



**2016
AROUND THE
GROUNDS
DAY 1**

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BROADMEADOW LOVE THE MAGIC OF THE CUP

By Russ Gibbs



‘An unrivalled football experience’ is how Broadmeadow Magic Youth FC President Perry Mellon describes the NSR Kanga Cup as the Newcastle based Northern New South Wales team returns to Canberra for a fourth successive appearance in the competition. “There is no tournament that can offer you at least five full competition matches over the course of a week as well as providing a stern test for any team that enters into the competition,” Mellon confirmed. “To those who are wishing to attend, don't even think about it register today and you'll never regret it!”

Magic is a local community based club that prides itself on being a leader of football in not only Newcastle but the entire Northern NSW region. Originally formed in 1966 (this year marking 50 years for our club) as a social club to play football together for Macedonians, they are now home to 250+ registered boys and girls from 5-15 years of age and field teams in Newcastle's 'Inter-District A Grade' competition that is played over fourteen Saturday mornings during the course of the season.

The club, which is famous for producing such luminaries as Newcastle Jets talent Peter Haynes, Andrew Hoole, Ben Kantarovski and Ben Kennedy, it seems can't get enough of NSR Kanga Cup week. “The love of the Kanga Cup started when the club first attended in 2013 with a single team participating in the U13 Cup competition, winning the tournament via penalty shoot-out,” Mellon revealed. “Ever since that first tournament we have returned to Canberra every July since and in 2016 we will be bringing our biggest contingent yet with three U12 teams entering.

“Our favourite part of the week is no doubt playing so many football matches during the tournament. The teams love getting up in the morning knowing that will be playing a match in the morning, going out sightseeing and then playing a match in the afternoon. Our other favourite part of the trip down to Canberra is the social aspect from our parents and players. As a tradition we hold a club dinner on the Wednesday night to celebrate our time down at the NSR Kanga Cup.”

For Mellon and the players the week promises a lot more than just football with some famed Canberra sights on the agenda. “We are most keen on experiencing all the fun activities that Canberra has to do,” Mellon said. “I am sure we will head to Questacon, AIS, The War Memorial and all the other great attractions Canberra has. Our team is looking to gain the experience of playing in a big tournament against teams from other parts of Australia/The World. All games are of high importance therefore, it helps our players develop at a speed they may not of achieved before because their decisions on & off the ball are so important. We are looking finishing Kanga Cup strong, returning to Newcastle a more experienced and technically better team.”

CHOCOLATES WERE THE KEY FOR WOLVES PARTICIPATION

By Russ Gibbs

Raising the funds to attend the NSR Kanga Cup is done in number of ways but one of the most popular appears to be the selling of the sweet stuff – chocolate. And that’s something that Craig Blackmore, Manager of Eschol Park Wolves U9 Gold knows all too well.

“Our lives are about selling chocolates to raise funds to keep the individual costs to families down,” Blackmore said. “Our club has also been fantastic, decking out the kids in tracksuits, hosting a fundraising BBQ and offering some money to help with the registration fee. Thanks Eschol Park Wolves Committee – we couldn’t have done it without you! We’ve been talking about the Kanga Cup since we found out about it when it was on last year so it’s been in our minds since then.”

The Eschol Park Wolves are a club team from the Macarthur Region in Sydney which has played together for a number of years. Last year the team won the Club’s Mini Team of the Year award and Blackmore won the Manager of the Year for the whole Club. “We love football!” Blackmore revealed. “With such a great group of families, the idea of a football-filled week and having the kids (and parents) hang out together was very appealing. Also, playing against kids from all over Australia and possibly from different countries really appeals to the kids to gage their skills and to meet new friends.

“The kids are definitely looking forward to the football, but also being around a group of their mates for a WHOLE WEEK, including visits to Questacon and hanging out at the accommodation together is very exciting. Our team are looking forward to challenging themselves against teams from all over Australia and the world on the field and making new friends and having new experiences off it. A week spent together will strengthen the already solid bond our kids and parents have. It looks to be a great experience for all!”

It won’t be just the games that the Eschol Park Wolves will enjoy during the first week of July in what looks like being a packed schedule to keep everyone busy and active.

