

= Mark Bresciano =

Mark " Marco " Bresciano (Italian pronunciation : [breʃʃʃano] ; born 11 February 1980) is an Australian football (soccer) player who last played for Qatar Stars League side Al @-@ Gharafa as a midfielder . He represented Australia at all youth levels , including appearances at the 1999 FIFA World Youth Championship and 2000 Olympic Games . For several years he was a regular member of the Australian national team , and represented Australia at the 2006 , 2010 and 2014 FIFA World Cups . Since the age of 19 he played senior club football in Italy with Empoli , Parma , Palermo and Lazio before moving to the United Arab Emirates .

= = Biography = =

= = = Early days in Australia = = =

Bresciano grew up in Rosanna , Melbourne . He began playing football locally and later progressed to the first team of Victorian Premier League side Bulleen Lions in 1995 at the age of 15 . He made little impact until his third year in the first team , scoring four goals in four league games and helping Bulleen to the 1997 VPL grand final . Bresciano 's reputation began to grow and he was selected in an Australian Schoolboys squad that toured the United Kingdom in 1996 . In 1997 , he featured prominently in Australia 's unsuccessful U17 World Cup qualifying campaign , scoring five goals .

At the end of the 1997 season and upon completing high school at Marcellin College , he was offered a place at the Australian Institute of Sport , where he reunited with childhood pal Vince Grella . The players ' careers would mirror in the coming years as the two supported their footballing endeavours on and off the field . He and Vince Grella signed with new National Soccer League (NSL) club Carlton for the 1997 ? 98 season , but Bresciano was forced to wait until Round 17 to make his NSL debut . He then played every game for the rest of the year , as Carlton finished second with a place in the finals . Bresciano scored in injury time to win the elimination semi @-@ final and put the club into its first grand final , which they lost 2 ? 1 . He stayed with the Blues for the 1998 ? 99 season , scoring four goals in 18 games , but the club finished well outside the top six . In 1998 and 1999 , Bresciano made a number of appearances for Australia in various matches at Under @-@ 20 and Under @-@ 23 level , including the 1999 FIFA World Youth Championship , where the Young Socceroos were eliminated in the first round .

= = = Move to Italy = = =

As for many Australian players , a career in Europe beckoned for Bresciano as he sought to develop his game and further his career . Bresciano and Grella had sights set on a move to Italy , spurred in part by their Italian heritage . The pair joined Empoli in 1999 , who had been relegated to Serie B the previous season , and became regular selections in the first team . In Bresciano 's third year at the club , he scored 10 goals and helped Empoli to a fourth position and promotion back to the top @-@ flight Serie A. The pair also appeared several times in the Australian Under @-@ 23 team in the lead @-@ up to the 2000 Olympics , particularly in friendlies held in Europe . They were both included in the team for the Sydney Olympics , although Bresciano only saw limited action as a substitute . The following year , his efforts with the Olympic squad were rewarded with a call @-@ up to the " Socceroos . " On 1 June 2001 , Bresciano received his first cap for Australia in a Confederations Cup match against France , coming on as a substitute in the 78th minute for Josip Skoko . He made a further five appearances that year for the " Socceroos , " including another match against France in a friendly at the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG) , again replacing Skoko as a substitute .

In the summer of 2002 , he joined Parma for ? 7 million , at the time a record transfer fee for an Australian player . " Moving to Parma was a big change in every way , not just money @-@ wise but it is a big club . The structure of the club , the facilities , its popularity means you are under a lot

more pressure to get a result , " he said following the close of the season , well aware of his profile . Though he was hampered by a series of injuries , his 24 appearances in 2002 ? 03 helped Parma to fifth and a UEFA Cup place . With Empoli being relegated again , he was reunited with Grella who stayed in Serie A with a transfer to Parma .

