

International friendly

MATILDAS – CHILE 1-0

The Matildas have defeated Chile 1-0 in Tuesday night's women's soccer international friendly in Adelaide.

Matildas attacker Emily Gielnik provided the hit and captain Sam Kerr some rare misses in a 1-0 win against Chile in Tuesday night's women's soccer friendly.

Kerr blew a penalty, had shots saved and hit a cross-bar - but set-up teammate Gielnik's goal as the Matildas set another crowd record.

The 10,342-strong attendance at Coopers Stadium is the largest to watch a women's soccer international in Adelaide, after the over 20,000 in attendance at Bankwest Stadium for the first fixture broke the record for female football in Australia.

The previous Adelaide benchmark was 5168 for a 2006 fixture against China - the last time the Matildas played in the South Australian capital.

Most came to witness the near-peerless Kerr, who was dynamic despite her misses as Australia swept the two-game

series against the Chileans.

Australia's coach Ante Milicic made four changes to his starting line-up from last Saturday's 2-1 win in Sydney before a crowd of 20,029 - an Australian record for a women's international.

The tinkering had scant impact on the fluency of the Matildas, who produced a first half domination punctuated by Gielnik's 23rd minute strike.

Played into space by a shrewd Kerr pass, Gielnik's first-time shot somehow eluded Chilean 'keeper Natalia Campos at the near post.

Australians Elle Carpenter and Tameka Yallop failed to convert further chances until Kerr took centre stage on the cusp of halftime.

After a trademark dash forward, Kerr had a shot saved and the ball rebounded to near the edge of the area where Campos, scrapping for possession, brought the Australian down to give away



a penalty.

But Kerr's shot from the spot, low to the left, was well-covered by Campos, leaving the hosts 1-0 up at the break despite basking in two-thirds of possession.

Australia continued their command of the world No.37 Chileans in a second half notable for another Kerr close-call - in the 48th minute her curling right-footer smacked into the cross-bar.

But despite their general dominance,

the world No.8 Australians almost paid a hefty price for their goal-shooting waste.

From a dead-ball in the 58th minute, Chile's Daniela Zamora had only 'keeper Lydia Williams to beat but her strike was body-blocked by the Matildas custodian.

And 77 minutes in, Williams had another nervy moment when Chilean Carla Guerrero's speculative 25m shot deflected from Kerr and looped toward goal, hitting the top of the cross-bar.

SAM KERR SNAPPED UP BY CHELSEA



Australia's women's soccer captain Sam Kerr has officially signed with English club Chelsea.

Sam Kerr says a desire to play in the world's best women's soccer league led to her signing a lucrative deal with English heavyweights Chelsea.

The Matildas captain has ended weeks of speculation about her club future, announcing on Wednesday she's joining Chelsea for the next two-and-a-half years.

The 26-year-old striker is taking a three-week holiday before linking with Chelsea for the second half of the English Women's Super League (WSL) season.

The WSL is the best league in Europe," Kerr said in a statement.

"I want team success and I don't want it to come easy.

"I feel Chelsea have been building something special over the years and I want to be a part of that. I want to lift some trophies."

Kerr has become the face of Australian women's soccer since debuting with the Matildas at the age of 15.

The dynamo played a key role in Australia's sweep of the just-completed two-game friendly series against Chile - she scored a brace in a 2-1 win in game one in Sydney last Saturday, and set-up the match-winner in a 1-0 triumph in Adelaide on Tuesday night.

Kerr had been weighing up her club future since

opting against returning to Australia's domestic W-League and Perth Glory.

She had been splitting her time each year between the Glory from October to April, then the Chicago Red Stars in the United States' National Women's Soccer League from April to September.

After Tuesday night's victory in Adelaide, Kerr conceded the gruelling schedule had led to near-exhaustion.

She outlined her plans for a three-week holiday, initially in Perth to visit family and then to Bali.

"I'm really looking forward to a break," she said post-game.

"It's the first time ever I have had scheduled time off where I can go on a holiday and take care of myself.

"It's my body - obviously I have been going back and forth (between Australia and the US) - but also my mind. I have been going non-stop.

"And the Matildas have gained a whole lot of exposure in the last few years so our lives have changed dramatically.

"It will just be nice to turn off from football and enjoy myself."

Chelsea's manager Emma Hayes hailed the signing of Kerr for her club.

"She's a player that can make things happen but she's also a fantastic team player," Hayes said in a statement.

"The fact she chose Chelsea when she could have gone to any club in the world is a testament to the players and the staff here, because she saw this is the best place for her to grow and take the next step in her career."