

ANGE & THE BOSS

Puskás in Australia



A film by

Cam Fink, Tony Wilson & Rob Heath

angeandtheboss.com

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Film synopsis (short)

Ferenc Puskás was the player of the 1950s, an icon of world football. He was a goal scoring phenomenon for both Real Madrid and the Hungarian national team, the Magical Magyars, which lost just one game between 1950 and 1956 (tragically, for Hungary, the 1954 World Cup final)



'Ange & The Boss' tells the story of how Puskás ended up halfway around the world in Australia coaching South Melbourne Hellas between 1988-92. The Messi or Ronaldo of his era, he made a home among the Greek diaspora in Melbourne. Barely able to speak English and comedically overweight, he united and inspired the team to a dramatic

championship win in 1991. Eating, drinking, and enjoying himself along the way.

The South Melbourne Hellas captain was a young Ange Postecoglou, now coach of Tottenham Hotspur. The film explores the relationship between the two, and Puskás's influence on Australia's most successful coaching export.

But this is more than a football story. It's a story about immigration, multiculturalism, and community. Full of laughs and funny anecdotes, the film captures a beautiful chapter of footballing life in Australia.

'THE FILM IS A VIVID PORTRAIT OF A MOMENT IN TIME BUT ALSO A FASCINATING DOCUMENT OF THE IMMIGRANT EXPERIENCE.'

– The Times, UK



Film synopsis (long)

'Ange & The Boss – Puskás in Australia' opens with some of the great names of Australian football placing Ferenc Puskás in his proper context. 'One of the ten best players of all time' says Ange Postecoglou, now coach of Tottenham Hotspur in the Premier League. 'Part of the holy trinity of world football' says Craig Johnston, the former Liverpool star. We then see Puskás in his glory days, a goalscoring machine with 83 goals in 84 internationals for Hungary. As due recognition, FIFA hands out the Puskás Award to the player who scores the best goal in the world each year.

The film tells the story of how Puskás got to Australia, with spectacular never before seen footage of the sixty-something, rotund, big-bellied legend playing scratch matches on unmanicured paddocks in Melbourne's outer east. We follow him through his Australian clinics, with bizarre photos of George Best, another all-time great, turning up in the paddocks beside him.

Through a link in the Greek community, the Greek-speaking Puskás offers his services to coach South Melbourne, and a gobsmacked South Melbourne Hellas lands the biggest football name to ever coach in Australia.

It's beautiful hearing Puskás players remember their coach. They have many funny stories of a warm and charismatic man, with strange quirks and interesting philosophies. Most of all we get a sense that this was match made



in heaven, an attack-minded coach who had been forced into exile from Hungary as a result of the 1956 uprising, meeting up with a Greek community who found refuge in a football club after the trauma of civil war and immigration in the '50s and '60s.

**'A GLORIOUS FILM ABOUT
A GLORIOUS TIME'**

– Paul Trimboli

South Melbourne & Socceroos legend

The football story is excellent, the 1991 Grand Final is as close, exciting and climactic a sporting event as there has been in Australia's premier soccer competition, whether it be the NSL or the A-League. We also learn about the close relationship between Postecoglou and Puskás, and the influence one of the all time greats had on Australia's greatest coaching export.



Logline

A football legend finds joy in a far flung corner of the football world, and inspires a team and its captain to glory.

Directors' statement

What does the title of this film mean?

Puskás' players called him 'The Boss' because he invariably wore a black Hugo Boss windcheater to training, with the word 'Boss' emblazoned across the front. The Ange part of the title pushes forward Postecoglou, and the film does celebrate Puskás as a formative influence on the Tottenham manager. We included some funny anecdotes about Ange driving him around Melbourne, and Postecoglou reflects quite emotionally on how much he would have liked Puskás' 'to see what I'd become – a successful coach'.



Why did you make this movie?

The three of us are sport and football lovers, especially for quirky and overlooked stories in our own backyard. As Ange has ascended, more and more people have heard that he was coached by Puskás. But when we embarked upon this film in 2017, we were shocked how few people knew the story. When we discovered that Puskás had lived with his wife Elizabeth in Ashwood behind a garden supply, it seemed just a crazy and delightful story. Imagine Messi or Ronaldo in twenty years in Melbourne's outer east, conducting clinics and putting their hands up to coach in the A League! Then we saw the highlights of the 1991 Grand Final, and knew the film could have a sporting heart beyond the 'big fish, small pond' curiosity. We started interviewing players who played under Puskás, just to test the waters, and the stories were so funny and heart warming that we had to make the film.

