

MATCH 1

AUSTRALIAN SCHOOLBOYS DEFEAT WALES 3-1

Only 24 hours after their arrival in UK the Australian touring U'19 team defeated Wales' schools in their first International game. The game was played at Penydarren Park the home stadium of Merthyr Tydfil F.C.

In very wet conditions, the first ten minutes were dominated by the Australian team who maintained possession but were unable to penetrate their opposition's defending third. As the game continued both teams had the opportunity to open the score in their quest to claim superiority.

Victorian left fullback James Duvcevski ventured forward in the 23rd minute and after a clever combination with midfield, mobile striker Hassein Akil was set free with only the goalkeeper to beat. Akil from NSW made no mistake to score the first goal of the tour.

Three minutes later defender Duvcevski was involved again helping the Aussies to win their first corner. Yet another defender Chris Atsikbasis rose to make a strong header and give a well earned 2-0 advantage to the Aussies.

The Wales School selection responded immediately and pressured the Aussies, both teams creating several opportunities to add to the score mark.

The second half saw a more determined Wales team who initially dominated with the support of a healthy vocal crowd. Australian Goalkeeper David Lowery made some brilliant saves, keeping the Schoolboys in the game.

The Australian kept creating opportunities but conceded their first goal after a well executed free kick. The home team threw everything at the Aussies but they stoically maintained the advantage. Both teams had another two opportunities with each goalkeeper saving at least two shots each. Aussie striker Michael De Bono (SA) was denied by Wales's goalie Marcus Griffiths and Anthony Fearon (WA) saw his header strike the cross bar when Griffiths was truly beaten.

On 83 minutes, midfielder David Rowley (Qld) won a header to make the score 3-1 and confirm the Aussie superiority. The home team never gave up but the touring Australian team ensured that their first game with minimal preparation was a success.

The Schoolboys had a good start to the tour and should become a cohesive force with another nine games including another five full internationals games to be played. The tour which includes a girls' team will visit England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales.

Team: David Lowery (NSW), Umut Tokdogan (NSW – 86 min - Ryan Pretorious (WA)), Nathan Sherlock (NSW), Christopher Atsikasis (SA), James Duvceski (Vic), Steve Biason (NSW), Simon Ryan (NSW - 68 min, David Rowley), Glenn Trifiro (NSW - Daniel Carter (NSW)), Andrew Ciarla (SA – 85 min Chris Roulston (Qld)), Hassein Akil (NSW – 45 min Anthony Fearon (WA)), Jesse Pinto (NSW – 45 min, Michael De Bono (SA)),

Subs not used: Sebastian Usai (Qld).

Scorers: Akil, Atsikasis, Rowley.

MATCH 2

AUSSIES UNDEFEATED AFTER AN IMPRESSIVE COMEBACK

The touring Australian Schoolboys remains undefeated after a thrilling encounter against a good English Colleges' squad. The game held at Oswestry Park synthetic pitch after flooding inundated the scheduled ground in Telford was a wake up call to the touring side as they were taken by surprise by an organised fast and skilful English side.

Although in the first ten minutes both teams were on even terms, soon the English Colleges claimed superiority. The Aussies with a new line-up allowed the opposition to take control of the game. At the fifteen minutes mark a clever through ball left their striker with only the goalkeeper to beat to begin his brace. He made no mistake from close range and buried the ball in the net as keeper, Sebastian Usai (Qld), did not have a chance.

As Anthony Fearon pressured the defenders his persistence played off as he was gifted an open opportunity as the goalkeeper and central defender muddled up the ball. Fearon made no mistakes with the open goal at his mercy for the equaliser.

The Australian team tried to gain the ascendancy, the England striker was left unmarked and he converted to give the English Colleges a 2 -1 advantage. Soon their target man completed his hat trick yet with another clever combination with his skipper.

The English team deserved their 3-1 advantage. However a defensive blunder gave the Aussies their second goal. Chris Roulston pounced on a ball dropped by the goalkeeper after a high cross and closed the gap for the touring side (2-3). The Australian Schoolboys tried hard to find solutions to contain the waves of attack that followed and were lucky to only concede three goals before half time.

