

RELEASED: Thursday, November 12, 2015

Australian Story: Age of Ange

Airs Monday, November 16 at 8pm on ABC and introduced by Santo Cilauro, screen comic, football tragic

As the Socceroos march toward qualification for the 2018 World Cup in Russia, it's hard to believe that not so long ago there were serious question marks on the team's future.

Ange Postecoglou is the "hard arse" coach attributed with turning the tide for the national team and delivering the biggest trophy in their history – the 2015 Asian Cup championship.

"No-one would ever have said we'd have won the Asian Cup 'cause we're Australian and it's soccer. And we're not supposed to win. But that's what we've done. That's what Ange has done."
- Tim Cahill, Socceroo

This week on *Australian Story*, Socceroos' coach, Ange Postecoglou, tells how he and his game have come a long way from their migrant beginnings.

The Postecoglou family arrived in Melbourne by boat in 1970 after father, Jim, lost his business following the 1967 Greek military coup. Young Ange was only five when photographed holding his immigration number "24" to his chest on arrival.

Waves of European migrants in the 50s and 60s brought footballs in their luggage. They formed football clubs as weekend refuges from the daily struggles of assimilating into a new culture.

The Postecoglous joined the club of the Greek community, South Melbourne Hellas, where Ange Postecoglou had a winning career first as a player and then as a coach.

But a series of failures as the national youth coach culminated in an eviscerating interview that went out on live TV. It is still talked about nearly 10 years later as "an iconic event in football television history."

Soon after, Ange Postecoglou was sacked and found himself "*unemployable*" until a chance encounter gave him the opportunity to mould a team that would "*explode onto the pitch ... and create a piece of history.*"

That team was the Brisbane Roar but for Postecoglou: "*it could have been any team*". Not long after, he was appointed to turn his training blueprint to the floundering national side.

Now the champions of Asia, the Socceroos are no longer seen as underdogs.

But the expectation is to win. And to keep winning...

"I'd love to win a world cup. I think most people will see that as a crazy statement right now but I've got three years to go for it, you never know."
- Ange Postecoglou



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