



TIM CAHILL

Roundheads: Lucas Neill and Tim Cahill are plotting a football revolution for Australia.

flying. I speak with him all the time and he always leaves really explicit messages when Melbourne have won. The A-League's fantastic and it's good for players there. I can't wait to come home and play in it.

You fancy the A-League later on?

Definitely. You see David Beckham going to America – obviously there are differences in money and things like that, but he's going to [raise the profile] of football in America, and hopefully me and Lucas (Neill) will come back and do the same thing.

What did you think when you heard about Beckham's salary?

Fair play to him. I say that because of what he's done for football and for kids. It's not him, it's his image that sells – he's more talked about off the pitch than for what he does on it. But a lot of kids look up to him.

And a lot of parents spend a hell of a lot of money getting Beckham on the back of a jersey or buying his boots. He's only going to help America, but hopefully he can have a life there. He'll be able to walk down the street without being recognised, take his kids to the shops, just do the normal things. If he went back to England I don't think he'd be able to do that.

Do you ever wish you had his life?

Not really, I'm happy. The media's blown it out of all proportion. He is a very level-headed guy, and I've never seen any other footballer put as much effort as he does into kids. I can never speak too highly of him because of what he puts back.

What's the biggest misconception about being a footballer?

People think we've got time for no one but ourselves, and that we're overpaid. Maybe some are overpaid, but that's just the way it is. Say you're a painter or a bricklayer, and a big

firm comes in for you and says, "Do you want to work for double your wages?" You won't say no. I can understand some players don't portray themselves well, so there are [understandably] mixed opinions.

Do you hate the tabloid media?

I don't hate them; you've got to get on with them, although I don't do many interviews, and I only talk about football. The only time I really want to be talked about in Australia is when I'm helping kids or I'm doing something to promote the game. That's one thing Lucas and I talked about after the World Cup is making every effort we could to try to promote the game in Australia.

Does the club try to tell you how to live?

"The A-League's fantastic. I can't wait to come and play in it."

No, the gaffer's really good. He knows I'm professional and I look after myself. I wouldn't do anything to go against that because it's not worth it; it's so hard to get and so easy to give away.

Which players are doing it right?

I love players like Ronaldinho and Steven Gerrard, (Frank) Lampard – you look up to players like that. I just want to keep improving.

Are your kids getting a scouse accent?

No chance! You can put that in capital letters.

Who are your toughest opponents?

Definitely midfield battles. Steven Gerrard – we both like a tackle. Patrick Viera's the hardest I've ever played against. I couldn't get near him. There are irritating players like Robbie Savage.

Does he irritate you as much as he irritates everyone else?

Yeah, he's good at what he does, he upsets players. Sometimes you play big defenders who knock lumps out of you. Lampard is very hard to get the ball off. (Claude) Makelele, (Michael) Essien...

What are you like to be around when you've lost?

I'm a sore loser, but that's whether I'm playing football or against Lucas on the computer. I don't like to lose. There's a thing on the Xbox where you can play other people at home, so I can play Harry and Lucas and we can talk to each other at the same time. That's the next big craze we're on. It's a war game. I've got to practice for a couple of days before I invite them to play.

Do you feel you missed out on anything for the sake of your career?

As a kid I didn't really do much, didn't go out or spend time with my mates because I was constantly

playing football. At the time, my old man said, "You've got plenty of time for that after," and he's so right. We would like to go on holidays more, spend more time back in Australia. But come 35, that's pretty much time when you collect your pension. There's plenty of time for partying later. There are so many times I've heard people saying, "I could have been a professional footballer but I hurt my knee, or I went out too much, or girls" and stuff like that. With hindsight, I could have been that person.

Where will you be in 10 years?

Running loads of football academies in Australia – something to do with football in Australia. And relaxing over the barbie with all my family.

What's your biggest fear?

Dying. I'd leave the boys behind.

Have you got any big regrets?

None whatsoever. Everything happens for a reason. I would have liked a hat-trick against Japan!

Tell us something surprising about yourself.

That's a hard one.

OK, we'll come back to it. What's your most prized possession?

My Lamborghini Gallardo. That's my baby.

We read somewhere you had a Bugatti Veyron as well.

[Laughs] No, that's a lie. They're trying to sell them in Australia so they threw my name in the mixer. You read too many papers, mate.

Would you get one?

No chance. I wouldn't pay that much for a car. \$2.75 million? I would never do that. I see my Lamborghini as an investment. If I sold it I wouldn't lose money.

Describe yourself in five words.

I've got to do this so I don't sound like a nob... Grateful, witty, mischievous, happy – I'm not going to say anything dodgy, am I? Daring.

OK, what are you going to surprise us with?

[Away from phone] What can I tell him that's going to surprise him? [To Alpha] You've got me here. What's everyone else said?

Er, Craig Mottram talks to himself.

That's not that odd, is it?

Tell us you've got a collection of stuffed toys, or something.

I collect memorabilia, but everyone knows that. Premiership jerseys. I've got loads, all the best jerseys.

What's the best one?

Alan Shearer, before he retired. **A**



WORDS: IVAN SMITH; PHOTOGRAPHY: SIMON BULLARD.