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MCMAHONS POINT 2060

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Thanks to

Dolores @ Star City, Bernie Mandic, John Armitage, and Heidi @ SBS, Claire Scullion and Simon Judge in the UK who saved us at the death. Cheers mate!

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Printed Webstar, a Division of Blue Star Print Group, Silverwater, NSW

Distributed Network Services Company

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FourFourTwo is published monthly by Haymarket Media Pty. Ltd, 52 Victoria St, McMahons Point, NSW 2060. Tel: +61 2 8399 3611 www.haymarketmedia.com.au

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Straight from the dugout



It's been a question I've been wanting to know the answer to for a while: just how good are Australian footballers?

While on this side of the world respect and adulation for our football players is almost unconditional, we're only basing our feelings on fleeting glimpses during home internationals and hour-long review shows on TV.

But seeing as the majority of our pros play overseas, wouldn't it be better to ask the opinion of fans who watch them week-in, week-out?

So we scoured the globe for football fans who would tell us what they *really* think of us and the results were pretty surprising. From "hardworking", "an enigma", "a credit to his countrymen" and "healthy... with good manners" (!!!?), the responses were as diverse as the countries the guys play in. But I won't spoil all the fun, check out the full feature on page 40.

This month, we also chat with Harry Kewell, who told us that he might surprise a few people by coming home to play in Australia sooner than they think [page 34]. How good would that be!

Finally, we've teamed up with the guys at SBS to bring you *The Complete Guide to Euro 2008* featuring in-depth profiles of all 16 teams, players to watch and heaps of interesting facts on the continental festival of football.

I'm in training getting my body clock into European time for the kick-offs already, but just in case, I'm off to buy an industrial vat of coffee beans to keep me going...

Paul Hansford, Editor in chief

LETTERS»

LATIN CREDIT

I have been shocked at the recent criticism of the Brazilian and Latin Americans playing in our A-League. Time after time media personalities and journalists have explained the bad signings and poor showings of imports who are apparently depriving the league of the use of its exciting young Australians.

First of all, what exciting young Australians are there? Apart from Michael Zullo and Robbie Kruse the league has been inexplicably short of exciting players who are home grown.

I will admit that while some of these Brazilians have been flops – including Cleberson, Mario Jardel – there remain a number of players from the Americas who deserve recognition.

Queensland's Reinaldo frustrated many beyond belief at times, but became a goalscorer and irreplaceable hit man for the Roar, while his compatriot Marcinho provided spark and the occasional goal for his team. Sydney's World Cup winner

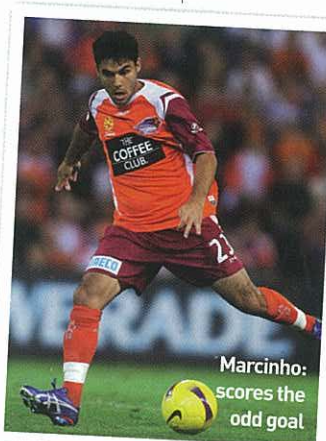
Juninho was obviously the class act of the league and although injuries ruined much of his campaign, his quality and flair kept the crowds strong and interest high in Sydney.

Melbourne Victory's Hernandez came in for criticism in the early part of the season, he looked overweight and uninterested, but some of his performances and obvious class on the ball have left Victory supporters with high hopes for him in the Asian Champions League and next season.

I wouldn't say any one of them has had the same impact as Fred in season two, but this should not make coaches scared to sign these often brilliant and gloriously skilled players. Thank God every player doesn't play like Kevin Muscat or Jamie Harnwell. *Guy Tiffany, Mitcham*

MISSING IN THE RUCK

I enjoyed the article (and the mag) "Rucking All Over The World" immensely [May 2008, page 56]. However, you missed out my favourite. In a qualifier for the World Cup 1970, Scotland went to ▶



Marcinho scores the odd goal