“We are expecting a wonderful experience for both kids and parents alike with a chance to gauge the team’s skills against similar teams from around Australia and throughout the world,” Blackmore commented. “Also, to participate in such a large competition will be an amazing experience. Mainly though – to have FUN! It will be great to meet some other teams off the field and to watch some of the older kids’ games to pick up some hints and tips. The kids are keen to visit Questacon and the parents are talking about other things to see in Canberra. We’re looking at visits to the War Memorial, Parliament House, the National Gallery and the National Museum.” For the Wolves the 2016 NSR Kanga Cup looks sure to be a memorable experience.

COLTS STEPPING INTO THE UNKNOWN

By Russ Gibbs



Creating a football team from scratch is a tough business. There are a myriad number of questions that need to be answered and a huge number of logistical issues to ponder and complete. But, in the end as we all know, it's well worth it! One such team is the Caulfield Colts and they will begin their first season of competition by entering the 2016 NSR Kanga Cup.

"We are a newly formed team from the Caulfield Glen Eira area of Melbourne with the majority of our team coming out the North Caulfield Maccabi Junior Football Club," Paul Platus, Manager of Caulfield Colts U12 told us. "The club has initiated an elite program offering high quality coaching, facilities and resources to attract quality footballers within the local area."

Whilst the team itself may be a new team the area is renowned for producing high quality footballers such as Matildas international and Melbourne Victory starlet Ashley Brown as well as Socceroo and Victory winger Connor Pain. And, whilst it is too early to ascertain whether any of the current crop will go on to emulate this duo Platus is convinced that the NSR Kanga Cup will be a good grounding for the Colts.

"We hope to offer the playing group a unique football experience at a young age by travelling together as a team to represent their club in quality football tournament," Platus said. "This is, of course, our first time at the Cup looking forward to the competition. We are hoping to use the competition as a team bonding and football experience for the players and are looking forward to the team camaraderie and crowd support!"

According to their club website the Colts have a strong vision of what they want to achieve. Stating that they aim to raise the standard of football in the surrounding area of Caulfield whilst also planning to encourage the improvement in quality and innovation of football coaches over time. It's clear that their ideals are the development of players, coaches and general football staff in the area.

"We have a very supportive group of parents who have helped facilitate and manage the logistics of the club and our first visit to the NSR Kanga Cup," Platus commented. We feel it is a great opportunity for young footballers to have a great sporting team experience."

The Colts NSR Kanga Cup journey is just beginning and we are sure that, after experiencing first-hand what the competition has to offer, that they will become a regular at the event in the near future!

TASMANIANS COMPLETE FULL HOUSE

By Russ Gibbs



When Beachside Football Club signed up for the 2016 NSR Kanga Cup they completed a full-house for the competition. The addition of the Tasmanians means this year's tournament can now boast entries from every state and territory. That's right clubs from New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia, Queensland and the Northern Territory will join Beachside and the local ACT players in making the competition a truly Australia-wide event.

Beachside FC can be found in Sandy Bay in Hobart, located near the Wrest Point Casino, and are a prime example of a traditional community based club with the focus on its junior development. Currently the club can field three senior men's teams, two social men's teams, two women's teams and nine junior teams, encompassing the U12 to U18 age range. The team that will come to Canberra will be a mixture of the club's U15 and U16 players who play in the Tasmanian U16 Division 1.

"Tournaments such as the Kanga Cup are fantastic opportunities that allow young men to experience things on and off the park," Beachside GC Technical Director Brett Pullen commented. "They get to travel without family and experience life in a new environment.

"In football terms it's a wonderful opportunity to play other teams from all over Australia and compare styles and strengths and hopefully create new friendships. I came with a U10 team seven years ago, they won the Team Spirit award and made the Semi-Finals but they had the best time, that's why I'm back."

Having teams from all around this vast wide land descending on Canberra can give the competing teams a whole new perspective on the game as each club brings with it its own distinctive style, culture and history.

"When I came to the tournament seven years ago I had an absolute blast," Pullen reminisced. "I am expecting the competition to be an awesome experience for the players. We have a large number of talented players in the squad and I am hopeful that they will play well and enjoy a tremendous experience. So far the competition is going along well and we are playing good football and developing a string system.

