



By George Stavroulakis

# SOCCEEROOS WILL NEVER FORGET COPA: ARNOLD

The chance to play for your country in football-mad South America at next year's Copa America will be unmissable, Socceroos coach Graham Arnold says.



**Unlike many** of the players he'll take to next year's Copa America, Arnold has first-hand experience of representing your country in football-mad Argentina. **Arnold was** part of the Socceroos team which lost 1-0 to the Diego Maradona-led Albiceleste in a World Cup playoff in Buenos Aires in 1993. **It's a** memory that he quickly recalled when the Socceroos were pitted alongside the co-hosts for the 2020 Copa America in Wednesday's draw in Colombia. **Australia will** face Lionel Messi's Argentina along with Chile, Paraguay, Bolivia and old foes Uruguay in the 12-team South American continental championship as one of two guest

nations. **It's an** opportunity Arnold is urging those lucky enough to earn selection to make the most of. **"Sometimes you** reflect back on the wonderful experiences the Socceroos had playing in 1993 at River Plate against Maradona and (Diego) Simeone and those types of players," Arnold said. **"And with** the Socceroos in 2001 and 2005 playing against Uruguay. **"That group** of players experienced playing in South America. **"But this** group of players, close to none of them have had the wonderful experience of playing in a very different football culture of South America. **"Fans and** everyone should be really

excited about this opportunity ahead of us." **Of Australia's** current squad only a handful have played international football in South America. **Goalkeeper Mat** Ryan, captain Mark Milligan as well as Mathew Leckie, Bailey Wright, Adam Taggart and Massimo Luongo were all part of Australia's 2014 World Cup squad in Brazil. **Ryan and** Milligan, along with Tom Rogic and Mitchell Duke, were also involved in a 6-0 friendly defeat at the hands of Brazil in Brasilia in 2013. **Arnold believes** the opportunity to take on some of the world's best players, such as Messi, Uruguay's Luis Suarez and Chile's Alexis Sanchez will be invaluable

for the younger players in his team. **"You're talking** about the oldest competition in the world we're going to and we've been invited to," he said. **"It's a** wonderful moment for Australian football overall. **"It's never** happened before. **"I wouldn't** say it's in line with the World Cup because it's obviously the most prestigious tournament in the world but when you're talking about Euro championships, Asian Cup, Copa America you'd probably say it's right up there." **Australia will** kick off their Copa America campaign against 15-time champions Uruguay in Cordoba on June 13.

# GLORY COACH POPOVIC REFUSES TO PANIC

**Glory were** the runaway Premiers Plate winners last season, but currently find themselves in 11th spot with just one win from seven games. **Their task** won't be any easier on Friday night when they play second-placed Melbourne City at AAMI Park. **Glory have** averaged just one goal per game this season - down on the 2.1 from last campaign. **They are** also yet to keep a clean sheet. **Time is** running out for Perth to become serious title contenders this season, but Popovic isn't worried just yet. **The master** coach believes his team's performances have been relatively good - but they haven't had much luck when it comes to finishing off their chances. **"This year** the results aren't there, but the performances are there," Popovic said. **"It would** be wrong of me to panic. The players have trained well this week. **"Confidence** I judge by what I see at training. Players can't hide their body language, players can't hide their demeanour. They're training extremely hard, they really want this to work. **"They know** they're close, and Friday is

an opportunity to get a result." **From about** midway through last season, teams started adopting a more defence-minded approach against Glory in a bid to limit their goalscoring power and catch them on the counter. **The same** approach has been adopted this year - with far greater success. **Popovic believes** the flood gates could open for Glory if they can score the first goal in a match. **"It's difficult** to score against a compact, organised defensive block," Popovic said. **"We're still** creating chances, we're still getting 20-odd shots on goal a game, but it's about converting those opportunities. **"Once we** convert, I'm sure the opponent won't be able to continue sitting that way, and then we'll have more chances to get those goals on the break like we got last season." **Defender Osama** Malik will miss a fourth straight game with a hamstring issue, and he's no certainty to return next week either. **His continued** absence is a blow as Glory attempt to find a way to stop prolific striker Jamie Maclaren, who has scored nine goals in four games this season.

## A-League

### A-League 8th Round Table

	TEAM	MP	W	D	L	GOAL	Pts
1	Sydney FC	7	6	0	1	16:7	18
2	Melbourne City	7	5	1	1	16:11	16
3	Adelaide United	7	4	0	3	13:10	12
4	WS Wanderers	7	3	1	3	8:9	10
5	Western United	8	3	1	4	8:10	10
6	Brisbane Roar	7	2	2	3	8:8	8
7	Newcastle Jets	6	2	2	2	7:8	8
8	Melbourne Victory	8	2	2	4	8:11	8
9	Wellington Phoenix	7	2	1	4	9:11	7
10	Central Coast Mariners	7	2	1	4	7:12	7
11	Perth Glory	7	1	3	3	7:10	6

**A-League 8th Round Results**  
 Adelaide United - Wellington Phoenix 1-2  
 Western United - Sydney FC 0-2  
 Newcastle Jets - WS Wanderers 2-0  
 Brisbane Roar - Central Coast Mariners 2-0  
 Melbourne Victory - Perth Glory 1-0

**A-League Round 9**  
 Melbourne City - Perth Glory  
 Wellington Phoenix - WS Wanderers  
 Sydney FC - Brisbane Roar  
 Western United - Melbourne Victory  
 Adelaide United - Newcastle Jets