

# Matthew Simon



Matthew Simon was born in Penrith 1986 and moved to the Central Coast when he was just one week old.

At the age of six (1992) he started playing football with Terrigal United and since that day his football career has gone on an upward curve culminating in the highlight of his career, playing for the Australian National team (Socceroos).

Matt's junior days started when he played at Terrigal United for 3 years (1992-1994) before moving to Wyoming where he played (1995,1996) U9 and U10. His favourite position then was striker and has more or less stayed that way during his career. Matt played Central Coast Representative teams 1997 U11 and 1998 U12 then with Ku-ring-gai FC as an U13 in 1999 before joining Manly United for two seasons in the 2000 U14 and 2001 U15. He returned to the Central Coast Coasties for two seasons to play his final years as a junior in the 2002 U16 and 2003 U17. Highlights of his junior football were winning the 1996 U10 Grand Final with Wyoming, playing alongside Brad Porter in

the U11 and U12 Coasties teams, and winning the U13 Grand Final with Ku-ring-gai.

Matt played two seasons 2004, 2005 as a 1<sup>ST</sup> Grade player for East Gosford FC before joining Central Coast Lightning as a First Grade player for the 2005/6 seasons. After returning to Central Coast playing against the Central Coast Mariners in a Charity Shield promotion, he was signed up by Lawrie McKinna for the Mariners' squad in 2006/2007 season.

Matt starred for the Central Coast Lightning during the 2006 season but was brought back into the Mariners' squad before round 19 to replace an injured Nik Mrdja. He had a solid 2007/8 campaign despite not scoring any goals in the season that the Mariners' won their first premiership, and were runners-up in the grand final. Matt scored his first A-League goal in the first game of the 2008/9 season, in what would prove to be the start of a wonderful season for him personally.

Matt played his last season 2011/2012 with the Mariners making his overall record for the Club being 114 appearances and scoring 36 goals. Highlights were playing with great players such as John Aloisi and Tony Vidmar; winning two premierships and playing in two grand finals; and, playing a part in the club being the great club it is today.

He won the Mariners Medal in 2008/9 for Player of the Year, and the Golden Boot for four consecutive years. Both Lawrie McKinna and Graham Arnold have been major influences on Matt's career with McKinna giving him the opportunity to play for the Mariners, and helping him to make the transition from semi-professional to professional.

Arnold took Matt to the 2008 Beijing Olympics and Matt believes he also took him to the next level as a footballer. He says that Arnold is a great mentor both on and off the field.

In May 2008 Matt played for the Australian U23 team in the Intercontinental Cup in Malaysia. He won the Golden Boot award with five goals which included a hat trick in the semi final versus Ireland.

2008 was an amazing year for Matt Simon and after 10 appearances for the Australian U23 he was selected to play for the full Australian National team and made two appearances.

Matt is currently playing for Chunnam Dragons in the Korean 'K' League but owing to a torn abductor tendon he has only played 6 games in his first season, and he is now looking forward to a much better 2013 season. Matt lives in the city of Gwangyang, in an apartment provided by the club. Most days are filled with training and team meetings, and players are expected to reach a very high standard of fitness. The standard of Korean football is very high, but Matt feels that sports science, and treatment of injuries are not as advanced as in Australia.

Matt Simon is the classic case of "local boy made good" in football. He sets a prime example to Central Coast younger players, as to what can be achieved with ambition and dedication.