

Young Bombers Primed for Saddam Clash

AFL coach, George Bush, explains how he'll beat Iraq

Well, mate, we've got a game plan and we'll stick to it. We know Hussein really likes to control the play and he's very hard at it, but our boys know if they stick to their guns - and just do the little things - we'll start to make him and his boys doubt themselves.

Our preparation's been as good as it could be, none of my boys feel underdone, and I was really pleased with how they fought it out against Afghanistan, even though the backline was a bit loose and let Bin Laden run off them a bit too much. He's a quality player, a real gun that bloke; hits his targets, and he seemed to find gaps in the play everywhere against us.

But I'm really hoping against Iraq some of the younger blokes we gave a bit of game time to against the Afghans will *really* respond to the faith the club's shown in them and step up to the next level. We were strong in the air in Afghanistan, but we'll need to be really effective at ground level against the Iraqis.

Look, I know it's a cliché, but we're taking it week by week at the moment as to how we'll use our attacking half against Hussein. But I know the boys are prepared to back themselves, there'll be no complacency after our big win and they'll be hitting the contests very hard. We had a couple of minor injuries against Afghanistan – and a few blokes swapping clubs mid-match – but there's just so many blokes who've put their hands up for the game against Iraq, and we've got faith in them that they can do the job for us.

You know, we've been up against quality opposition before, Somalia at home is not an easy game, and even though we really annihilated Iraq last time we played, they're pretty hard to stop once they get a run on. Plus we've tried to get spies into their training, but we can't see what secret weapons they might have up their sleeves for the big one. But to their credit our boys aren't worried about the big guns or reputations or homeground advantages, they're prepared to back each other up and do the hard things.

You know, the modern war's a funny game. You can be bombing away at the goals and just keep on missing your target. We did that against Afghanistan a bit – and I know one of the clubs I'm giving a lot of advice to – Israel – is having trouble getting the long bombs to find their target, too.

But we've done a lot of work on our shooting for goal and the blokes we've got ready for the Iraqis love it in close and tight. I know our boys will rise up to the challenge we've set for them, they'll find Hussein's corridor and shoot long and hard – and take no prisoners. There's been a lot of critics of our slow starts of late, but we should be able to get away with Iraq and end up obliterating them in the end.