We had made a previous archival sports documentary about a VFL (Aussie Rules) tour of Ireland, the UK, and the USA in 1967. We thought this was a good follow up. Local in setting, but with an international figure at its centre.



What archive does it contain?

We have great highlights from NSL in the Puskás era, and Football Australia have been generous in donating the use of matchday footage from the era. We also set up Puskás' achievements with highlights from his playing days for Hungary and Real Madrid, and the Hungarian National Archive (NIV) has amazing clips that show what a rock star he was. But maybe the most exciting archive is the footage donated by Parkmore Soccer Club, which shows Puskás in his Australian context — round of tummy but still exquisitely skilled. When James Gheerbrant of the Times UK watched a rough cut of the film, he wrote:

“Some of the vignettes of archive footage are simply delightful. We see Puskás taking training in a black tracksuit with the word “BOSS” emblazoned on the front and a whistle around his neck. Puskás giving an entire stadium of home fans the bird after they chant for him to bring a popular substitute on. Puskás playing in an amateur game on some rutted farmland pitch, carrying his prodigious stomach with the upright majesty of a ramrod-backed marching-band major carrying his bass drum, caressing 50-yard passes and smoking half-volleys into the top corner with minimal effort or flamboyance.”

What is the film's multicultural heart?

Puskás was in exile 1956 to 1981, unwilling to return to his beloved Hungary after the Soviet crackdown against the uprising of 1956. He wandered the football world, playing in Spain and coaching in far flung territories such as Paraguay and Egypt.

The Greeks of Melbourne suffered a similar trauma, being forced to flee civil war and seek a better life, so far away. They embraced Puskás partly because he was a Greek hero as well as Hungarian one, having coached Panathinaikos in Athens to the European Cup final in 1971. He spoke Greek very well.

The film documents the ethnic heart that beat at the centre of the old NSL – how each club had their ‘old world’ affiliations. There is beautiful footage donated by the Agapitos family that shows Greek migrant life in Melbourne, and interviewees discuss the reasons a club like South Melbourne became ‘the shining Greek club’ for factory workers, labourers and small business owners, attempting to make it within an Anglo-dominated Australia.

We found it very moving – especially when Ange Postecoglou talks about his parents, and his father's 1991 post-Grand Final pitch invasion, and how he'd hoped he made him proud.



How long did it take to make the film?

We started interviewing in 2017. Indeed, the central interview with Ange Postecoglou was recorded two days after he finished as head coach of the Socceroos, which now seems a long time ago. Certainly, triumph after triumph has followed him since then. The good news about the time delays for our interviewees is that they look fresh-faced and youthful!

We had a rough cut of the film made by 2021, but the struggle over the last few years has involved finding funds to pay for an expensive archive.

What music have you used?

David Bridie (My Friend the Chocolate Cake, Not Drowning Waving) did the score for our first film 'The Galahs' and his experience writing and producing with world music legends like Frank Yamma and George Telek made him a perfect choice for Ange & The Boss. David assembled an incredible group of studio musicians, and weighed an interesting balance between Greek rembetika and Hungarian folk. For our Ange montage, we have a spot of Robbie Williams and the terrace anthem 'I'm Loving Big Ange Instead' (lyrics, James Black) as a backdrop to the incredible Ange Postecoglou ascension. Robbie himself sings us into the montage! He was incredibly generous allowing use of that footage in our film. We love the Hungarian folk song that backs our closing montage, 'Repulj Madar, Repulj' (Fly, bird, fly) which was sung by Hope Csutoros from My Friend the Chocolate Cake. She has a Hungarian background and really delivered with this performance.

What were some of the memorable parts of the editing process?

A lot of this film was edited during covid lockdown. Cam was in New Zealand, and Rob and Tony were in Melbourne, and we would set alarms for early in the morning (very early for Tony and Rob) and we'd share screens on Zoom and put a film together.

We edited in sections – eg Hungarian uprising, the Welcome function, Ange as driver, the 1991 Grand Final; Puskás legacy – and then we strung those sections together.