"The cup is living up to its reputation to be a great competition and an awesome experience. It is our clubs aim to provide such experiences to our youth teams when possible. Our aim is for the players to experience the tournament experience and of course to win as many games as possible but also to play attractive football."

OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS FOR FAR SOUTH COAST

By Russ Gibbs



The girls from the Far South Coast Football Association are loving the opportunity to pit their skills against their peers from around the country and the NSR Kanga Cup gives them the perfect opportunity to do so. The team, which is made up of players from clubs such as Mallacoota, Tathra, Eden, Merimbula, Pambula, Bemboka and Bega are regular competitors in the Southern Branch

Championships and this group were the first team to win that competition and thus competed in the NSW Country Cup where they were more than competitive.

“The kids in this area don’t get much opportunity to play outside of club football and the Kanga Cup is a highlight for them,” Paul Webster, Coach of the U14 team, commented. “The whole week is a great time for the girls from the Opening Ceremony experience to ice skating in the mall. We have sent a team for the past several years and keep returning. These kids don’t get much opportunity to play club soccer, and especially the girls as we don’t have a female competition, this is great chance to play in an all-girls event.”

Having a squad together for the week will also allow Webster, and his support staff, the chance to check out the progress of their representative players and to look forward to things off the field as much as the action on it.

“The competition provides valuable game time for our representative players and hopefully will go some way towards building our girls representative teams on the Far South Coast. Luella Bolton being one of the youngest in the team won Player of the Tournament at Branch Championships and Kiarna Woolley-Blain is rock solid at the back, so we have plenty of talent.

“As the event so close to home, it is not too big a job to get to the NSAR Kanga Cup however is quite a large financial commitment to the individual parents! We would like to thank team manager Kate Webster and also thanks to one of the parents Dan Ferrara for taking care of the arrangements!

“I would say to all teams thinking of coming to the event to get involved! It’s a great experience for the kids and is played in good spirits by all teams.”

WESTON-MOLONGLO DEVILS IN A DANCING MOOD

By Russ Gibbs



Celebrating a goal is the norm in football and is often a highlight for any player lucky enough to find the back of the net during the NSR Kanga Cup. A celebratory jig can often provoke lasting memories and occasional laughter. What is unusual however is having a team dance for if the opposition score! That however is exactly what the Weston-Molonglo Devils had planned for NSR Kanga Cup week.

“We are planning to have a special dance when we score a goal and a different dance when a goal is scored against us!” Coach of the U13 Kanga Cup team Kylie Robinson told *Around the Grounds*. “These girls were extremely eager to play in the Kanga Cup and our motto is “play your best, play fair and have a great time!” Our team had not played together before this week and come from our U12 Division 1 and U13 Division 2 and 3 teams.”

Making the experience an enjoyable one for all of the participants is key to the success of the NSR Kanga Cup and Robinson fully supports the ideals that a fun time is essential for a happy group.

“The Kanga Cup is a fabulous experience for kids of all ages to take part in,” she said. “Both my children have played for the last few years and have absolutely loved it. My oldest daughter was part of the team that won the Cup in her age group two years in a row. Most of the girls have participated in the Cup before just not as a team together. They all love participating.

“The Kanga Cup is a great sporting experience for kids to instill sportsmanship and fair play values. It is so exciting to have something like this tournament in Canberra, we just have to participate. I just want my team to have a great fun time. Make new friends, hang out in the freezing cold and just laugh. It’s not about winning or losing for our team but just taking part and enjoying something in the school holidays. Being outside and keeping fit.”

As you would expect Robinson is extremely encouraging of any team who is thinking of taking the plunge and entering the 2017 edition.

“It is a fabulous way to teach your kids about sportsmanship, making new friends, getting out there and having a go,” Robinson commented. “You don’t have to be super awesome and super competitive to participate. It is an extremely well organized event and I actually think I love it more than the kids sometimes. It is just a wonderful week.”

CULTURE OF CUP IS IMPORTANT FOR HARRINGTON

By Russ Gibbs



The aspect of team is one which is important to all NSR Kanga Cup entrants but it's especially important for Harrington United Green who will compete in the 26th edition of the youth football tournament under the tutelage and guidance of Head Coach Giovanni Italiano.

"We've entered the team in the NSR Kanga Cup for the whole experience, so that the boys can show off their skills on a level like never before, and to encourage all to be a part of a great sporting culture that brings people together from all walks of life," Italiano commented.

