



## ***APIA'S YOUTH SQUAD STUNNED BY SPECTACULAR VIAREGGIO CARNEVALE***

VIAREGGIO 2012

*Article 4 - by John Economos*

*(From Viareggio, ITALY.)*

APIA LEICHHARDT TIGERS last Sunday afternoon attended the "Viareggio Carnevale", one of the World's most spectacular, vibrant, colourful, highly energised carnivals, annually staged on the waterfront Promenade of the City Viareggio.

This magnificent, unbelievable extravaganza, left almost the entire touring APIA Youth squad absolutely stunned, leaving the young APIA players with indelible memories for the rest of their lives.

Graded as the second biggest in the World after Brasil's Rio Carnevale,

The 'Viareggio Carnevale' is staged annually this time of year and spread over five consecutive Sundays.

The Carnevale draws crowds of over 100,000 on each of these Sunday, with tourists streaming in to Viareggio from all over Europe.



The wide beach-side waterfront Promenade has twin walkways, each some 16 metres wide with both walkways in opposite direction, split by a 5 metre garden island stretching some three kilometres down the beach-front.

Right on 2.30pm, the main entrance gates swing open allowing no less than 2 massive, mobilised monster floats to ever-so slowly creep onto the Promenade.

These giant, wide monstrous floats, most towering into the sky some 20 to 25 metres high, were dragged by mini-tractors into the crowd as the slowly meandered down the beach-side strip.

More than half of these 'monsters' are so gigantic in width as well as length, they creep

slowly past beach-side Hotels and apartment buildings with barely centimetres to spare from making contact.

Each 'Float-monster' is stacked with singing, very bright coloured costumed Italian dancers, numbering anything from 50 to 120 performers. That's 50 to 120 entertainers on each float.

Each 'monster' has onboard its own very loud sound system, bellowing out a cacophonous, upbeat, rhythmic music to which the bouncing on-board performers synchronise to the beat.

Most of these very colourful monsters have a basic, satirical theme, be it comedy, satirical political attacks, or even based on ecclesiastical themes such as on the Pope and the Vatican.

APIA's star central 18 year old defender, Paul Galimi, who was left totally overwhelmed by the Carnevale, stated to us:

"It was just amazing and so colourful and full of energy that injected the whole Community with delirious excitement, provoking them with buzzing adrenalin into dancing to the vast Rock, Disco music.

"Stand out floats included the satire on Silvio Berlusconi, and there were numerous on him, plus vivid images projecting the Italian culture.



"Regarding APIA's tour of Italy, it's been professional and a real eye-opener for all our players.

"The tour presents many opportunities to learn so much and we must grab them.

The scenery and lifestyle has been a massive experience," concluded Galimi.

Meanwhile APIA's star towering central striker, Blake Armstrong, quietly reflected:



"The Carnevale was so authentic and a huge eye-opener for our squad.

"One of the stand-out floats was the one with a massive Wolf's head reaching sky-high, plus the huge number of dancers onboard.

"Every float had its own loud, very clear music that wound up the entire crowd. "These floats generated so much crowd spirit it was just incredible. "And as far as the APIA tour of Italy, it's been tremendous and much more than I could have ever expected, and that applies to all the games, pitches and various styles we've come up against," ended Armstrong.

After witnessing this mega-extravaganza, the players filed back into their hotel to rest prior to their early dinner followed by a tactical team meeting for tomorrow's (Monday), double matches.

APIA will have a friendly hit-out in this morning against the Brazilian Club, Gremio at 10am. On Monday afternoon APIA's first Viareggio Cup Tournament clash is against the Italian Serie D side, Citta Di Marino.