

FOOTBALL'S HOME- WHERE IT BELONGS

By The Supporters

The Brisbane Strikers played *Real Football* at Perry Park last Saturday night for the first time in 8 years. The Free Kick decided to ask the supporters what they thought of the place after the game.

Here are some of your comments.

Well, it was our first ever visit to Perry Park.

What I liked: the location and access to road and rail; knowing that monies paid were making their way in the Strikers' pockets; seeing people on the other side, instead of empty seats.

What I didn't like: the menu - Pluto pups and chips just don't quite cut it; the exposure to that howling wind.

What worked well: the car parking; the temporary seating; the Samba drummers.

What needs improving: the PA system needs a boost; the presentations excluded all those sitting in the eastern stand.

At the risk of committing sacrilege, it was just another soccer ground. It had better seating, worse food, more people, and indifferent lighting.

Lee-Anne

I thought Perry Park was excellent. The atmosphere generated by the fans was awesome. The only problem I had was when I got there to watch the youth game; the gates opened about 5 minutes before kick-off

Vitor

Great to be back at Perry Park. Feels like home but would like to see 5000 in there. Things that could be done better:

- Gates open at 4.30pm. Make sure there is money and that no one goes home locking the safe with all the change in there.

- Another food outlet. The queue was about 10 meters long all night at the northern end,

- Can we have the youth team allocated numbers and printed in the Eye on Strikers?

This may seem silly but a few people are a little unhappy with the price and the subsequent decline in creature comforts (not me btw). Perhaps when the Strikers have a plan of what they are going to do to Perry Park they could have display of what it will look like so that people can understand what is going to happen in the future.

Rob

I was in the "new" stand last night - sitting on my home made cushion (worked a treat) The wind was strong, and it actually became quite cool towards the end - as a result the transmission of sound from the western side varied. Further to this point, the PA needs to be extended to the eastern side, as most ground announcements were difficult to hear - especially with the Samba Drums playing. ... Overall I see potential for PP becoming a great "Boutique" ground.

Doug

It was great to be back "home", and overall a memorable and successful night.

David

We sat in the main stand for the first half, on the left side, the end that the Strikers were attacking... - the singing didn't carry too well so hard to join in. Good atmosphere all the same and the flood lighting was very good - no probs there. Very close to the action.

Switched to the East side at half time so as to get a closer view of the Strikers attacking. I really enjoyed the drummers - it really

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added something to the occasion and I hope they come back.

The pitch was better than I was expecting, though the ball bobbed a fair bit when passing on the ground. Good to see no rugby emblems and insignia on the grass. Just football markings - a proper football ground at last.

Chico Raul

I thought it was great to be back at Perry Park and, I thought the atmosphere was great.

I was pleasantly surprised with how well the old girl scrubbed up. Still needs some major improvements, though...

I thought the \$15 entry was pretty steep, too. It almost scared my friend off at the turnstiles.

Cam

Took the family last night and sat

on a blanket behind the goals at the northern end. (Haven't done that for years!!!) Better than being crammed in on plastic seats. The ground looked a treat and on a whole was a great family atmosphere!

EXCEPT, do we need those drums?????

Saint

Only 2,600 in, but they made quite a din at the Grand Old Lady. Spoke briefly to Stuart McLaren about the atmosphere as he left the field, and he said he had enjoyed it a lot.

I thought the pitch looked magnificent, too - one of the better surfaces likely to be found in the NSL and it will get much better yet. Congrats also to the Samba Band - they sounded great even from where I sat, right across the pitch.

Steve

MAN OF THE MATCH

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SKIPPER GRIERSON SHOWS THE WAY

By Steve Pitman

If you've ever thought that Peter Grierson, the Brisbane Strikers' new skipper, plays a cultured or 'educated' style of football you are probably right. He has just the background for it.

The 33-year-old midfielder has had a broad and eclectic football education. It began on the playing fields of his home town of Liverpool, England, where a trial as a teenager with Everton was brought undone only by an untimely injury.

From there he packed his football boots into his travel bags and moved to the island of Jersey (off the coast of England) where he played representative football in an inter-island competition which has produced players of the calibre of England internationals Matthew Le Tissier and Graham LeSaux.