"Meeting other teams and sharing experiences on a social level, and using these skills in other areas of life, showing off your passion and making it a reality or making a career from it is the aim, as there is nothing better than doing what you love. I'm looking at helping the boys have this experience to hopefully in the future bring them to a higher level in soccer and mark the standards for generations to come."

When pressed to nominate a key player Italiano is understandably reluctant to single out any individual but does have high hopes for the man between the sticks, Luke Paten.

"Our goal keeper Luke Paten is an A-Star keeper who uses all his analytical skills to defend the team," Italiano said. "The team are excellent team players and communicate well together. The need to place the team in the spotlight and help them progress and be a recognised team was the main reason we entered the competition. It's an opportunity to be part of the Kanga Cup as a new experience and to place their best foot forward and see where it takes them.

"The boys have been training two nights a week with intense strength training and preparation mentoring. They have already progressed from being Division 2 in 2014 and become a Division 1 skilled team 2015. The boys have been very strong and determined and hungry for the win each and every game. We will be trying to stay in the cup as long as we can, make the finals and enjoy watching the boys do their best during the week."

PROSPECT UNITED BRING 'PRIDE & PASSION'

By Russ Gibbs



Competing in the under-13 Male Plate competition the youngsters from Prospect United have certainly lived up to their pre-tournament promise of bringing 'pride and passion' in the representation of their club.

The Club was founded in 1970 with the aim of providing and fostering sport within the Prospect area. Since its first season of competition in 1971 Prospect United have been one of the strongest clubs in the district and will continue to strive to achieve this goal in the new millennium. The Club caters for all ages and skill levels and the trip to Canberra was something they felt they had to be involved with.

"We wanted to give the team the opportunity to compete in an international tournament," Brent Lord, Assistant Coach and General Committee Member, commented. "The Kanga Cup is well known and wanted to give our team an opportunity to experience the tournament and meet other teams and players that share their love of football. We have a team of superstars and we look forward to unleashing them on Canberra."

The 2016 NSR Kanga Cup will be the first time that Prospect United will have entered the long running competition and the team, which was leading its local completion heading into the start of the week, were looking forward to testing their mettle against their peers.

"The team have progressed well to date and have prepared well for the Kanga Cup. We want to use the Kanga Cup to understand as a team where we are at and how we need to continue to develop," Lord said. "We really enjoyed taking part in the march past at the Opening Ceremony. The boys brought all of their pride and passion to that.

"The Kanga Cup gives the boys the chance to experience the pinnacle of junior football in Australia. We would like to thank our sponsors Wise Planet Recycling, Reflex Plumbing, Big Red's Timberworks, Spotty Dog, HJR Lighting for their efforts and also all the parents for the efforts preparing for our Trivia Night and keeping the BBQ firing on training nights."

FORMER CUP KINGS LOOK FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

By Russ Gibbs



You may remember the name Bentleigh Greens. The senior club who play in the PlayStation® 4 National Premier Leagues Victoria made national headlines in the football world with a storming run through to the semi-finals of the inaugural Westfield FFA Cup in 2014 where they were defeated by Hyundai A-League side Perth Glory 3-0. Now it's the turn of their youngsters to try and emulate the older generation as they enjoy their 2016 NSR Kanga Cup experience.

"I think our boys will bond off the field and become a lot closer as will the parents," David Jackson, Head Coach of the under-12 team commented. "On the field we hope to go all the way but regardless of results at least we will know where we are at, and what hard work we will need to keep going. We are a NPLV club and we had eighty kids trial in November last year and selected twenty from that group. We are all about development and have a great bunch of kids."

Jackson attended the competition with a different club in 2014 and was determined to bring this talented group of Bentleigh boys to Canberra to sample the unique occasion that is the NSR Kanga Cup.

"It is the premier competition in the country and a great chance for our boys to see what the competition is like," he said. "The opening ceremony is something they won't forget but for the kids it will be playing the games. The boys are really looking forward to playing the South Korea team this year. I sent out an email asking for interest from our parents and by the next day I had already had 14 responses to say yes. All parents are driving up so they are pretty keen to support their kids. Kids love tournaments and this is the best tournament in Australia!"