The second half commenced with substitutions and a never die attitude for the schoolboys. They matched the English skills, pace and determination as both sides missed several opportunities. During the last twenty minutes the Aussies not only controlled the opposition but took charge of the game and created numerous opportunities with several near misses. At the 90 minutes mark a quick counter attack through the heart of the English defence and a measured through low ball by Glenn Trifiro found Hussein Akil entering the 18 yds box at full speed, he dribbled past the goalkeeper to his right side and blasted a shoot inflating the back of the net. The celebrations continued as the last three minutes of extra time concluded the game in 3-3 draw. The Aussies had made an astonishing comeback and earned a well deserved draw, this kept them undefeated before their next two games as they travel to the next destination Dublin and Belfast in Ireland.

Team: Sebastian Usai (Qld), Ryan Pretorius (WA - 65 min Umut Tokdogan NSW), Nathan Sherlock (NSW), Christopher Atsikbasis (SA), James Duvceski (Vic), Daniel Carter (NSW 45 min Simon Ryan NSW), Glenn Trifiro (NSW), David Rowley (Qld – 60 min Jesse Pinto NSW), Anthony Fearon (WA - 45 min - Hussein Akil NSW), Christopher Roulston (Qld - Andrew Ciarla SA), Michael De Bono (45 min SA - Steve Bason NSW),

Subs not used: David Lowery (NSW),

Scorers:, Fearon, Roulston, Akil

MATCH 3

AUSSIES LOSE THEIR WAY IN BELFAST

On a heavy pitch and with a delayed arrival to the venue the schoolboy's team were not able to consolidate their solid play. In the first fifteen minutes both teams worked hard in a well balanced game. At the 27th minute mark the spirited Northern Irish scored their first goal after a well taken corner. David Lowery the Aussie keeper could only parry a strong header, with the ball landing at the feet of their striker who buried the ball high in top of the net from point blank range with the defence caught flat footed.

The spirited Irish looked threatening, but the Aussies made a comeback and were successful in dominating parts of the game. Several chances went begging for both sides during the first half and the touring team saw efforts by Hussein Akil and Anthony Fearon go missing as they tried to equalise.

In the second half the Aussies worked hard chasing the result and launched themselves into attack looking for the equaliser. The Irish sat back and played a counter attacking game allowing the Aussies to dominate for long periods. The touring side managed their defensive set pieces to keep

pressing forward, however a substitution saw the introduction of a little Irish dynamo who ran at the Australian defence and made it very difficult as the Australians tired on the very heavy pitch.

A long ball found the back three Aussies defenders flat and this clever Irish player weaved his magic to make the score 2-0 in the 75 minute. As the touring side kept pushing forward an Aussie defender was caught by this wizard, who pinched the ball and scored his second to make the score 3-0 .

The schoolboys had lost their first game, however they gave all. Although desolation and silence reigned in the camp, they knew that the difference was made simply because the opposition took their chances. Next game: Republic of Ireland.

Team: David Lowery (NSW 45 min– Sebastian Usai Qld), Christopher Atsikbasis (SA – 45 min Ryan Pretorious WA), Nathan Sherlock (NSW), James Duvceski (Vic) Simon Ryan (NSW – 75 min Daniel Carter NSW), Steve Biason (NSW – 82 min Christopher Roulston Qld), Umut Tokdogan (NSW), Jesse Pinto (NSW – 55 min Glenn Trifiro NSW), Anthony Fearon (WA 55 min - Michael De Bono SA), Hussein Akil (NSW – 55 min David Rowley Qld), Andrew Ciarla (SA),

MATCH 4

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND LUCKY TO ESCAPE WITH A DRAW

On a very windy afternoon the Republic of Ireland were happy to escape with a draw in a game which the Australian Schoolboys dominated for ninety minutes. The game was played on a third generation artificial surface at the Oscar Traynor Soccer Academy. After only five minutes, defender Umut Tokdogan (NSW) converted to make the score 1 – 0 and frantically celebrated a well taken goal. Tokdogan collected the ball outside the 18 yard box after a clearance from a corner and danced past two defenders and the goalkeeper to score the early goal.

