

= Australia 31 ? 0 American Samoa =

On 11 April 2001 , the Australian and American Samoa national association football teams played each other in a qualifying match for the 2002 FIFA World Cup . The match was played at the International Sports Stadium in Coffs Harbour , Australia . Australia set a world record for the largest victory in an international football match , winning the game 31 ? 0 . Australia 's Archie Thompson also broke the record for most goals scored by a player in an international match by scoring 13 goals . David Zdrilic , the scorer of eight goals in the match , achieved the second highest number of goals in an international match since World War I.

The outcome of the match led to debates about the format of qualification tournaments , with the Australian manager Frank Farina and Thompson feeling that preliminary rounds should be introduced to avoid such unbalanced matches , views shared by the international footballing body FIFA . It eventually led to the introduction of a preliminary round in the Oceanian zone qualification for the 2006 FIFA World Cup . The unbalanced level of opponents also partly contributed to Australia 's move to the Asian Football Confederation in 2006 .

= = Background = =

The first attempt from Oceanian teams to qualify for the FIFA World Cup came with the 1966 FIFA World Cup . In subsequent tournaments they entered joint qualification competitions with the Asian zone , until a separate qualification round for the Oceania Football Confederation was introduced in 1986 . By the 2002 FIFA World Cup qualification tournament , this had grown to a competition with ten teams entering . The ten teams were divided into two groups of five teams , where each team played against each other once . The two group winners would advance to the final round and played against each other in a home and away format . The winner of Oceania would advance to the intercontinental play @-@ off round against the fifth best team in the South American zone for a place in the World Cup . Australia and American Samoa were placed in Group 1 along with Fiji , Samoa and Tonga with the matches to be played at Coffs Harbour , Australia during April 2001 .

Australia , along with New Zealand , were widely recognized as the strongest teams in the Oceanian zone . They were the only teams to have won the OFC Nations Cup , and the only ones to have qualified for the World Cup : Australia had qualified in 1974 and New Zealand in 1982 . American Samoa were one of the weakest teams in the world , having lost all of their official international matches since they had joined FIFA in 1998 . Prior to the match , Australia was ranked 75th in the FIFA World Rankings , while American Samoa was ranked 203rd , the lowest of all FIFA members .

Two days before the match , Australia recorded a 22 ? 0 win over Tonga , breaking the previous record for the largest win in an international match , held by Kuwait who won 20 ? 0 against Bhutan in 2000 . American Samoa had suffered two losses prior to the match , a 13 ? 0 loss to Fiji and an 8 ? 0 loss to Samoa .

= = Match summary = =

Australia fielded a team with several rarely used players as many regulars were either rested or omitted from the team . Strikers John Aloisi and Damian Mori who combined for 10 goals in the 22 ? 0 win over Tonga were also omitted for this match . The American Samoa team were troubled by passport issues , with only one member of their original 20 @-@ man senior team , goalkeeper Nicky Salapu , eligible to play . Some hint that the passport issue was an Australian ploy to win the match by a large margin in order to secure the team 's move to the AFC . American Samoa were also unable to call their under @-@ 20 players because most of them were involved in high school exams at the time . They were forced to draft in their youth players , including three 15 @-@ year @-@ old players , to put together a makeshift team with an average age of 18 . According to team manager and Football Federation American Samoa vice @-@ president Tony Langkilde , some of the Samoan players had never played a full 90 @-@ minute game before the match with Australia .

American Samoa held Australia scoreless for the first ten minutes of play until Con Boutsianis scored Australia 's first goal from a corner kick . Archie Thompson scored his first goal in the 12th minute , and his strike partner , David Zdrilic , added his first goal a minute later . Tony Popovic added two successive goals in the 17th and 19th minute to extend Australia 's lead into 6 ? 0 . In the 25th minute , Zdrilic achieved a hat @-@ trick , making the score 9 ? 0 for Australia . Thompson then scored 6 of the next 7 goals as Australia led 16 ? 0 at half time . Thompson led Australia in scoring with 8 goals at half @-@ time , and Zdrilic had 4 goals .

Boutsianis , who scored the first goal of the first half , scored the first goal of the second half in the 50th minute . Boutsianis later added another goal to complete his hat @-@ trick . Thompson and Zdrilic added 5 and 4 goals to finish with 13 and 8 goals respectively . Boutsianis finished with 3 goals , while Popovic , Aurelio Vidmar and Simon Colosimo scored 2 goals each , and substitute Fausto De Amicis scored one goal . In the 86th minute , despite being down by 29 goals , American Samoa managed to launch an attack towards Australia 's goal when Pati Feagiai had a shot , which was saved by Michael Petkovic . That was American Samoa 's first and only shot on goal .

