

= Central Coast Mariners FC =

Central Coast Mariners Football Club is an Australian professional soccer club based in Gosford , on the Central Coast of New South Wales . It competes in the A @-@ League , under licence from Football Federation Australia ( FFA ) . The Mariners was founded in 2004 as one of the eight original A @-@ League teams . It was the first professional sports club from the Gosford region to compete in a national competition . Despite being considered one of the smallest @-@ market clubs in the league , Central Coast Mariners has claimed one A @-@ League Championship from four Grand Final appearances and topped the table to win the A @-@ League Premiership twice . The club has also appeared in the AFC Champions League four times .

The club plays matches at Central Coast Stadium , a 20 @, @ 059 @-@ seat stadium in Gosford ; its purpose @-@ built training facility , Mariners Centre of Excellence , is located in the suburb of Tuggerah . The facility is also home to a youth team that competes in the National Youth League . The English Football League One 's Sheffield United has invested in the Central Coast @-@ based club , and the Mariners has affiliation agreements with several international clubs .

The Mariners ' main supporters ' group is known as the Yellow Army , for the colour of the club 's home kit . The club shares a rivalry with Newcastle Jets , known as the F3 Derby , after the previous name of the motorway that connects the cities of the teams . Matt Simon is the Mariners ' all @-@ time leading goalscorer as of December 2014 , with 45 goals in all competitions . The team record for matches played is held by John Hutchinson , who has appeared in 263 games for the Mariners .

= = History = =

= = = Formation = = =

Central Coast Mariners ' bid for a franchise in the Football Federation Australia 's new A @-@ League competition was aimed at filling the one spot for a regional team that was designated by the FFA . Media speculation prior to the announcement of the franchises in the new league suggested that the Mariners ' bid may be favourable due to its new blood . Backing from former Australian international player and club technical director Alex Tobin , as well as Clean Up Australia personality Ian Kiernan ? who would act as inaugural club chairman ? also strengthened its proposal . As the only regional bidder , Central Coast was expected to make it into the league by default . Following a reported signed deal with the FFA , the club signed former Northern Spirit coach Lawrie McKinna as manager and Ian Ferguson , a former Rangers and Northern Spirit player , as coach . To aid the FFA 's goals of building the profile of the sport , the Mariners created formal links with local state league team Central Coast United . On 1 November 2004 , after much expectation , the club was announced as one of eight teams to become part of FFA 's domestic competition , the A @-@ League . The decision made Central Coast Mariners the first Gosford @-@ based professional sports team to play in a national competition .

At the time of the formation of the new league in 2004 , the club was owned by Spirits Sports and Leisure Group . The club announced its search for a star player under the league 's allowance for one star player outside of the \$ 1 @. @ 5 million salary cap , insisting that the player should not look at the position as a retirement fund . Coach Lawrie McKinna sought interest from Australia national football team players Ante Milicic and Simon Colosimo , and announced that he may sign more than the three under @-@ 20 players required by league rules . Early concerns for the club focussed on concerns over financial stability , but after forming a partnership with technology company Toshiba and a cash injection from local businessman John Singleton , the club 's financial worries were eased . McKinna was keen to sign local player Damien Brown of Bateau Bay , formerly of the Newcastle Jets . In a decision which prompted the player to declare that he was " over the moon " , Brown became the first player to sign with the club . Club chairman Lyall Gorman was pleased that a local had become a " foundation player " and part of Brown 's role would be to assist with selection of younger players from the local area . By early December 2004 , the club had created a steady

foundation of player signings and began negotiations with former Perth Glory striker Nik Mrdja , signing him later in the month as its star attacker . Mrdja was one of the most prominent players in the last season of the National Soccer League , scoring the final goal to secure Perth Glory 's finals win . The club 's management was reluctant to sign a star player outside of the \$ 1 @. @ 5 million salary cap , stipulating that they " would have to contribute on the pitch and get people to come to the ground . "

= = = Lawrie McKinna era = = =

The Mariners ' inaugural season was considered a resounding success by many ; the team reached the 2006 A @- @ League Grand Final after finishing third during the regular season . Central Coast was defeated by Sydney FC 1 ? 0 in front of a crowd of 41 @, @ 689 ? a competition record at the time . The Mariners also won the 2005 Pre @- @ Season Cup , defeating Perth Glory in the final 1 ? 0 . Before the 2006 ? 07 A @- @ League season , the Mariners secured the services of then @- @ Australian international Tony Vidmar from NAC Breda for two years . This was the club 's first marquee signing , following the lead of Sydney FC ( Dwight Yorke ) and Adelaide United ( Qu Shengqing ) . Central Coast again reached the grand final in the 2006 Pre @- @ Season Cup , losing to Adelaide United 5 ? 4 on penalties after the score was tied 1 ? 1 after extra time . The Mariners then participated in the 2006 ? 07 A @- @ League season , but was unable to gain a spot in the final series , finishing sixth after the regular season .

