

# Hibs' duo Martin Boyle and Jackson Irvine won't get chance to face Lionel Messi this summer

Hibs' players Martin Boyle and Jackson Irvine will not have the chance to play against Argentina and the world's top player Lionel Messi this summer.

The Soccerroos announced yesterday they will not participate in this year's Copa America which will be hosted by Argentina and Colombia in June and July.







The withdrawal took place due to the coronavirus pandemic which forced changes to their 2022 World Cup qualifying schedule

Socceroos head coach Graham Arnold echoed his disappointment. "The Soccerroos' players and staff were greatly looking forward to the unique opportunity of playing in the Copa America and it is unfortunate that, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we will be unable to attend in 2021.

"On behalf of the team, I thank CONMEBOL for the invitation, which would have presented our team with a fantastic opportunity to test itself against some of the world's best."

Football Australia chief executive James Johnson added: "It is with great disappointment that Australia cannot feature at the Copa America in 2021.

"Regrettably, the international football calendar, including our FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 qualification schedule, has been significantly disrupted over the past 12 months by the COVID-19 pandemic.

"On behalf of the Australian football community, I would like to thank CONMEBOL for their warm invitation to the tournament, as well as their continued dialogue regarding our participation over the past year. We would also like to thank AFC and FIFA which supported our invitation to the tournament in 2019.

“To have participated in such a prestigious competition and to experience the unique South American football culture would have been a thrill for Australian players, staff and fans alike. We wish CONMEBOL every success in the delivery for the Copa America and remain hopeful for an opportunity to participate in future editions of the competition.”

Photos by Ian Jacobs