The club can lay claim to being the junior home of a number of players including Alastair Bray of Central Coast Mariners and the Melbourne Victory trio Nick Ansell, Conor Pain (who recently signed for Mariners) and Lawrence Thomas. From this current generation Jackson told us to keep an eye on defensive midfielder Leon Martin.

Martin is a very strong defensive midfielder who has captained Victoria in Futsal," Jackson said. "He is half Croatian and half Irish so he is bread to be a tough competitor." And Bentleigh are sure to be touch competitors throughout the week.

SOUTH MELBOURNE JOURNEY TO MATILDAS DREAM

By Ahmed Jbeili



South Melbourne Women's Football Club Under 13/14 coach Mark Knauer, is excited for the opportunity for his aspiring Matilda's girls to showcase their talent and skills at the 2016 NSR Kanga Cup. The team from Metropolitan Melbourne in Victoria had a long journey to make it to this year's Kanga Cup.

It took a huge commitment from the club, the coach, the Team Management Department, the player's parents & families and the wider business communities to ensure the girls could make it to Canberra. Financial support from these businesses and other generous support from volunteers allowed for team registration fees to be funded, brand new kits, mini-bus hire, fuel, bannerettes

and funding for food.

Knauer was extremely grateful for the girl's parents whose ongoing support allowed the team to make it from Melbourne to Canberra. "Our parents are extremely supportive of their daughter's development and have been more than happy to cover the out-of-pocket costs with regards to travel and accommodation" said Knauer.

The group of football fanatics are a close bunch who have come together to work hard on their individual and collective football journeys. Several players from SMWFC gave up 'lucrative' WNPL offers to remain with the club, which is competing in the A-Grade Community League Division in 2016.

For some of the girls it will be a debut NSR Kanga Cup Tournament. When asked what is the best part of the week at the Kanga Cup Knauer has said "All of it! From the journey from Melbourne to Canberra, to the Opening Ceremony and the matches themselves, the team bonding and the week of unforgettable football experiences."

The SMWFC is all about developing young female football players and helping reach their football dreams and goals. The Kanga Cup is a perfect opportunity for young players to experience a professional tournament and Knauer believes right now is the perfect chance to develop women's football in Australia. "There is no greater time, than now, to support the young and upcoming talent in women's football in Australia. The Kanga Cup provides a wonderful platform to contribute to and achieve this."

"It is an elite tournament attended by both interstate and international teams that is an extremely professionally organised event, we felt that competing in the Kanga Cup is an opportunity to showcase the talent at SMWFC outside the FFV arena and provide these players a concentrated football experience." Said Knauer.

SMWFC is known as a breeding ground for future superstars with winners in the Women's Premier League (WPL), SMWFC are 2011, 2014, 2015 Champions and Premiers in 2013,

2014. The club has always been known for being successful. Their parent club South Melbourne Club FC has had over 50 players represent the Socceroo's in international fixtures, most notably current Socceroo's Coach, Ange Postecoglou. SMWFC is currently 2nd place in their division (U13/14A Girls – FFV Metropolitan Melbourne) and the team has a great deal of promising players coming through the ranks.

When asked if there were any potential superstars to keep an eye on / or characters to watch out for, Knauer said, "I consider each and every player to be a budding football superstar. SMWFC prides its self on developing strong, assertive, resilient, intelligent, compassionate and determined young women with a passion to be the very best they can be in football and in life."

Asked why SMWFC entered the Kanga Cup and what would they recommend others to join, Knauer said, "To support the journey of a team of inspiring Matilda's and therefore consequently investing in the future of women's football. It is a well-known fact that women's football is barely recognised in Australia, despite the fact that the Matilda's are currently FIFA ranked 5th in the world competition and are going for Gold at the upcoming RIO Olympic Games. Help our girls reach their dreams and achieve their football goals".

KILLARNEY DISTRICT ENJOY OCCASION

By Russ Gibbs



They may have come to the NSR Kanga Cup with a blitzkrieg of goals under their belts but the occasion means more than the result to Killarney District Soccer Club. Undefeated in local competition heading into the tournament with ninety goals scored and just one conceded, the girls of the U13 team certainly arrived in full confidence with Women's Premier League Manager Russell Moore returning for another year.