We realised at one point that we lacked some connective tissue between some of the sections. A feature of the film is that it has no voiceover so we interviewed Puskas Foundation Board representative Robert Belteky quite a long time after our other interviewees, and he helped us with linking sentences.



What do you hope audiences take away from the film?

The film has a strong feelgood element. It tells a sporting story about team harmony, and how a coach or manager doesn't have to be tactical genius if he can bind people together. Our film is actually really funny – we couldn't have been luckier in terms of charismatic, entertaining interviewees. We're loving hearing genuine gales of laughter from full cinemas.

It also shows that the NSL was an exciting competition, with passionate crowds and high-quality players. A feeling all three of us had making the film was 'why weren't we going to these matches?' The atmosphere was incredible, the standard of football decent. We think audiences will love our interviewees. We asked them to dredge their memories for stories, and these amazing raconteurs share anecdote after anecdote – Puskás and the rain, Puskás and the balancing ball, Puskás and the pasta platter. Football fans who loved King Otto will love our film just as much – and, just quietly, our players are more eloquent, and funnier!

We also hope that migrant families and the children and grandchildren of migrants, sit in the cinema and think about the sacrifices and challenges their forebears faced, and the role football had in smoothing the way.

How did you finance the film?

When the film premiered at the Greek film Festival in October 2024, it was entirely financed by crowdfunding through the Documentary Australia Foundation, and our own filmmaker contributions. We have now had 142 donors who have donated a total of \$87,000 and we thank them all in the credits. It includes six generous 'super donors' who have mainly chosen to remain anonymous. It wouldn't have happened without them.



What's next for the film?

The film was the hit of this year's Greek Film Festival in Melbourne and Sydney. It sold out eight sessions and 1500 tickets, including a 1000-strong full house at the Astor for its Melbourne premiere. We hope the film has a strong festival life. We've entered it far and wide, and are so excited to be going to Palermo in December 2024 for the Paladino d'Oro Sport Film Festival, where Ange & The Boss is a finalist. We hope our film travels far and wide in 2025, and that we're there alongside it!

The film will also have a commercial release in 2025. In Melbourne, we have short seasons arranged with Nova, Classic and the Thornbury Picture House. We are looking for other independent cinemas around Australia to take us on.

It will come out on the DocPlay streaming service early- to mid- 2025, after its cinema run.

We are also interested in an international release.



Filmmaker biographies



Tony Wilson (director, producer & writer)

Tony Wilson is a Melbourne-based author, radio presenter and filmmaker who had his break into the media through the ABC travel documentary show Race Around the World. He is the author of the much loved football memoir, 'Australia United' and was part of the on-screen team for 'Santo Sam and Ed's Cup Fever'. He has written over 20 books for children and adults including '1989 The Great Grand Final' about the AFL epic of that year. His debut sports documentary with this Sepia Tones team was 'The Galahs', about a VFL tour of Ireland in 1967. It premiered at MIFF 2016 and is currently airing on Stan, Binge, Foxtel and DocPlay. He curates the speeches website Speakola and writes the popular newsletter 'Good one, Wilson' which has 2500 subscribers on Substack. More at tonywilson.com.au



Cam Fink (director, editor, DOP & writer)

Cam is a filmmaker and media specialist who makes a living filming events and conducting seminars on how to look good on camera. He has travelled the world filming events, including segments for 'Santo, Sam and Ed's Cup Fever' and tour videos for Geoff Lemon and Adam Collins (The Final Word). Cam is a World Cup junkie and has taken fan footage and street stories at four FIFA World Cups. His first film was 'The Galahs'. More at camfink.com



Rob Heath (director & writer)

Rob was a driving force during pre-production and filming, and organised most of the interviews. He sourced much of the archive and did a great deal of the early research. He works as a senior barrister in Melbourne, specialising in commercial matters. He was also part of the team for 'The Galahs' (2016).



Press and reviews

‘The vignettes of archive footage are simply delightful’ – The Times (UK)

‘A fascinating insight into the bond between Puskás and Postecoglou’ – The Standard (UK)

‘One of the greatest untold football stories ever. Genuinely astonishing, beautifully nostalgic and bloody funny. A pearler of a film.’ - Santo Cilauro, Working Dog Productions

‘A glorious film about a glorious time’ – Paul Trimboli – South Melbourne legend