After five or six years in the heavily touristed Channel Islands, Grierson got the travel bug again and headed for Australia. Settling on the Gold Coast (gee, he really must enjoy sunshine and a beach), he fed his passion for football by playing for Surfers Paradise and Broadbeach.

Eventually, he came to the attention of former Brisbane Strikers coach Frank Farina. Farina was all set to invite Grierson to pre-season training, but then left the club himself and Grierson's first NSL opportunity fell through.

Finally, however, John Kosmina gave Grierson his first opportunity to play with the Strikers. At the ripe old age of 29 Grierson

made his debut - and it was immediately apparent he was NSL material.

Playing as an attacking midfielder or striker, depending on the team's needs, Grierson was an instant hit. He scored a goal on debut and several more soon after, and generally carved up defences with quick thinking, clever passing and canny positioning - a legacy of all those years spent gaining that football education.

Over four seasons with the Strikers, Grierson became arguably the team's most reliable player - rarely missing games through injury or suspension and consistently turning in quality performances.

While Grierson's role within the team has changed - he now plays a deep-lying role in the centre of midfield - his influence has not dimmed.

In fact, it is increasing as he approaches his mid-thirties. This season Stuart McLaren - the team's skipper for the past three years - took on the role of player-coach and Grierson became the man to whom McLaren entrusted the on-field leadership role.

Grierson earned the job because of the esteem he is held in by other players. "He is a respected player, not only amongst our players but also among the players and coaches of other NSL clubs", McLaren said at the time.

For his part, Grierson took on the captaincy with a great deal of pride.



"Super" Peter Grierson

"I was delighted, obviously", he says. "Hopefully, I can do a good job and be a success for the club. I hope to lead by example, on and off the pitch, and to set a good example for the younger players. I will be doing everything in my power to be successful".

If the power of positive thinking is one attribute that is needed in a good captain, Grierson is well equipped. He believes his team has been unwisely written off by the annual parade of 'experts' who assess the chances of NSL teams, and expects them to mount a serious tilt at the top six. This belief is based partly on the strong local flavour of the team.

GET WITH THE PROGRAM!

By Evan Askew

The Brisbane Strikers youth development program should be aiming to work with the QAS instead of being in competition, according to assistant coach and youth development officer Luciano Trani.

While the Strikers want the best youth team possible he doesn't see the QAS as a rival but rather an opportunity for young Queensland footballers.

However, for Trani the Strikers remain the first priority. "The Brisbane Strikers are trying to get the best players available for the youth team that have the potential to play NSL football" he said.

Though there are areas that need improvement such as first touch and distribution, Trani approves of the squad saying they are "prepared to work and show the fighting spirit that

Queenslanders are renowned for."

Trani emphasizes the importance of blending these two qualities together.

We will see this occur when "the players train on a more regular basis and the successive youth teams will get better as the years go on based on the experience of these pioneers," he said.

And Trani knows the attributes needed by a young player thanks to a stint as youth coach for the Melbourne Knights where he won the NSL youth competition in 2000.

In addition to this he can point to experience as a U13 and U14

district coach for the Victorian federation, a coaching co-ordinator for the Fawkner Blues and U 15 coach for the Melbourne Knights.

In selecting the players for the Strikers youth squad Trani looked for "dedication, attitude, application, speed, strength, a good football brain, stamina and technically sound skills."

The pre season however has not been without difficulty as administrators struggled to establish a youth team program from scratch.

The problems included lack of time to organize a youth side, unfamiliarity to the local soccer scene, finding grounds to trial on and players still

being involved in club competitions.

Trani said this latter point is a particular problem, as he feels the Strikers need control of their players, both senior and youth, for ten months of the year.

He feels that if players in the off season play in lower standard leagues they slip into a comfort zone which makes it difficult when they come back to the NSL.

These difficulties will become less significant as the program evolves. Trani sees it as evolving into something that will be about more than football. "It will be devoted to education so that the boys can cope with life as an adult," he said.

This is an important philosophy, as not every player will make it as a regular first team foot-



REMODELED GLORY STILL A TOUGH OBSTACLE

By Steve Pitman

Perth Glory arrive at Perry Park tonight enjoying a status they have never previously brought to Brisbane - that of NSL champions. After two previous failed attempts to win grand finals (both in Perth), the Glory boys finally broke their duck with a 2-0 win over Sydney Olympic in Perth last June.

