



**ACT Football Federation**  
Trading as **Capital Football**  
Unit 2/3 Phipps Close, Deakin, ACT, 2600  
Ph: (02) 6260 4000 Fax: (02) 6260 4999  
Email: [info@capitalfootball.com.au](mailto:info@capitalfootball.com.au)

**By: Eamonn Flanagan**  
**Capital Football's Roving Reporter**

If you think footballers have it easy spare a thought for Canberra's Shaun Ontong.

Product of the AIS and Australia's Under 20 Captain, Ontong headed off overseas on the same plane with a certain Matthew Spiranovic to German side FC Nurnberg after the last World Cup.

Hopes were high for both players. Spiranovic signed, played against Bayern Munich in the Bundesliga, and ended up winning a German Cup winners medal. Oh and he was then called in to the Socceroos squad for the Uruguay game in June.

How did Ontong go? Ontong pulled a groin muscle in the trial and ended up coming home to Australia. He captained the under 20 side in Korea in the Asian Championships in November last year. He then was without a club. He trained with Melbourne Victory for a month before heading to Switzerland for a week's trial with FC Sion.

"The week, became a month and no offer was forthcoming," said Ontong

"What do you do? Do you come home? The A-League is over for another year. Or do you stay and hope to pick up a club, and at this stage of the year it could be any club."

"It was always a dream to play overseas. I felt to go home was to fail. I was determined to stay. I rang anyone I knew in football to try and get a club, a chance," said Ontong.

"I ended up in Slovenia, with Maribor. You are only allowed three foreigners and they had five. I made six so I was never going to get a chance. From there I went to Bela Krajina."

"It was crazy. I was living in a backpackers. I was trying to train. But I was having to guard my gear, to protect it from being stolen. At one point I got the girl behind the bar to guard my gear so I could go for a run."

"I had a trial but hadn't played for a month so wasn't fit. I'm the sort of player that goes 120% and I pulled my groin again."

"The club provided no treatment for foreigners, so I was looking on the internet trying to figure out how to treat myself. Things were pretty bad."

"So I came back to Australia. South Melbourne invited me down to train, and I was off for a trial with Wellington, when Adelaide stepped in."

So what is the injury status now.

"Well, I pulled my groin 3 times in twelve months, but I expect to be fully fit for the start of the A-League season. I've reassessed where I'm at. I'm delighted to get an opportunity with Adelaide."

"I got great mates here. (Kristaian) Sarkies, Nathan Burns and Bruce Djite are all here."

"Football is a funny game. Things can change so quickly. I saw Burnsey playing for the Socceroos recently. I felt emotional for him. It was great."

"I'm just hoping to get playing again with Adelaide."

When you play Kaz Patafta at Melbourne Victory will it be like the junior football days in Canberra?

He laughs, "You mean Belwest v Belnorth. Yes it will. They were great days. There were no football worries then."

‘I’ve learnt a lot by going overseas. And it’s made me stronger. I’ve got my love of the game back and I’m getting ready to play again. I’m with a professional club, they are protecting me, not rushing me back before my injury heals. I’ve just started jogging. Things feel good.