**Strange Days in NZ soccer**

**Part 1**

Nominations are now open for the Homer Simpson Award for the stupidest All White squad member of the year. Here's a sample of the leading contenders following New Zealand's trip to China this month...
Joshua "Dip" Stick: Called himself "Josh" on his visa application form for Guangzhou when his passport said Joshua, and had it refused by Chinese immigration officials. Doh.
Jason "Totally" Batty: Arrived with his passport already full, and no room for a visa page. He was late arriving in China because he had to make an emergency trip to China to have extra pages stapled in his passport. Should have been better prepared considering he's off to Aussie every fortnight.
"Simple" Simon Elliott: The Stanford University history graduate somehow managed to get a completely wrong passport number on his application. Try a semester in maths Simon.
"Punctual" Paul Uriovic: Australian-based Uriovic is pretty sharp as a striker, but perhaps dull in other matters, it seems, as he showed by missing his flight from Melbourne to join the All Whites Auckland on January 10. (In his defence he claims NZ Soccer never contacted him directly, but asked a player from a rival club to give him a bell.)

**Part 2**

As far as soccer comebacks go, the efforts of Nigel Mattison are hard to beat. The NZ Soccer board member has been reappointed to Canterbury's board and re-elected as chairman - less than a month after being voted out of office by the organisation's affiliates.
So, one minute he's not good enough to hold the chairmanship, the next he is co-opted onto the board and made chairman in the same sitting.
Mattison and fellow director Garry Lund were unseated at Canterbury's Soccer's annual meeting on December 13 and replaced with former Halswell United chairman Kevin Clarke, and Jade Stadium general manager Campbell Prentice.
But another director, Dunedin-based Baden Ewart, resigned at a board meeting in early January. So the board invited Mattison to take his place, then unanimously decided to make him chairman.
But delegates at the AGM started the weirdness. They axed Mattison, yet had no hesitation in accepting a restructuring plan he had masterminded.

**Part 3**

After lamenting their inability to get more people to Albany for home matches, the Kingz were stunned when thousands finally turned up on January 14 - unaware the match had been postponed because of All Whites commitments.
While the fans were disgruntled, it shows the Kingz are doing something right. They have gained the support of all the Aucklanders that do not read the paper, do not read the match programme, do not watch television and do not listen to the radio. And all achieved without any advertising too. Brilliant.