Their victory delighted many football followers around the country. That is because, since gaining entry to the NSL in 1996/97, the club has shown that the dream shared by most football supporters - that of an Australian club drawing mass support - is far from unachievable in this most under-achieving of football nations.

Defying predictions by administrators of eastern seaboard clubs that a Perth-based team would contribute little to the NSL, the Glory quickly established themselves as a runaway box office success in their home state, regularly playing home matches before five-figure, capacity audiences at Perth Oval.

With such support, it was only a matter of time before Perth Glory became a powerhouse of the NSL, able to attract the best players and field a very professional and competitive team. And so it proved. The Glory have now competed in five finals series, notching two minor premierships and finishing runners-up in the grand finals of 2000 and 2002 before breaking through this year.

The Glory took its first premiership with a withering burst of form that

saw it win seven of its last eight games. That became eight from nine last week when it got its 2003/04 campaign underway with a 3-0 scoreline over the Melbourne Knights.

But while Perth's pulse barely missed a beat in the break from last season to this one, its team has undergone a few changes. Even in Perth, it seems, the NSL's current era of austerity has bitten deep. The number of players in its squad has been trimmed, potentially posing question marks over its depth later in the season.

Along with the loss of quantity, some quality also disappeared. During the off-season the Glory lost an entire defensive line of Jamie Harnwell, Shane Pryce, David Tarka and Craig Deans, along with classy midfielders Andre Gumprecht, Simon Colosimo and Edgar Junior.

However, it would be unwise to assume that those losses will make Perth Glory a weaker outfit this season. The Glory managed to recruit three of Sydney Olympic's most talented players in Wayne Srhoj and Jade North (both also former Brisbane Strikers), and speed machine Tom Pondeljak. They also captured versatile former Socceroo Matthew Bingley and former Socceroo centre-back Shaun Murphy, who has returned to his home State from English first division club Sheffield United.

But while opposition clubs

might be wondering how the newcomers will combine, no such mystery will surround its forward partnership of Damian Mori and Bobby Despotovski - who are surely the most experienced and prolific front two in Australia. These predators will expect to thrive, as usual, on the service provided from out wide by Scott Miller and Matthew Horsley, whose work rates on the left and right flanks respectively continue to astound and weary opposition defences.

Finally, the Brisbane Strikers must contend with the up and coming talents of Adrian Cacaes. Cacaes received limited game time last season after returning from a stint with English Premier League club Southampton and will be desperate to make the most of his opportunities in this campaign.

Significantly, he got on the score sheet last week against the Knights, when the Glory scored all three of their goals in the last ten minutes.

The mountain the Brisbane Strikers must climb tonight if they are to register their first home win over Perth Glory remains formidable.

Strikers Vs Perth



	P	W	D	L
Overall	14	4	3	7
Home	7	0	3	4
	GF	GA	Pts	
Overall	22	39	15	
Home	7	17	3	

AWAY TRIP COMING SOON

Adam Coleman

Now entering its fourth year, the annual BSSA Away Trip promises to be bigger and better than ever before.

Supporters

who've attended previous

Trips enjoyed being able to support the lads on the road, and the players loved having us bring a bit of Brisbane's singing to the south.

This season, Parramatta Power is once again the hosts, and with the addition of ex-Strikers' greats Fernando Rech and Clint Bolton to the Power roster in the off-

season, this promises to be an extra-special game.

Our game in Parramatta is on Sat February 7, 2004, so plenty of time to start saving. Perhaps make it an early Christmas present?

Packages are being evaluated and will be unveiled at the next home game, against Newcastle United on Nov 1.

Information will also be made available on our website. So, if you fancy a southern Strikers' sojourn early next year, keep watching this space!!!

www.go.to/bssa

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Featured player collector card \$0.50

Strikingtons also available to order \$5 / 6

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UPBEAT MCLAREN RAISES THE STRIKERS TEMPO

By Steve Pitman

The tone used by Brisbane Strikers player-coach Stuart McLaren to deliver his words was matter-of-fact, but there was no mistaking their meaning: supporters could be in for a feast of attacking football tonight.