Club captain Noel Spencer was released by the Mariners , then signed to participate in the Asian Champions League by Sydney FC after the 2006 ? 07 season , and Alex Wilkinson was appointed the new captain . Only 22 years of age at the time , Wilkinson had played every possible competitive match for the Mariners up to his appointment . In February 2008 , Central Coast Mariners signed an arrangement with English Football League Championship side Sheffield United . The partnership was one of several connections the Mariners made with foreign clubs ; other partner clubs included Ferencváros of Hungary , Chengdu Blades of China and São Paulo of Brazil . The agreement benefits the club by providing an opportunity for the youth programme and senior side to draw from the roster of Sheffield United through transfers . The teams also formed a property development joint venture , in the hopes that Central Coast could use its share of income to expand and bolster their Mariners Youth Academy .

The 2007 ? 08 season saw Central Coast win its first premiership on goal difference ahead of Newcastle , following a final round that began with Central Coast and three other clubs level on 31 points . The final series began with a 2 ? 0 loss to Newcastle in the first leg of its major semi @- @ final , but the Mariners forced the tie to extra time by holding a 2 ? 0 lead in the second leg after 90 minutes . A 94th @- @ minute goal by Sasho Petrovski , who had scored earlier to level the tie , gave Central Coast a 3 ? 2 win on aggregate , putting the Mariners through to the 2008 A @- @ League Grand Final . In a rematch with Newcastle , the Jets defeated Central Coast 1 ? 0 in the Grand Final , which ended in controversy due to an uncalled handball against Newcastle in Central Coast Mariners penalty box during the closing seconds of the match . If called , the foul would have given Central Coast a penalty kick and a chance to equalise . As Mariners players disputed referee Mark Shield 's decision , goalkeeper Danny Vukovi? struck Shield on the arm , resulting in an immediate sending off and later suspension . Vukovi? was suspended from both domestic and international competition for nine months , with an additional six @- @ months ' suspended ban ; the latter period was reduced to three months on appeal . Despite further appeals , the ban was eventually confirmed by FIFA in June , to include banning the young keeper from competing at the 2008 Olympic Games . The ban lasted into October ; in response , Central Coast signed former Manchester United and Australian international keeper Mark Bosnich on a seven @- @ week contract .

Before the 2008 ? 09 season , Central Coast was predicted to be among the A @- @ League leaders , but had a run of three losses in a row to end the regular season . Even with the losing streak , the club narrowly qualified for the finals , finishing in fourth , two points ahead of Sydney F.C. and Wellington Phoenix . Central Coast lost 4 ? 1 on aggregate in their minor semi @- @ final

against Queensland Roar , ending the team 's season .

= = = Graham Arnold and Phil Moss era = = =

In February 2010 , following the club 's 2009 ? 10 season , McKinna chose to move into a new role , becoming Central Coast 's Football and Commercial Operations Manager . Socceroos assistant manager Graham Arnold was appointed as the club 's new manager , becoming its second manager . In the lead @-@ up to the 2010 ? 11 season , numerous transfers resulted in changes to the club 's squad . The Mariners announced the signing of 2005 Under 20 's World Cup winner Patricio Pérez of Argentina in June 2010 , followed by Dutch defender Patrick Zwaanswijk . In July 2010 , it was announced that the Mariners ' women 's team would not compete in the 2010 ? 11 W @-@ League competition . The club stated that financial reasons were behind the decision , after Football NSW withdrew its funding .

