

Tony Popovic

International Football Coach & Keynote Speaker

Tony Popovic is a former footballer and football coach who has achieved unprecedented success on a global scale.

Perhaps best known in Australia as the head coach / manager of the Western Sydney Wanderers FC and then Perth Glory FC, Tony Popovic came to Australia following a successful playing and coaching career in the English Premier League.

Regarded as one of Australia's 'Golden Generation' of players, Tony is an exceptional keynote speaker, MC and Q&A panellist, who engages with broad audiences on topics related to leadership, team motivation, workplace culture, managing change and staff turnover, talent development, and excelling domestically and internationally while embracing different cultures ... the list goes on.



More about Tony Popovic:

Tony Popovic enjoyed a successful football career in the United Kingdom, as an English Premier League (EPL) captain and then assistant coach of London EPL club Crystal Palace.

In Australia, he is credited for having established the Western Sydney Wanderers FC in 2012 from literally nothing. His first squad was mostly assembled from players that established Australian clubs had rejected and was predicted by experts to finish its first season towards the bottom of the table. However, Popovic led the Wanderers to become the most successful football club in Asia. This was done with the added handicap imposed by the Football Federation Australia (FFA) law that only allows a maximum of 23 players per team with a AUD\$2.6 million total salary-cap while his Asian competitors have first team squads of at least 32 players without any salary restrictions. By any standard, this is an incredible achievement by a club that did not exist in April 2012.

With Popovic as Head coach/Manager of Western Sydney Wanderers, the team won the Asian Champions League (ACL) despite having been created just two years earlier. In his first attempt to win the ACL, with a total yearly budget of \$6 million and a playing squad more than 30% smaller than his Asian competitors, Popovic knocked out clubs with budgets that were five to 20 times greater - Marcello Lippi's Guangzhou Evergrande, Chinese Super League Champions and 2013 ACL Champions; Sanfrecce Hiroshima, 2012 and 2013 Japanese Champions; FC Seoul, 2013 ACL Runners-Up and 2012 Korean Champions; and Al-Hilal, 2014 ACL Runners-Up and Saudi Champions.

Popovic's reputation was further enhanced on 30 November 2014 when he won the Asian Coach of the Year award ahead of football luminaries like Marcello Lippi, plus his team won the Asian Team of the Year award.

Tony's extraordinary success continued when he made the move to Perth Glory FC. Glory had not won any trophy in A-League history, and finished third last in 2018. In less than a year, Popovic led Perth Glory FC to winning the Premiership in 2019 with two matches to spare, having scored the most goals, and having conceded the least.

Tony Popovic's many career firsts include:

- He is the first coach in the world from any professional team sport to win the Premiership (considered the main national Championship around the world) in the same season that the club was created and entered an already existing professional competition.
- He is the first coach in the world to qualify for the region's Champions League (or equivalent competition) in the same season that the club was created.
- He is the first coach in the world to win the region's Champions League (or equivalent competition) on his first attempt and on a club's first attempt immediately after it was created.
- In the 2015/16 season he became the first coach in the world to change more than 80% of a team (18 players from a 23 man squad) while they were the Asian Champions League winners. This team went from 2nd last to 2nd place in 1 season.
- His teams have qualified for 4 Grand Finals (Australian Cup Championships) in 6 years, have four top 2 finishes, have won 2 Premierships (considered the main national Championships around the world) and most astonishingly, have won an Asian Champions League - a feat never achieved by any Australian coach, nor by any club.
- He became captain of his then Australian top division club Sydney United at the age of 20 and played in the J-League (Japan) at age 22, where he also became the captain of Sanfrecce Hiroshima.

- He captained English Premier League club Crystal Palace (eventually becoming their assistant coach) and played at the 2006 World Cup as a team member of what is regarded as Australia's "Golden Generation".

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