

NEW ZEALAND SOCCER

Press Release

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WORLD CUP DEVELOPMENT SQUADS ANNOUNCED

New Zealand Soccer has unveiled the first group of teenagers charged with turning the sport's World Cup dream into reality.

A total of 97 players have been selected in three squads – under-13 and under-15 boys and under-14 girls – as part of NZ Soccer's new World Cup development programme.

Complimenting the women's squad preparing for a tilt at August's under-20 World Championships in Russia, the World Cup development programme is designed to cash-in on Australia's departure to the Asian Football Confederation.

With the traditional roadblock to Fifa tournaments removed, New Zealand are determined to secure Oceania's berth at the next two under-17 boys World Cups in 2007 and 2009 and the inaugural under-17 girls World Championship in 2008.

The newly announced squads will assemble for the first time at Auckland's Kings College next month.

International opportunities will follow the January 26-29 camp while players will continue to be closely monitored by the network of national development officers and directors of football attached to NZ Soccer's seven federations.

Ricki Herbert, NZ Soccer's high performance manager, said the Fifa under-17 World Championship hosted by New Zealand in 1999 should serve as all the motivation the new squad members need to reach football's highest stages.

"Twenty-five thousand people packed out North Harbour Stadium for the final between Brazil and Australia and now we have a programme designed to give these players that sort of opportunity...what a dream that could be," Herbert said.

The makeup of the World Cup development squads was finalised after last week's Century Foundation national age-grade tournament in Napier but Herbert insists the door has not been shut on unsuccessful players.

"We're putting our hand up and saying we probably haven't got it 100 percent right. If we've found the best players now, fine. If it is next year, great. But if it is three months before the tournament then even better still," Herbert said.

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“What we’re saying is that we’ll continue to scour the country for the best players to ensure we maximise this great opportunity. There will be an opportunity for players to be included and for others to be released.”

NZ Soccer are close to confirming a series of offshore matches for the squads. Herbert, who doubles as the All Whites coach, sees that as the launching pad toward the 2010 senior men’s World Cup in South Africa and beyond.

“Hopefully we’ll breed a foundation of players that have played 30 or 40 international matches before they become an All White or a senior New Zealand women’s player,” Herbert said.

“You can link that back to the Socceroos’ success [in qualifying for next year’s World Cup in Germany]. A lot of their players have been to all these age-group World Cups so their understanding of international football is very clear.”

NZ Soccer’s immediate age-group focus is April’s Oceania under-20 women’s qualifying tournament in Samoa with New Zealand to be coached by John Herdman (NZ Soccer’s manager of coach development) and former international Ali Grant (Canterbury).

The first Oceania assignment for the boys is the under-17 qualifying tournament scheduled for Tahiti in April, 2007. Colin Tuua (Manawatu) has been appointed head coach with Clive Campbell (Auckland) named as his assistant.

WORLD CUP DEVELOPMENT SQUADS

UNDER-13 BOYS

Gordon Murie, Jack Hobson-McVeigh, Rafi Mohammadi (North Shore City), Conor Von Keisenburg (Whangarei), Patrick George, Cameron Linsay, Ernesto Lopez, Zane Sole, Nick Paterson, Yuri Agarkov, Sean Lovemore, Thomas Doyle, Thomas Spragg, Kelly-Jack Martin (Auckland), John Duffield, Neko Vujevich, Adam Thomas, Jordan Shaw (Hamilton), Ben Hamer (Western BOP), Luis Esteves (Ngongataha), Nikolai Molijn (Rotorua), Stephen Kibby (Taranaki), Max Hall (Gisborne), Fergus Neil (Napier), Thomas Heaps, Francis Nono, Cameron Lidstone (Wellington), Coey Turepa (Nelson), Thomas Stanton (Christchurch), Aajay Cunningham, Michael Still, James Watson (Dunedin).



UNDER-15 BOYS

Dale Bennetto (Whangarei), Sam Hanna, Kris Carpenter, Mars Keomahavong, Ben McArdle, Aidan Wong, Jason Hicks, Mokhtar Mohammadi, Tom Smith (North Shore City), Heath Coleman, Otis Maddison, Jacob Mathews, Simon King, Nick Branch, Aaron Bawdekar, Pomare Te-Anau-Kumar, Colin Murphy, Timothy Myers, Isaac Fitzgerald (Auckland), Cory Chettleburgh (Palmerston North), Paul Junior Iosefo, Moses Petelo, Gareth James, Costa Barbarouses, Jake Gleeson, Sean O'Neill, Caleb Gaylan, Sam Morrissey (Wellington), Michael O'Keeffe (Blenheim), Joel Wiechens (Nelson), Hamish Chang, Adam Cowen, Ben Harris, Geoffrey MacIntyre (Christchurch).

UNDER-14 GIRLS

Lauren Mathis (Warkworth), Caitlin Campbell (Waitakere), Therese Saito, Danielle McFadyen, Rebecca Brown, Nikau Hindin, Annalie Longo (Auckland), Kelsie Mackintosh, Sarah McLaughlin (Hamilton), Kylie Jens, Jessica Rollings (Tauranga), Charlotte Wood (Rotorua), Kerri Gerrits (Ngaruawahia), Claudia Crasborn (Havelock North), Tam Wells (Gisborne), Meghan Sheppard (Napier), Leah Gallie (Palmerston North), Briana Watson (New Plymouth), Hannah Stotter, Hannah Wall, Yumi Nguyen, Amy Collins (Wellington), Maia Vink, Victoria Esson, Morghan Bradshaw, Aimee Phillips, Alana Ainsworth, Megan Shea, Gabrielle Kerdemelidis (Christchurch), Eliza Sims, Elise Mamanu-Gray (Dunedin).

Media interested in interviews with Ricki Herbert or any player/s should contact New Zealand Soccer Public Relations and Communications Executive Kent Gray.

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