== Goal scoring for Parma and Socceroos ==

Setting himself a target for the 2003 ? 04 season of five goals , Bresciano surpassed that with eight goals from 33 appearances , the most of any midfielder in the Serie A , as Parma finished fifth in the league again . Bresciano had also claimed a regular spot in the " Socceroos " line @-@ up , justifying his selection with a string of goals , including a match @-@ winning free @-@ kick against New Zealand and the only goal in a one @-@ nil victory against South Africa . Parma 's fifth place qualified them for the UEFA Cup , where the club advanced through to the semi @-@ finals before being eliminated by eventual winners CSKA Moscow . Their league performance that year was in stark contrast to their UEFA Cup form , as they were forced in to a play @-@ off to retain their Serie A status by finishing 18th in the league . Bresciano and Grella were excused from the 2005 Confederations Cup by then @-@ Australian manager Frank Farina to allow them to take part in the play @-@ off against Bologna ? Parma went on to win the tie and remained in Serie A for the following season . Both players returned to the Australian squad in September 2005 , now under the direction of Guus Hiddink , for World Cup qualification playoff against the Solomon Islands , followed by a friendly against Jamaica where Bresciano scored the first of Australia 's five goals . After playing the first leg of the CONMEBOL ? OFC World Cup qualification play @-@ off against Uruguay on 12 November , Bresciano scored the only goal in the second leg four days later . The 1 ? 0 win levelled the playoff 1 ? 1 on aggregate after extra time and the " Socceroos " won the ensuing penalty shoot @-@ out to advance to the World Cup .

Parma recovered well in the 2005 ? 06 season with Bresciano playing the majority of games , finishing a respectable 10th by season 's end in May 2006 (later rising to seventh and a UEFA Cup place after the Calciopoli findings) . Bresciano described their resurgence as physically finding their form . Despite starting poorly , the team went from " strength to strength " as the season went on , with Bresciano himself becoming mentally tougher for the experience .

== 2006 World Cup ==

Buoyed by his strong club season , Bresciano played in Australia 's opening game of the 2006 FIFA World Cup , being substituted before the team went on to score three goals and defeat Japan . He came on as a substitute in the second game against Brazil and , in the third Group Stage game , was instrumental in the 79th @-@ minute goal scored by Harry Kewell against Croatia . The goal resulted in a 2 ? 2 draw , a result securing Australia 's place in the second round . Against Italy , Bresciano was judged to be in a scoring position in the 50th minute when fouled by Marco Materazzi , the Italian receiving a red card . Italy went on to win after being awarded a penalty in the dying minutes of the game , eliminating the " Socceroos . " After being identified as a key player for Australia , Bresciano 's overall performance at the tournament failed to live up to expectations , described by an FFA writer as " solid without being spectacular , " although his role as a set @-@ piece @-@ specialist was highlighted .

== Palermo and Asian Cup ==

Shortly after the end of the World Cup , Bresciano was signed by Palermo on a four @-@ year @-@ contract , and made regular first team appearances in the Serie A and Europe . In October 2006 Bresciano scored what some ? including Socceroos Assistant Coach John Kosmina ? have described as the greatest goal ever scored for Australia in a full international match . In an Asian Cup qualification match against Bahrain , Mile Sterjovski received a cross @-@ field pass which was played first @-@ time back in to the penalty area , Bresciano reacting quickly to turn his body

horizontally and strike the ball on the volley into the net . The goal drew comparisons to his first goal for Palermo in Serie A , two months earlier , against Reggina on the opening day of the 2006 ? 07 season . Bresciano was on the pitch on 2 February 2007 , when violence broke out outside the stadium in the Catania @-@ Palermo match . He was affected by tear gas as it drifted into the stadium and afterwards described the incident as " completely terrifying " . He scored his ninth international goal against China in March 2007 . A hamstring injury suffered in May caused him to miss the final round match for Palermo , Australia 's friendly against Uruguay on 2 June and hampered his preparations for the 2007 AFC Asian Cup . However , he recovered in time for a warmup match against Singapore and played all of Australia 's first two Asian Cup matches . He was substituted in the second half against Thailand and the quarter @-@ final against Japan before the Socceroos ' elimination on penalties . The Sydney Morning Herald rated the 71 minutes played against Japan as his best performance of the tournament , after average displays in the early matches .

Bresciano returned to the national team in February 2008 for Australia 's opening World Cup qualification match against Qatar , starting the match and scoring the Socceroos third goal . He also played a full 90 minutes in the second group match , away to China . The new campaign has also seen Bresciano change squad numbers , wearing ' 18 ' in the two qualifiers , as opposed to his traditional ' 23 ' which he has worn for the majority of his Socceroo career .

