

AUSTRALIA NEWS

Serb Style Can Worry Roos

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EXCLUSIVE: Australian-based former Red Star Belgrade player Misha Radovic says the Socceroos will face a highly technical Serbia when the two sides meet in the group stage at World Cup 2010.

Announced this morning in South Africa, Australia has been drawn with Germany, Ghana and Serbia in a difficult Group D of the 2010 World Cup.

Radovic, a UEFA "A" junior coach at the AC Milan Academy in Sydney, says the traditional Serbian style has returned under ex-Real Madrid, Barca and Atletico Madrid coach Radomir Antic (pictured). And they have the players for such a game plan.

"Now with Antic, with his leadership the Serbian team is very compact and united. He has returned their style of football of traditional short passing style," the former Red Star man told [au.fourfourtwo.com](#).

"And he's got strong team leaders in Vidic, Ivanovic and Dejan Stankovic, so I think the Serbian side can go very far in the World Cup. Tournament competition is very hard to predict but Serbia has the quality to go through to the last eight."

The Serbian system is clearly doing something right with Serbia topping their European World Cup qualifying group for South Africa ahead of France.

Speaking with some of the best young coaches in Serbia on a recent coaching trip, Radovic's eyes were opened to the coaching system over there. "It is a tribute to the coaches that numerous top European clubs are vying for their junior talent," he said.

Serbia's youngsters have become hot property across Europe with both Manchester United and Chelsea snapping up their talent. Aside from defender Nemanja Vidic, a regular at Manchester United, Sir Alex has also signed Zoran Tasic and Adem Ljajic from Partizan Belgrade.

Tasic, 22, was part of an eye-catching Serbian side that drew 1-1 with Australia at the last Olympics. And at Chelsea, Nemanja Matic, 20, arrived this year from Slovenian side MFK Kosice joining compatriot Branislav Ivanovic at Stamford Bridge.

Serbia and Australia have been ranked close to each other in recent months with both just outside the top ten before falling back to the 20s in October. And Radovic, who played for Red Star in the 1970s and 80s but has lived in Australia since the early 90s, also believes the Aussies are an outside chance.

"In my opinion the current team are mentally stronger than 2006 and this in combination with one World C up under their belt gives them an advantage. Everything is relative, the strength and confidence of the teams drawn in their group is a huge influential factor.

"However, the world is changing and the old boy's could no longer monopolise world soccer. We have seen many surprise outcomes. This offers brilliant prospects for any team that is prepared to go 'all out' to win".

Another insight into the Serbian football mentality could come from spearhead Josh Kennedy. The tall Socceroo striker is coached by Dragan Stojkovic at J-League club Nagoya Grampus where the forward has just completed his first campaign in Japan.

The man nicknamed "Pixie" was capped 85 times for the former Yugoslavia - including at World Cup 1990 - and is one of the greatest ever players for club side Red Star Belgrade.

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