In spite of relatively low expectations in the lead up to the season , the 2010 ? 11 season was more successful for the club than 2009 ? 10 ; the A @-@ League and youth league teams both finished second in their respective leagues in the regular season . The senior team was then defeated by the premiers , Brisbane Roar , 4 ? 2 on aggregate over two legs in the major semi @-@ final , before defeating Gold Coast United 1 ? 0 in the Preliminary Final to qualify for the 2011 A @-@ League Grand Final against Brisbane . By reaching the Grand Final , the club also qualified for the 2012 AFC Champions League . In a championship match that the A @-@ League 's website called " classic " , Central Coast was defeated 4 ? 2 in a penalty shootout after leading 2 ? 0 with three minutes remaining in extra time to finish runners @-@ up for the third time .

The 2011 ? 12 season was similarly successful , as the club won the premiership for the second time in its history with 51 points , two more than second @-@ place Brisbane . The club failed to qualify for a second successive Grand Final , though , losing 5 ? 2 on aggregate to Brisbane in the major semi @-@ final and 5 ? 3 on penalties after a 1 ? 1 draw with Perth Glory in the Grand Final Qualifier .

On 21 April 2013 , after three losses in Grand Finals , Central Coast won its first A @-@ League title , defeating first @-@ year side Western Sydney Wanderers 2 ? 0 in the Grand Final at Allianz Stadium . Arnold re @-@ signed with the club for a further two seasons on 30 August 2013 , but on 14 November it was confirmed that he had signed a two @-@ year contract to become manager of J. League Division 1 side Vegalta Sendai , starting in January 2014 . Former assistant manager Phil Moss was named the new head coach . Mariners general manager Peter Turnbull left the club as well , and New Zealand international Michael McGlinchey moved to the J. League to play for Arnold 's new side . Central Coast finished the 2013 ? 14 A @-@ League regular season in third place , behind runner @-@ up Western Sydney on goal difference . In the semi @-@ final , the Mariners ' championship hopes ended with a 2 ? 0 loss to Western Sydney ; the game came three days after the team was eliminated from the 2014 AFC Champions League after losing to Japanese club Sanfrecce Hiroshima 1 ? 0 to finish last in their group .

In what was Moss 's first pre @-@ season as coach , he did little to change what Arnold had built at the club . The only major changes in the side were with the addition of Senegalese international Malick Mané and Hungarian Richárd Vernes , and Marcos Flores leaving the club , with Mile Sterjovski retiring . Mariners began the season on a high , progressing to the semi @-@ finals of the 2014 FFA Cup and defeating local rivals Newcastle Jets 1 ? 0 at home in the opening round of the A @-@ League . However the season soon turned with the team failing to secure a win for the remainder of the year . After their elimination from the 2015 AFC Champions League qualifying play @-@ off by Chinese side Guangzhou R & F and a continued poor league record after a short mid @-@ season break , the club stood down Moss as head coach . The decision was made on 6 March 2015 , with Mariners appointing technical director Tony Walmsley in an interim capacity and captain John Hutchinson in a dual player @-@ coach role , until the end of the season . Portuguese player Fábio Ferreira also joined the team at the tail end of the season . On 15 April Walmsley was announced as Mariners ' permanent technical director and head coach for the 2015 ? 16 season . The announcement came despite a disappointing end to the season in which the club finished the

league in eighth position .

= = Colours and badge = =

The home jersey worn by the Mariners is mostly yellow with sleeves that are navy blue . The away uniform is a mostly plain navy blue jersey with yellow as a secondary colour . In the 2011 ? 12 season , the club had its kits manufactured by Hummel , as the A @-@ League 's Reebok deal had expired at the conclusion of the 2010 ? 11 season . In September 2012 it was announced that the Mariners had signed a two @-@ year deal with Kappa for them to be the official apparel supplier . The team logo is a yellow football at the centre of a blue curling wave , which symbolises the beaches of the Central Coast .

Since 2012 , the Mariners have worn special pink kits for one match in October to raise money and awareness for Pink Ribbon Day , part of National Breast Cancer Awareness Month . The Mariners club collected donations at the ground , as well as auctioning the match @-@ worn kits on online auction site eBay with proceeds going to the charity .

= = Sponsorship = =

= = Stadium = =

Central Coast Mariners plays home games at Central Coast Stadium , Gosford . It is located in Grahame Park , between the Gosford Central Business District and the Brisbane Water foreshore . It is constructed to make the most of its location , being open at the southern end , giving filtered views of Brisbane Water through a row of large palm trees . It is within walking distance of Gosford railway station and is adjacent to the Central Coast Leagues Club .