= = = To England and back = = =

On return from Australia 's Asian Cup exit , Bresciano became a transfer target for Premier League club Manchester City . After confirmation from new Palermo manager Stefano Colantuono that he would be leaving Palermo for Manchester , the clubs agreed to a four @-@ year contract with a transfer price of £ 5 million and he began training with the City squad . " I needed a new challenge and I wanted to get the excitement factor back into my game , " Mark stated in confirming his desire to play in England , also citing the chance to play under Sven @-@ Göran Eriksson as a big reason for seeking to make the switch . However , talks between the two clubs broke down in finalising the move , with the timing of the transfer fee given as the primary issue ? as City sought to delay payment ? and Bresciano returned to Palermo to rejoin their pre @-@ season preparations . As the transfer deadline passed and the deal was put off indefinitely , Bresciano continued training with Palermo . He came off the bench for their opening @-@ day loss to Roma , and remained a regular selection under new manager Francesco Guidolin , although more commonly from the substitute bench .

He came off the bench in the first match of the 2008 ? 09 season to score a goal , although Palermo lost 3 ? 1 to Udinese . He then established himself back in the starting line @-@ up following the appointment of new head coach Davide Ballardini , playing both as a winger and a deep @-@ lying forward for the rosanero , and also managing to score both goals in Palermo 's second seasonal away win , a 2 ? 0 to Sampdoria on 18 January 2009 .

= = = Lazio = = =

On 3 July 2010 , it was confirmed that Bresciano had signed for Lazio on a two @-@ year @-@ contract . Bresciano scored his first goal for Lazio in the Coppa Italia third round win over Serie B outfit Portogruaro on 27 October 2010 .

= = = Al @-@ Nasr = = =

On 9 August 2011 , it was announced he had signed a contract with UAE Pro @-@ League side Al @-@ Nasr Dubai for free .

= = = Al @-@ Gharafa = = =

On 6 August 2012 , Bresciano joined Qatar Stars League side Al Gharafa on a three year contract . He unilaterally breach the contract with Al Nasr in order to finalize the transfer .

On 4 October 2013 , Bresciano was suspended for four months and fined \$ 1 ,377 ,000 after the manner in which he transferred to Al Gharafa from Al Nasr , putting serious doubt into his chances for a third World Cup . On the 8 January , Bresciano was cleared to play for the Socceroos in the 2014 World Cup . The ban was ended on 3 February 2014 . Both Bresciano and Al Nasr had appealed to the Court of Arbitration for Sport , however the transfer ban of the club , the ban and fine of Bresciano were dismissed .

== Style ==

Bresciano is one of Australia 's most talented footballers and has a renowned eye for goal . He usually plays his football on the left side of midfield but can also play as a forward and in the central or right midfield role . Bresciano is a versatile player who often assists in both attack and defence and is also a set piece specialist .

Bresciano is also popular for his " Spartacus " goal celebration , that involves the player stopping in the position from where he shot from , clenching his fists by his side and raising his chin . He stands still , usually until mobbed by his teammates coming to celebrate the goal .

== Personal life ==

=== Name ===

Bresciano 's correct first name is Mark and not , as is often reported , " Marco " . Interviewed for the TV documentary The Away Game , he said " In Australia , it 's Marco . In Italy , it 's Mark . Work that one out . My birth certificate says Mark . But I 'm named after my grandfather Marco . I like Marco but not Mark O. I prefer Mark " .

=== Family ===

Bresciano 's father is Italian (from Viggiano , Basilicata) and his mother Croatian (from Antonci , in Istria) . His younger brother Robert currently plays for Fawkner Blues in the Victorian Premier League . He married his childhood sweetheart Renée Capitanio in May 2006 in Heidelberg , Melbourne , after proposing to her at the Romeo and Juliet House in Verona . In February 2007 , the couple welcomed their first child , a daughter named Alessia and in May 2009 , the couple welcomed their second child , a daughter named Montana .

== Career statistics ==

=== Club ===

Statistics accurate as of 12 March 2015 .

Cup includes domestic cups , promotion / relegation playoffs and NSL / VPL Finals series

=== International career ===

As of 22 January 2015

=== International goals ===

Scores and results list Australia 's goal tally first .

= = Honours = =

= = = International = = =

Australia

OFC U @-@ 20 Championship : 1998

OFC Nations Cup : 2004

AFC Asian Cup : 2015