The Aussies looked threatening but were unable to consolidate their superiority. They passed the ball comfortably and penetrated their opposition skilfully. Glenn Trifiro, Tokdogan and Michael de Bono went close to converting but the ball would not go in with some good saves by the Irish goalkeeper and some wayward shooting.

In the second half the opposition, assisted by the wind, launched a series of attacks. The Australians looked comfortable and under control but an own goal was scored after Sebastian Usai misjudged a corner. The ball hit the back post and a defender's hips. As the ball was going to cross the line it was cleared by defender James Duvcevski . The referee in consultation with the linesman confirmed the goal even though several Aussie players were complaining to the referee that the ball did not cross the goal line.

The touring Aussies continued attacking with skilful combinations but were unable to convert. The Irish goalkeeper made several outstanding saves. Trifiro's skills had every body screaming for a goal when the goalkeeper made three consecutives saves to avert defeat. This game was the one that got away from the Australian Schoolboys but they found their flair and started to mould as a team. The next game is against England schools.

Team: David Lowery (NSW 45 min– Sebastian Usai Qld), Nathan Sherlock (NSW), James Duvceski (Vic), Umut Tokdogan (NSW), Christopher Roulston (Qld – 60 min Jesse Pinto (NSW), Daniel Carter (NSW), Glenn Trifiro (NSW), Andrew Ciarla (SA – 60 min Hussein Akil NSW), Michael De Bono (SA – 58 min Simon Ryan NSW), David Rowley (Qld – 73 min Anthony Fearon WA), Steve Biason (NSW),

Injured: Christopher Atsikbasis (SA), Ryan Pretorious (WA),

MATCH 7

AUSTRALIAN DEFEAT IN SCOTLAND

In a horrific night with icy winds and snow in the air, the Australian Schoolboys' team found it very hard to compete against a resolute Scottish side. With a gale force wind blowing in all different directions, freezing temperature and icy rain, the touring side were undone by a well organised, fast and composed opposition.

During the first ten minutes both teams attempted to dominate the game. The Scots sat back and waited as the Australians played the ball comfortably on their back third. Penetration occurred at the five minute mark by the Aussies but this did not materialise in a goal as a long shot from Steve Biason was contained by Peter Conelly the Scottish goalkeeper. An early warning for the touring side came at the fifteen minutes mark when Aussie defender Christopher Atsikbasis intercepted striker's Jonathan Boyle shot when he had only the goalkeeper to beat. Immediately the Australian counteracted and after winning a free kick forty metres from goal Nathan Sherlock's cross was headed into his own goal by Scottish defender Marc McCafferty putting the Aussies 1-0 in front.

As the weather turned into a storm so did the Scots as they commenced a fury of attacks. It took them only 45 seconds to get the equaliser when Scottish Midfielder Kevin Ireland made a 20metres run with the ball unmarked he completed a wall pass and finally unleashed a low shot to level the score. The storm continued as another long range shot defeated David Lowery the Aussie custodian. As the Aussies attempted a comeback Atsikbasis challenged for the ball inside the 18 yards box to be surprised by a soft penalty decision. The penalty was duly converted by Boyle leaving the score 3-1. With only one minute to half time a corner kick was met by a Steven Howarth header to give the Scots a deserved 4-1 lead as they had dominated the first half converting all their attempts at goal.

The second half commenced with Scottish dominance and again Lowery made two consecutive saves at the fifty five minutes mark after two double opportunities by the Scots. As the Scots made substitutions the Australians become more dominant and created a few chances, however they could not convert them. The icy weather and the good play of the Scottish team took a toll on the young Aussies who found no answers to combat the opposition in a synthetic grass pitch at New Douglas Park Stadium home of Hamilton Academy F. C. This is located one hour from Glasgow.

