



FOOTBALL FEDERATION
TASMANIA

FROM THE DESK OF THE TECHNICAL DIRECTOR

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All eyes with this weekend begin turning to the World Cup in South Africa.

While Southern Development Officer Anthony Alexander is lucky enough to be there – at least for a couple of weeks – the vast majority of us will be glued to the television. With kick-off times late at night or in the early morning hours here in Australia, there will be plenty of bleary eyed fans trying to get through the day for the next month.

The World Cup is unique in many ways, not the least of which is that those of us who were born in other countries usually have two teams to cheer for, the one where they live and the one they come from.

All of us will be well and truly behind Australia as they begin their quest to reach the knockout phase. It will be tough, with games against Germany, Serbia and Ghana, but not insurmountable. Australia were cruelly eliminated by a dubious penalty last time around against Italy and will be hoping, as will other nations, that those infamous moments that always occur will go in their favour.

This promises to be as open a World Cup as there has ever been, with a whole slew of countries capable of coming out as champions. Brazil and Spain are touted by many but who wants to play Holland, England, Italy, Germany or Argentina for example.

Ivory Coast, Cameroon, Portugal and several other countries are going to prove very difficult hurdles. In fact, you could throw a blanket over about 10 or 12 countries and anyone of them might well be the first to wake up as the title winners.

At the highest levels of international football lots of elements come into play.

Which team will make the least mistakes? Which team will take most of its chances? Which players will step up to the plate when you most need them and win their country a game? Will someone miss a vital penalty? Which goalkeepers will come up with miraculous saves that keep their country in the contest? Which team will have that little bit of luck just when it is needed? Will an official make a horrendous error? Will a player get sent off? All of these elements come into play in the beautiful game, especially when it is played at the pinnacle of its level – the World Cup.

In the dressing rooms before kick-off, there will be precious little, if anything, dividing some of the competitors. In many cases it will come down to which team is mentally better prepared, which players are psychologically ready for the battle to come. Which players channel their motivation in the best direction.

When Jose Mourinho finally takes charge of a national team – and he will – we can all beware, because that team will be as ready as any to take the field. His will be a team of unity and one that will include gifted individuals who can make a difference and win games.

Later in July we will find out which team best fits that desired mould at the World Cup of 2010.

If Brazil wins it we will have something else to think about. The next World Cup is in Brazil and if they are a favourite now, imagine trying to bet against them then.

P.S. Fozz on Football, by Craig Foster, is a must read, especially the sections detailing his views on how the game must be treated to progress in Australia.