McLaren was in no doubt, when asked earlier this week, how he thought Perth Glory would approach tonight's game.

"They'll play the same as they always do", he said. "They've got probably the two best strikers the league has ever seen, certainly the best in the last three or four years. They'll look to get them involved as much as possible. It will be a nice, open game of football as it always is between us. We will fight fire with fire, but at the same time look to keep the back door shut".

Over the years, defenders have had a tough time of things in fixtures between the Strikers and the Glory, with scores like 4-3, 7-2 and 5-1 emerging as the rule rather than the exception. But while hard-headed realists might not expect that to continue, McLaren hinted at a further reason why it might.

When asked if Perth Glory's high off-season turnover of players gave him hope that his team could exploit some unfamiliarities among their ranks, McLaren replied "there always is that hope and Mitch D'Avray

(Glory's coach) is fairly aware that it will take a period of time for them to produce their best. It's a good chance for us to catch them while they're trying to mould. But at the same time we have our own issues to resolve in that area and no doubt they'll be thinking along those lines too".

But while he acknowledged that his own players still need time to gel, McLaren did not lack confidence that they can cope with whatever the reigning NSL champions might have in store for them.

"The thing I like about our set-up this season is that it is fairly adaptable", he said. "We've got players who are comfortable in the middle of the park or out wide. We'll see what they come up with and make our adjustments".

McLaren said he was unlikely to make any "major" changes to the fifteen who were on his team sheet for last week's 1-1 draw with Sydney Olympic. "Luciano (Trani) and I will keep an eye on players' performances during the week, and where we think Perth Glory can be vulnerable, and make our minds up from there", he said.

Brisbane forward Royce Brownlie is again unavailable for selection after undergoing minor knee surgery. This means that mobile

young strikers Luke Morley and Josh Rose should again be the home side's forward line, with McLaren, Karl Dodd and Josh McCloughan sharing the responsibility for keeping tabs on Mori and Despotovski (or, if selected, Nick Mrdja).

It is across the midfield, however, where the most intriguing battles could be fought tonight. Those sentimental souls who hanker for days gone by, when two sets of attacking wide players went hammer and tongs at each other, could be in for a rare treat. The home side's Shane Stefanutto, on the left, and Steve Fitzsimmons on the right, have speed and aggressive intent to burn, but will have to play out of their skins to get over the top of the more experienced and equally energetic Perth duo of Matt Horsley and Scott Miller.

Meanwhile, closer to the centre of the park Brisbane's in-form trio of skipper Peter Grierson, Matthew McKay and David Pilic will face a stern test from the likes of Wayne Srhoj, Adrian Cacaes and Brad Hassell.

Fans can get set for a cracking contest as the home team attempts to capitalise on its good start to the season against a team it has never beaten in Brisbane.



JUNIOR MASCOTS



Our mascots tonight are a combination of the U9's and U10's from

New Farm United.

New Farm United Junior Soccer Club Inc. was formed in 1986 and is located in beautiful New Farm Park at the corner of Brunswick and Sydney Streets.

Our success in the last few seasons (this year all our competitive teams made it to the semi-finals) can be contributed to the dedication and training of our Coaches and the enthusiasm and enjoyment for the game by the players.

We have created a safe and friendly environment for players

to develop their football skills, sportsmanship, understanding of team work, and compassion for others to encourage them to become true champions in life as well as on the pitch.

As a community club we host regular functions for the local community including our "Party in the Park" with a disco for the children, Family Fun Days and Bowls afternoons.

With the addition of women's teams and the growth in the local area, New Farm United has doubled in size in the last few seasons, we look forward to seeing this trend continue and, more importantly, are able to cater for the needs of all players so that they can develop and reach their potential in skill and enjoyment.

For further information on the club please contact Heather on 3254 2632.

PLAYER OF THE SEASON



Voting has changed this year. If you are a BSSA member you can register to vote for this prestigious award every home game.

Contact Alex Wainwright either by phone 3279 2807 or email at BSSAvote@tpg.com.au

Then after each home game register your top three players for 3,2 and 1 points. These points will be tallied to produce the BSSA Player of the Season.

If you are not a BSSA member don't despair. It only costs \$10 to join and have your say in the best player each game. So join up now!