"I brought my daughters team to the Kanga Cup in 2014 to compete in the W15 age group where they were lucky enough to be winners," Moore said. "I was coaching these younger girls in the W12 as well at the time, and upon hearing all about the trip these girls and their parents thought it would be a great thing to be part of. My daughter is now currently assistant coach of this W13 team.

"Most of the team came together 3 seasons ago to compete in the W12 comp as 10 year olds. The first year was spent learning to play and become competitive. Last year the girls won the W12A comp. This year they have a couple new players in the team and currently they lead the W13A comp. Two or three of the team are still eligible to play in the W12 competition this year."

The NSR Kanga Cup does more than just allow the team to come away for a week and enjoy more matches as Moore continued.

"The bonding together as a team is definitely one of the best parts of the week along with the chance to test ourselves as a team against different competition," he said. "I have been as a coach and my assistant coach Jacinta 'Pos' Moore has been a previous winner as a player. The chance to allow another team to experience the cup is what has made me return. The team has a number of good players across the park that all complement each other's abilities.

"We have entered the Kanga Cup to further enjoy a sport that we all love. Any teams considering the Kanga Cup should by all means do it. Just make the decision early to allow plenty of time for fundraising and organisation. The fundraising itself is an adventure that brings the team together. The girls that travelled from our club to the Kanga Cup in 2014 from our club still regard it as the best trip ever.

"The strengthening of team friendships along with improvements in our game that comes with the increased competition. And above all a fantastic memory of the teams trip together."

MAJURA U14 OVERCOMING PRE-CUP INJURY CURSE

By Russ Gibbs



Few would imagine that playing under-14 Girls football would be such a tough battle, but for Majura SC the pre-Kanga Cup build-up was all about nursing through a number of players who have suffered one way or another for their love of the game.

“I would say our form coming into the competition has been experimental,”

Team Manager Tonia Leckie joked. “We have had a number of new players this season and are seeking to settle positions. Although we hadn’t lost a game in the regular season we have had a few injuries already - broken collarbone, broken wrist, broken ankle, torn muscles around knee, one girl knocked off her bike on pedestrian crossing by a truck. Can you believe it - anyone would think we are playing rugby league!”

The NSR Kanga Cup will give the young group a chance to recharge their batteries in a different kind of environment, a competition that poses its own unique set of challenges for the players and management.

“It is a big event with lots of hype and mojo and it is right in our back yard,” Leckie said. “The variety of playing teams from other regions and states helps to get perspective on your standing as a team. There are memorable events when you're a kid and Kanga Cup is one of them. You'll talk about this when you're funny embarrassing parents!”

“As a local team so we have got it easy in terms of logistics! Although hats off to all the interstate and overseas teams as it is hard enough organising when you're a local team. The core of the team has been together for four years and, over that time, have won a bit of silverware but mostly had a lot of fun getting together each week for training and games plus competing in two or three tournaments a year. We particularly enjoying playing our nemesis Woden Valley United for tough contests. They often have the wood on us - but never underestimate an underdog!”

As with all team games it’s the unity of the group that stands out and we can expect to see Majura SC U14 showing plenty of that during Kanga Cup week.

JAFFAS DEVELOPING SELF-BELIEF

By Russ Gibbs



The Lambton Jaffas are a progressive bunch. They have certainly made it a mission to come to the NSR Kanga Cup and, with a club that boasts former Socceroo Joel Griffiths in its first grade coaching ranks and ex-Newcastle Jets star Jobe Wheelhouse as the skipper, it's no surprise that the junior ranks are also bursting with talent and a determination to make it to the very top.

Lambton Jaffas FC was first founded in 1957, however has only been in the top tier National Premier League (NPL) since 2014. The team representing the club at the Cup is their NPL15 squad.

"The team is a work in progress with varied playing experience within the group," Assistant Coach Matt Chock said. "They are starting to develop some self-belief and confidence which is reflected in some great results. The Kanga Cup was recommended by representatives of teams who have competed previously in the competition and was seen as a great opportunity to expose a number of our players to a tournament environment similar to state and national titles. Only one of our players has participated previously in this tournament."

The NSR Kanga Cup offers clubs like Lambton Jaffas the opportunity to gain valuable experience across the week and allows coaches the chance to work with their players on a regular basis throughout the six-day period away from home.