As part of their tour boys and girls visited Ibrox Stadium the home of The Rangers Football Club Ltd and were delighted with the tour of all their facilities. They leave now for Oxford – England to the last leg of the tour with their first game on Sunday 3rd February against British Colleges at Oxford City F.C.

Team: - David Lowery (NSW), Umut Tokdogan (NSW - 70 min Simon Ryan NSW), Christopher Atsikbasis (SA), Nathan Sherlock (NSW), James Duvceski (Vic), Steve Biason (NSW), Daniel Carter (NSW - 75 min Ryan Pretorius WA), Glenn Trifiro (NSW), Jesse Pinto (NSW – 45 min Michael De Bono SA), Hussein Akil (NSW - 75 Christopher Roulston Qld), David Rowley (Qld - 70 min Anthony Fearon WA).

Rested; Sebastian Usai (Qld). Andrew Ciarla (SA -),

MATCH 8

AUSTRALIAN DEFEATED BRITISH COLLEGES AT OXFORD CITY F.C.

The Australian schoolboys and girls gave a football lecture at Oxford City winning the double header against the national side of British Colleges.

The boys played an exciting hard fought battle in which the touring side dominated large parts of the game and defeated a brave and resolute British Colleges side. In a very open game both teams got into action from kick off. Defender Christopher Atsikbasis missed an open header just one minute from kick off, and two minutes later livewire British Lewis Henry dribbled past two defenders to unleash a hard shot that Sebastian Usai the Aussie custodian parried with the ball spilling on the path of Carl Lazenby who gave the home team an early advantage after three minutes of play to make the score 1 x 0.

The Aussies immediately responded and at the five minutes mark midfielder Glenn Trifiro full of

far post where Australian midfielder Steven Biason slotted the ball in the net but unfortunately he received a hard knock from a late tackle and missed the rest of the game due to injury. The 1 x 1 score line helped the Aussie to settle into the game.

The first half was a clash of physicality from the British and flair and possession from the Australian side. Both sides created several opportunities keeping both goalkeepers busy on a cold and windy afternoon.

Only four minutes into the second half British striker Henry got free and run onto a free kick cross and headed the ball over advancing David Lowery giving the home side a 2x1 advantage. The Aussies absorbed the pain and launched a good display of football, flair and attacking play. Aussie Trifiro combined with striker Anthony Fearon who saw his shot parried by British custodian Agabor. As the pressure cooker boiled in cold weather a free kick by Nathan Sherlock was converted into an own goal from a British defensive header for the deserved 2 x 2 equaliser for the Aussies.

With 25 minutes left on the clock the Aussies become the dominant force in the game and were denied several opportunities, time after time by the spirited British. The fighting qualities of Australian sportsman become overwhelmingly present at the Oxford City FC ground and each player worked hard to produce the goods. When the clock was ticking away seconds from the 90 minute mark a corner by Jesse Pinto allowed defender Atsikbasis to make amends from his first minute miss and he scored a brilliant header inflating the net with fantastic goal. The Australian players including the girls' team and all officials jumped incessantly until the last whistle indicating the end of the game with a 3 x 2 win for the Aussies. This completed the double as the girls team disposed of their British counterpart 2 x 0 earlier in the day. The next game will be tomorrow, Monday 4th against Oxford United FC again in a double header.

Team: - Sebastian Usai (Qld – 45 min David Lowery NSW), Ryan Pretorious (WA – 75 min Umut Tokdogan NSW), Christopher Atsikbasis (SA), Nathan Sherlock (NSW), Daniel Carter (NSW), Steve Biason (NSW – 11 min Hussein Akil NSW – 68 min Andrew Ciarla SA), Simon Ryan (NSW - 68 min James Duvceski Vic), Christopher Roulston (Qld – 80 min David Rowley Qld), Glenn Trifiro (NSW), Michael De Bono (SA - 68 min Jesse Pinto NSW), Anthony Fearon (WA).