

Soncin treads top coach path

FAB Soncin will follow in the footsteps of Melbourne Victory coach Ernie Merrick in a move to distinguished Melbourne club Sunshine George Cross next season.

The former Marlin Coast and Mareeba mentor's resume includes eight premierships, nine grand final wins and four Crad Evans titles.

Four times – twice with

MURRAY WENZEL

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both teams – he has picked up the treble. But he will now lend his services to the southern club after they were relegated from the Victorian Premier League this season.

Merrick coached the team from 1989-91 and Socceroos Craig Foster, Kevin Muscat and Paul Trimboli have all spent time at the Georgies.

"The club's got a rich history and I see it as a good stepping stone to get into the system," Soncin said.

"It was always my intention to go to a mid-table or relegated club because it gives you a chance to put your mark on

them and make progress." Marlin Coast, and to a lesser extent Mareeba, were both in that situation before Soncin came on board.

"Rangers were the whipping boys and we built them up from ground zero, hopefully, I can do the same with this team," he said.

The club could not decide between Soncin and 101-game Georgies veteran Chris Ket-

sakidis, so they hired both. Ketsakidis will be head coach of the top side, while Soncin assists him and also directs the under-21s.

"He has a very good relationship with the players, which is probably all that I lacked," Soncin said. "In saying that, I can bring about nine guys with me that have the talent to play A-League."

And FNQ Football coach

of the year Glenn Binskin will be back in 2011 after his Stratford team's 7-0 grand final loss to Marlin Coast.

"I feel like I've got unfinished business there," he said.

"I'll be putting a broom through the club. I won't have blokes missing training and expecting to start on the weekend. They will earn their spots, that's for sure."



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Lucky Lions roar to Stratford glory

GOALS to Scott Nuttall and guest player Kane Alderton secured Leichhardt the Stratford Carnival at the weekend.

The Lions rode their luck to make the final, scraping into the semi-final on goal difference before beating Edge Hill in a penalty shoot-out to reach the decider.

But the 2-0 defeat of Townsville's Heatley Warriors was well deserved and made it a double celebration for Leichhardt after their women beat Darwin Olympic in the final earlier in the day.

The end-of-season carnival was approached as a "bit of fun" by Leichhardt and their stand-in coach, Pasco Rogato, but they still worked hard.

"It was a big effort over the two days," Rogato said. "I've got to thank the guys for their support because they really dug in."

In the absence of injured pair Danny Stowers and Pedro Jorge on Sunday, Lions'

young guns Mitchell Smith, Doug Kyle and Tom Murphy seized the opportunity to impress.

"They were just outstanding and the win was made more special because we were able to do it without two of our better players on Sunday," Rogato said.

"It was a great day for the club and a good reward for the girls as well."

Tournament organiser Mladen Bosnic said it was great to see new teams in the mix.

"Melchester and Pagewood both brought big squads up and had a great time," Bosnic said. "We always look forward to seeing new teams compete and in our 37th year, I think it was as good as ever."

– Murray Wenzel

RESULTS

MEN – Winner: Leichhardt; Runner up: Heatley Warriors Player of tournament: Greg Cheshire (Heatley) Player of final: Tom Murphy (Leichhardt)

LADIES – Winner: Leichhardt;

Runner up: Darwin Olympic Player of tournament: Emma Treveleaven (Darwin) Player of final: Stephany James (Darwin)

OVER-35s – Winner: Melchester

Rovers; Runner up: Pagewood Player of the tournament: Joe Williams (Eagles).



Skills: Leichhardt's Doug Kyle keeps control, despite a challenge from his Townsville opponent (above).

Contest: Leichhardt's Chantelle Maugeri vies with her Darwin counterpart.

Pictures: JAKE NOWAKOWSKI

In control: Young Lion Tom Murphy (top) impressed in the absence of some bigger names.

Goal: Scott Nuttall (above) leads the way for Leichhardt.

On the move: Horacio Ingles (right) gets away from his Heatley Warriors opponent and looks to move the ball forward.

Pictures: JAKE NOWAKOWSKI



Hernandez brace shows there's more to Man U

WITH a classy backward header and late winner, Javier Hernandez showed Manchester United they don't need to rely solely on Wayne Rooney as the Mexican forward clinched a crucial 2-1 win at Stoke.

Elsewhere, Arsenal moved into second place – five points behind leaders Chelsea – with

a 3-0 victory over 10-man Manchester City, while Liverpool eased the pressure on Roy Hodgson with a 2-1 win over Blackburn at Anfield.

Rooney, who was absent against Stoke due to an ankle injury, would have enjoyed the clinical display of finishing by Hernandez (pictured).

Hernandez put United in front in the 27th minute with a clever back-flicked header before Stoke substitute Tuncay Sanli curled home an 81st minute equaliser.

United responded superbly to that setback and Hernandez sealed his side's first away league win this season.

"When their goal went in, you start to say to yourself it is going to be one of those seasons, but Chicharito (Hernandez) came up with the winner," Ferguson said.

Manchester City were unable to recover from the early dismissal of defender Dedryck Boyata for a professional foul

on Arsenal's Marouane Chamakh at Eastlands.

At Anfield, Reds boss Roy Hodgson was able to celebrate a much-needed second league victory this season thanks to Fernando Torres's second half winner, but Liverpool remain in the relegation zone.