"We are looking forward to using the competition to continue to build on our technical football as well as trying new combinations and set plays," Chock explained. "We also look forward to giving younger players the opportunity to test their abilities in a higher age group."

"In addition to the football the players are looking to bond with each other as well as players from other teams. The tournament also allows players to have some quality holiday time with their families whilst at the same time playing the game they love."

"We look forward to the Kanga Cup as another opportunity to play football in a tour and recommend the tournament to other teams considering entering in the future. To get to the competition, players have been active in fund raising as well as seeking sponsorship. Vital sponsors whom we have to thank for assisting us get to the tournament include Pacific Smiles Dental, The Concept Gym, Saz Corp, Powernet, DPC Diverse Property Constructions, Lambton Lunchbox, Fire Station Hotel and Valley Air Conditioning."

FUTURE OF SEOUL ACADEMY AT CUP

By David Jordan



Back for the second NSR Kanga Cup in a row, FC Seoul's under-12 team fought out an entertaining 1-1 draw with the CU Academy on a chilly Canberra morning. FC Seoul is a professional club from Korea, who at the highest level play in the K-League classic, the first division in South Korean football.

This under-12 side is part of 'The Future of FC Seoul' Academy, ranging from ages six through to twelve, and Team Manager Young Gon Kim has his sights set on the trophy at the end of this week.

"I would like to see the team become the Champions," he said, "but more important is that the boys enjoy the game."

That ever-important attitude was on show at the side's first game, as those both on the field and on the bench enjoyed themselves despite the crisp Monday morning. Kim said despite the cold weather here, he believes that his side will be used to it shortly, adding that they are used to much, much worse.

Average winter temperature in Seoul hovers around the -2.5 degree mark, meaning Canberra's best efforts are probably less of a culture shock than expected.

"In Korea, it is summer now, so it is not good to play," said Kim. "But the Winter of Korea is much worse than Australia so I think that after one day or two days the boys will handle the weather just fine."

Kim's first knowledge of the Southern Hemisphere's largest junior football tournament came from studying in Australia, before speaking to Kanga Cup ambassador Keith Lee.

"I heard about the Kanga Cup when I was a student in Australia, and then once back in Korea I spoke to Keith [Lee]," Kim said. "We attended the Kanga Cup for the first time last year, and I think it is a very good sport & tournament for the boys, so we came back again this year!"

The Seoul team demonstrated a fast-moving and direct brand of football, playing the ball along the ground and remaining disciplined for the full match. With some stiff competition in the U/12 Male Cup, their matches are sure to be entertaining, but whatever happens, this side will go home as a group that has learnt a lot during their time in Canberra.

OLYMPIC RELISHING CUP OPPORTUNITY

By David Jordan



Ignacio Marquez of Canberra Olympic is this year taking onboard his first ever Kanga Cup as a coach, and is relishing the opportunity that his under-14 side have with such a competition on Canberra's doorstep.

"Yeah, it's brilliant," he said. "You get to see different teams from interstate and internationally, even. It just gives you different styles to work on, and play against and it helps give added fitness and competitiveness that the players love."

Olympic are one of Canberra's most popular clubs, with a long-standing presence in the capital since 1956. The Men's side recently won through Canberra's Westfield FFA Cup Qualifying Final into the main draw, and will take on Surfers Paradise Apollo in the National Round of 32 later this month.

Speaking after his side's 2-0 loss to Camden Tigers, Marquez was upbeat and excited for what his side can get out of the competition.

"Our aim is basically demonstrate, and to keep developing what we already have been doing throughout the season," he said. "We get to try and put that in a more competitive framework, where the intensity is a bit higher. But we also want just let them have fun as well with enjoyable football one of the Kanga Cup's biggest drawcards."

Marquez's side appeared to have a ball of a time as they raced around the Charnwood field, despite giving a slight physical edge to the Tigers boys with their size.

Marquez was positive with his side afterwards, focusing on what the side did well rather than any negatives. With a friendly but still-competitive feel, the Kanga Cup gives young coaches and referees the chance to develop their skills in a positive environment.

With Marquez's side playing each weekend in the under-14 division of Capital Football's National Premier League, the Cup gives them plenty of opportunities to continue their development and teamwork going forward.