While the stadium has a capacity of 20 @,@ 059 , the highest attendance for a Mariners game is 19 @,@ 238 against Newcastle Jets in round 19 of the 2007 ? 08 season . Difficulties in drawing spectators led the Mariners to schedule matches in the 2013 ? 14 and 2014 ? 15 seasons away from Central Coast Stadium , at North Sydney Oval and Brookvale Oval . The club 's goal was to play closer to its fan base in north Sydney , which majority owner Michael Charlesworth estimated to be about 20 % of its total supporters . Following attendances at North Sydney Oval that were similar to those at Central Coast Stadium , Football Federation Australia CEO David Gallop suggested in December 2014 that it would be unlikely that the club would be permitted to continue playing in north Sydney .

= = Supporters and rivalries = =

The active supporters ' group for the Mariners is called the Yellow Army , who sit in bay 16 of Central Coast Stadium during home games . In addition to the Yellow Army , there is a Central Coast Mariners Official Supporters Club , which was established during 2013 . The Central Coast region has about 300 @,@ 000 residents , which gives the Mariners the A @-@ League 's smallest local fan base . Accordingly , the Mariners acquired a small @-@ market image among commentators .

The Mariners developed a strong rivalry with Newcastle Jets throughout their first season , often referred to as the F3 Derby . The naming is a title previously used for the Sydney ? Newcastle Freeway , the major motorway which joins the two clubs ' cities . The rivalry 's origins date back to before the teams played against each other in the A @-@ League . A May 2005 Oceania Club Championship qualification match , which went to a penalty shootout that the Mariners won , helped create hostility between the sides . In the game , a tackle by Central Coast 's Mrdja broke one of Newcastle player Andrew Durante 's legs , causing him to miss the following A @-@ League season ; Mrdja offered no apology for the tackle , upsetting Jets players . Fans of the clubs battled verbally before and after one 2011 derby match , leading the Newcastle Herald 's Josh Leeson to call their

actions " immature and laughable . " In more recent seasons , the F3 Derby has gained less attention in the press than the derbies in Melbourne and Sydney , but Central Coast player Nicholas Fitzgerald maintains that " the players and fans still take it very seriously . "

Central Coast also have a rivalry with Sydney FC . Like Newcastle , Sydney FC is close in proximity to Central Coast . In 2006 , the Central Coast Express Advocate 's Richard Noone called the Central Coast ? Sydney rivalry " Arguably A @-@ League 's fiercest " .

= = = Notable Supporters = = =

Julie Goodwin

= = Affiliated clubs = =

Through an investment in the Mariners by Sheffield United the club has the following international affiliations :

Sheffield United

São Paulo

Ferencváros

In addition , the club has a player development partnership with the following international clubs :

Everton

The club also has formal relationships with the following organisations in Australia :

Northbridge ( as North Shore Mariners Academy )

Western NSW Football ( as Western NSW Mariners FC )

= = Players = =

= = = First team squad = = =

As of 13 July 2016Note : Flags indicate national team as defined under FIFA eligibility rules .  
Players may hold more than one non @-@ FIFA nationality .

= = = Academy = = =

= = Club officials = =

= = = Management = = =

= = = Technical staff = = =

= = = Managers = = =

= = Records = =

John Hutchinson currently holds the team record for number of total games played with 268 matches in all competitions . Former captain Alex Wilkinson has the second most appearances for the club with 203 matches . Adam Kwasnik is the third most capped player with 158 appearances . As of 2014 , Central Coast 's all @-@ time highest goalscorers in all competitions is Matt Simon with

45 goals , one more than Adam Kwasnik . Daniel McBreen has scored the third most goals for the club with 29 . Central Coast 's highest attendance at its home stadium , Central Coast Stadium , is 19 @, @ 238 against Newcastle Jets in their round 19 match of the 2007 ? 08 season . This was the second highest crowd at the ground for any sport since the first match at Central Coast Stadium in February 2000 .

= = Honours = =

A @-@ League Premiership

Premiers ( 2 ) : 2007 ? 08 , 2011 ? 12

Runners @-@ Up ( 2 ) : 2010 ? 11 , 2012 ? 13

A @-@ League Championship

Champions ( 1 ) : 2013

Runners @-@ Up ( 3 ) : 2006 , 2008 , 2011

A @-@ League Pre @-@ Season Challenge Cup

Winners ( 1 ) : 2005

Runners @-@ Up ( 1 ) : 2006