The large number of goals created a confusion over the correct scoreline . At the end of the match , the scoreboard at the stadium showed 32 ? 0 and Thompson was credited with 14 goals . After the statistician did a recount , the 31 ? 0 scoreline was announced , and Thompson 's total goals count was reduced to 13 . After the match , FIFA went on to release the official statistics after receiving the official report from the referee and match officials , which confirmed the 31 ? 0 scoreline and Thompson 's 13 goals .

= = = Details = = =

= = Records = =

Australia 's 31 ? 0 win broke the record for the largest win in an international match . The previous record was Australia 's 22 ? 0 win over Tonga , recorded two days earlier in the same competition . Both wins surpassed the previous record held by Kuwait in a 20 ? 0 win over Bhutan in the 2000 Asian Cup qualification . The match also broke the record for the largest win in a World Cup qualification match . The previous record was held by Iran in a 19 ? 0 win over Guam in 2002 World Cup qualification . The match also broke the friendly match record set by North Korea against Guam 21 @-@ 0 .

Apart from team records , individual records were also broken in the match . Australia 's Archie Thompson , who only had two international caps and one international goal prior to the match , scored 13 goals in the match and broke the record for most goals scored in an international match . David Zdrilic scored 8 goals and was widely reported as having recorded the second most goals scored in an international match , after Thompson 's 13 goals . In fact , his figure was less than the previous record of 10 goals , which was achieved by Denmark 's Sophus Nielsen at the 1908 Olympics and Germany 's Gottfried Fuchs at the 1912 Olympics . Nevertheless , this made Zdrilic 's total the second highest in almost 90 years . Thompson also equalled the world record for most goals scored in a recognized senior match , set in 1885 when John Petrie scored 13 goals in Arbroath 's 36 ? 0 win over Bon Accord in a Scottish Cup tournament . The previous record in a World Cup qualifying match was seven goals and was jointly held by another Australian , Gary Cole , who scored seven goals against Fiji in the 1982 World Cup qualification on 14 August 1981 , and Iranian Karim Bagheri , who also scored seven goals against Maldives in the 1998 World Cup qualification on 2 June 1997 .

= = Match reactions = =

Australia 's manager Frank Farina criticised the qualification format and questioned the need for these kind of matches . Archie Thompson , who scored a record @-@ setting 13 goals , was delighted with his record , but he also agreed with Farina 's comments . FIFA spokesman Keith

Cooper agreed with both comments and suggested a change in the qualification format , with the smaller teams entering a preliminary round . However , Oceania Football Confederation chairman Basil Scarsella , opposed both comments and claimed that the smaller teams have the right to face Australia and New Zealand , similar to Australia having the rights to face stronger opponents such as Brazil and France .

" Breaking the world record is a dream come true for me ; that sort of thing doesn 't come along every day . But you have to look at the teams we are playing and start asking questions . We don 't need to play these games . "

This match and the other lopsided victories in the qualification partially contributed towards the reintroduction of a preliminary round for smaller teams in the qualification for the 2006 FIFA World Cup , in order to avoid these one @-@ sided matches . The significant gap between the two top teams , Australia and New Zealand , and the rest of the teams in the Oceanian zone was one of the reasons behind Australia leaving the Oceania Football Confederation at the end of 2006 to join Asian Football Confederation in order to increase the competitiveness . Starting in the 2010 World Cup qualification , Australia participated in the Asian zone qualification rounds .

The Samoan team was not feeling downhearted after the game , and even embraced and sang to the audience as the game finished . Salapu declared that he enjoyed the game . " I wasn 't embarrassed because we all learned something from it . If we had all our players maybe it would have been only five or six goals , because I was without my best defenders and there was nothing I could do . " Tony Langkilde also defended the goalkeeper , saying that he " kept the score down with a magnificent display " . He also added that " now we are recognised by FIFA , it has really helped spark an interest in football on the islands " . Samoan manager Tunoa Lui commented that football was being played in the Samoan elementary and high schools and " in five years we will be competitive . "

= = Post @-@ match = =

American Samoa closed their qualification campaign with a 5 ? 0 loss to Tonga . American Samoa finished bottom of the groups with a -57 goal difference in four matches , without scoring a single goal in the qualifications . Australia continued their qualification campaign with a 2 ? 0 win over Fiji and 11 ? 0 win over Samoa . Australia finished first in the group with a + 66 goal difference in four matches , without conceding a single goal .

Australia then defeated New Zealand , the other group winner , with an aggregate score of 6 ? 1 . By winning the Oceanian zone , Australia advanced to the intercontinental play @-@ off round against Uruguay , the fifth best team in the South American zone , where Australia was defeated with an aggregate score of 1 ? 3 , therefore failing to qualify for the 2002 World Cup .