

**One of the fastest growing sports in the world is Beach Soccer.**

Australia failed to qualify for the men's Beach Soccer World Cup in Dubai late last year, after competing in qualifying rounds in that same location.

The Australian team was put together late in the day under the coach, Airton Andrioli, a Brazilian who has lived in Australia for many years and works for the South Australia Football Federation, based in Adelaide.

As Airton is quick to point out, beach soccer, compared with the normal 11 v 11 game, is very different and demands a different set of techniques, skills and physical fitness.

Beach soccer is five-a-side, including the goalkeeper. It's played barefoot with three 12 minutes periods. The field length is 35-37 metres and width 26-28 metres. In terms of endurance, try running across a sand field a few times, let alone play a full game.

Airton wants to find the best players from around the nation and to that end he spoke to me during a recent FIFA course in Sydney. I said I would investigate and determine the interest here in Tasmania and if the response was sufficient, run some trials.

Airton said at any tryouts here, he would want me to note any players I felt were good enough for elite level beach soccer and at some point in the future he would travel here to run his eye over them personally.

Airton, a superb player during a professional career in the 11 v 11 game in Brazil and Europe, is only looking for senior level players capable of playing at the highest levels.

To gauge the interest in Tasmania, a link has been set up on the FFT website. Those players who believe they are good enough for a trial please leave their name, address, contact details and playing history. Please, no phone calls. Register your interest here.

In other news, a number of people have already registered to the level one goalkeeping coaches' course in February. Registrations are still open, as they are for the junior licence coaching course in Launceston at the end of January.

The junior licence is for the starter level coach. It is user friendly and details the new FFA coaching methodology. Anyone taking the course will benefit, as will the players they coach. Details for both of the courses are on the FFT website.

FOOTNOTE: Scott Gallagher has stepped down as coach of the under 13 male state team. I have taken responsibility for that role and Kurt Reynolds, the northern development officer, will be the assistant coach. Some state teams are still looking for sports trainers/physios. If interested, contact FFT.