

NL KEEPER STORIES

Zac Speedy:

Age: 18. Height: 1.81m

While most players look to impress with their on-field work rate, Zac has a minimalist approach – he hopes for as little work as possible. When interviewed by Andrew Voerman (of Stuff.co.nz), Zac commented: “My ideal game would be if I just stood there and did nothing, and we won 5-0 - it would be perfect.”

Despite Zac’s preference for a low work rate he responds to the pressure of being challenged to maintain his #1 keeper position, while playing for waiBOP last season Zac stated: “Even now I know that if I have one mistake or a bad game, there’s Louie (Caunter, the alternate waiBOP ‘keeper) hot on my heels, so it keeps me motivated, and that’s the way I like it”.

Zac turns 20 on the 29th of this month, despite his young age Zac’s shot stopping and goal keeping abilities see him keeping Suburbs goal safe in the upcoming season as an experienced National League campaigner. The 2016/17 season will be his 4th playing in the Premiership, having spent his first two campaigns with the Wanderers SC, Zac then kept goal for waiBOP during the 2015/16 season.

Silvio Rodic:

Age: 29. Height: 1.97m

Silvio is another player that has joined Suburbs from Europe with an impressive CV, his credentials include playing for the Croatian Under 21 team, Silvio went onto win a full international cap for the Croatian national team against Togo. He also counts playing in Europa League Cup games, including a victory over CSKA Moscow, amongst his career highlights.

At 1.97m (that’s 6’4” in ‘old money’) Silvio is a

giant and makes for an imposing figure ‘between the sticks’.

Suburbs can thank Mario Bilen of Auckland City FC for securing the goal keeping services of Silvio. Silvio comments in his profile: “I’ve been asked by a number of people what brought me to New Zealand and to sign up for Eastern Suburbs? My good friend Mario Bilen told me all the about Eastern Suburbs and gave them a good review. Mario also told me about New Zealand and the lifestyle he enjoys here. It was Mario’s influence that made my decision to come to New Zealand and Eastern Suburbs”

Josh Dijkstra

Age: 18. Height: 1.82m

This is a young keeper with a big future.

Like many talented players Josh’s keeping abilities stood out while at school, he kept goal for his school’s 1st Eleven (Kings High School) from year 9 (that’s for 4th form in ‘old money’). Josh was nominated as his school’s most valued players last year.

Josh made his National League at just 16 years of age in 2014 for Southern United when he played in place of the injured Tom Batty. This was a ‘deep end’ introduction to Premiership football and as he was called on for plenty of work that day, The Otago Daily Times noted Josh’s performance that day as “the only bright spot in the gloom”. The ODT went onto write: “Dijkstra kept the score almost respectable with some brave stops and agile saves”

Southern’s coach, Luiz Uehara, commented after the game: “...one bright spot was the super performance by young Dijkstra in goal”.

Understandably Josh was Southern’s NYL player of the year.

NYL PLAYER STORIES

Calvin Lee

I started playing football at a young age after my father passed away to cancer when I was five. He was a professional goalkeeper himself in what is now known as the Chinese Super League, playing for Beijing, and of course, I naturally fell in love with the position. Although I played a season with Fencibles United in the 8th Grade, I did not play for a club again until high school, instead focusing my time on trainings and inter-school football. However, I credit my formal development to Suburbs' partner club, Ellerslie FC, the Eastern Suburbs' Premier Reserve Team whom I played for this season and the Auckland Football Federation Talent Centre.

My greatest achievements in football would include being selected as the No.1 GK for the NZ Schoolboys, training with the Qatar U17's at the Aspire Academy in Doha and winning the Dilworth School Sportsman of the Year award for 2016. Playing in the 1st XI football team at Dilworth since year 10 and captaining the side as a senior was also a memorable experience, where working together with my mates and achieving results in front of my peers and teachers was extremely rewarding. I personally love the buzz gained from making saves, keeping the team in the game and/or preserving our lead.

I'm now also really embracing the challenge of being a sweeper-keeper, a role I have developed significantly under the guidance of the Suburbs' coaches. Influential coaches would include Kris Pinnock, my former goalkeeper coach at Ellerslie, Courtney Napa, my GK coach at the Auckland Football Federation, and of course, Jesus Bueno, our current Suburbs National Youth League goalkeeper coach whom I have had the privilege of learning from, working with and being mentored by this season at the club.

Corey Walters

Starting off as a youngster I spent my early playing days at Fencibles United AFC under the wing of goal keeper coach Dave Priestley who developed my initial skill set & understanding of Keeping. In 2012 i made the Move to Eastern Suburbs where i was handed my first opportunities in senior football, whilst the infamous Kevin Fallon was in charge of the First Team and The well weathered yet very capable Andrew Webber with the reserves. Much the same could be said for the Manager of reserves at the time John Davidson (JD Senior).

Throughout my time at Suburbs I had also been working on my game with goal keeper coach Miroslav Nikolic who to date as well as Paul Marshall, who i worked with at Mount Albert Grammar (MAGS), have been the biggest Influences in my football journey so far.

Some of my most memorable moments in football would include winning the FTC national tournament with AFF, being apart of The LillyWhites 2015 first team squad who achieved winning both the NRLF Premiership League, as well as the Chatham Cup and gaining my First Team experience with Central United FC at the start of the 2016 Premier League Season, Before returning back to Eastern Suburbs in the mid-season transfer window.