

■ soccer

# Coach's eye on future

By ANDRE GRIMAUX

SALVATORE Sottile's mission briefing is simple – turn quantity into quality.

Sottile is the new technical director in charge of developing more than 800 junior soccer players at Albany Creek Excelsior, and it is a job he is passionate about.

Sottile has been involved in fostering young talent since he hung up the boots after 16 years playing professionally in Italy's third tier Serie C league.

Now 41, the former Italian under-20 national team goalkeeper is hell-bent on producing players of a professional standard who may one day even play for Australia's Socceroos.

"I focus on the technical skills, and the attitude of the player," Sottile said.

"This is as important as being able to play the game.

"So I hope to prepare these young players for the professional level, and everything that goes with it."

Sottile was born in Australia and moved to Sicily when he was two.

It was on the Italian island that he learnt his football craft and he went on to make a living from the world game.

Having been back in his country of birth for more than 10 years, and after coaching stints at the likes of Brisbane City, Sottile says he is looking forward to one of his most exciting challenges.

"I am very happy with what I have seen at Albany Creek," he said.



ELITE VISION: Albany Creek Excelsior technical director Salvatore Sottile wants to help develop great footballers.

"My mission really is to develop the clubs Rebel (Sport) junior premier league players into elite footballers.

"My style is very European, obviously. The

first touch of a player is crucial, and that is one of the biggest differences between Europe and Australia.

"The mentality and discipline is also very import-

ant."

Sottile is so optimistic that one of his charges will make it down the long road from Albany Creek to playing for their country that he has introduced a football school

to the Brendale club, offering advanced training to players of all levels.

The training will begin in March.

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# Albany Creek excels

SEVERAL new signings, an increased coaching presence and new facilities will ensure 2010 is a big year for the Albany Creek Excelsior football club.

The club has acquired seven new players – strikers Danny Flaskas and Jason Poggi, midfielders David Barker and Paul Armit, keeper Gerard Bowtell-Harris and defenders Justin Ansell and Glen Andrew.

Albany Creek Excelsior president Claude Sorbello said the club had spent several years getting facilities up to scratch and had identified 2010 as the year to invest in the technical structure of the club.

"Our objective this year is to be competitive and get back into a winning spirit in our senior ranks," he said.

"We had a lot of things to do a few years ago.

"In that period of three years we invested \$1.3 million in the club, getting those things right."

Sorbello said the new signings were a coup for the club, with many players playing a division below their talent.

"They understand that the club is looking at a turn-around strategy. They are understanding and supportive of what we are trying to do," he said.

Sorbello said the club now had five coaching directors instead of one, and a new full-time technical director in Salvatore Sottile.

"We are embracing the sort of players who want to play and aim for the elite," he said.

"We are developing footballers, their attitudes and their behaviour."

Sorbello said pre-season training had started for Albany Creek, while a "football school" would be offered in March.

The club's first game is against Newmarket at McCook Park on March 5.

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# Pine Hills must rise to the challenge

PINE Hills soccer coach Ashley Hempstead has some difficult decisions to make in the coming week after his side's disappointing 3-1 pre-season loss to North Pine on Friday night.

With just 10 days until

their Premier League season opener against Pine Rivers, Hempstead said his team needed to lift.

With the early start to the season and an influx of new players, the Pine Hills mentor has trialled a high num-

ber of players in three pre-season games so far.

"Some have to improve and some might get moved on, but we have to do a lot better than the other night," he said. "If you haven't got the right attitude and com-

mitment, you'll get beaten, it doesn't matter what level you play at."

North Pine clearly dominated and were unlucky not to win by more. They will play Brisbane City in the final of the Pine Hills pre-

season competition at James Drysdale Reserve on Saturday night.

Mitchelton showed some promise despite a 2-1 loss to City at the weekend and will play Pine Hills in their final trial on Friday night.

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