

ICONS & INFLUENCERS

Meet 'Hong Kong's Cristiano Ronaldo', Matt Orr: the 26-year-old began playing at age four and just helped the city to the Asian Games quarter-final for the first time in 65 years

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Meet Hong Kong's answer to Cristiano Ronaldo, Matt Orr. Photo: @mattorr8/Instagram

+ Matt Orr's recent goal against Palestine in the Asian Games helped catapult Hong Kong to the quarter-finals – the first time the city had reached the last 8 of the competition in 65 years

+ The born-and-bred Hongkonger honed his skills at Kitchee SC and inherited his love of football from his Kiwi dad – who used to play professionally for New Zealand

Hong Kong professional footballer Matt Orr has established a remarkable reputation in the city's sporting sphere of late.

Orr, who plays striker, netted a pivotal goal against Palestine just last month at the Asian Games. The goal gave Hong Kong a 1-0 win, advancing them into the quarter-finals.



Matt Orr scored a crucial goal against Palestine in the Asian Games, putting Hong Kong through to the next stage. Photo: @mattorr8/Instagram

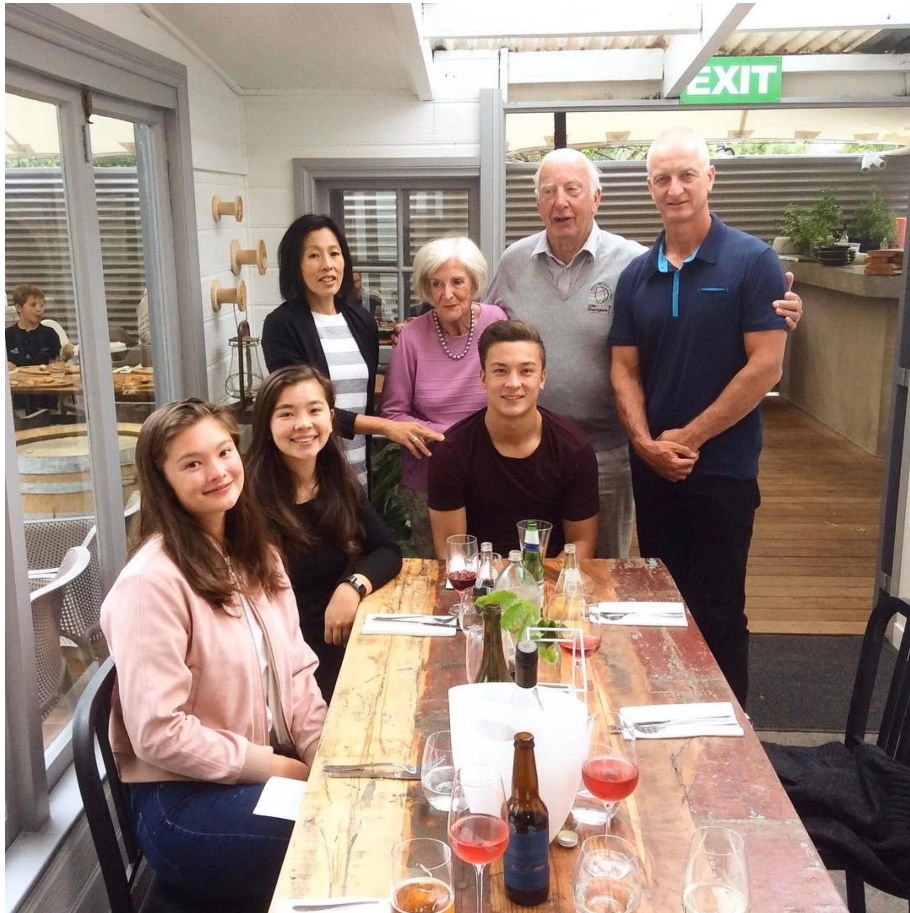
It was a defining moment for the city, as it marked the first time Hong Kong secured a position among the top eight contenders in the Asian Games

since 1958.

Although the team suffered a 4-0 defeat to Japan last Wednesday during the semi-finals, Orr's prowess on the field and dashing good looks have earned him the title of "Hong Kong's Cristiano Ronaldo" from fans and the local media.

Here's what we know about Hong Kong's budding football star.

Matt Orr was born and raised in Hong Kong



Matt Orr with his family. Photo: @mattorr8/Instagram

Matthew Elliot Wing Kai Chin Orr was born in Hong Kong to parents Andrew Orr and Janice Chinn on January 1, 1997. His father is from New Zealand and his mother is Chinese.

The 26-year-old attended Canadian International School in Hong Kong and at just 11 years old joined Kitchee's Academy, a football academy in Hong Kong, according to Sportsroad.

He always knew he wanted to be a football player



*Hong Kong striker Matt Orr battles for the ball during his side's East Asian Football Championship game against South Korea last year.
Photo: HKFA*

Orr decided early on that he wanted to pursue football professionally. The Hong Kong striker has been playing the sport since he was four and largely owes his passion for it to his father, who was also a professional player for New Zealand.

"I've fallen in love with the sport since day one, and it has become part of my daily life ever since," he said in an interview with local media.

His journey so far



Matt Orr first began kicking a ball around aged four – now he plays with some of the best. Photo: @mattorr8/Instagram

Just a year after joining Kitchee, at age 12, Orr earned the opportunity to represent Hong Kong on the U13 team of the Jockey Club Youth Football League, a huge accomplishment for a budding player.

Two years after that, Orr reportedly enrolled at the IMG Academy in Florida, a prestigious boarding school renowned for its excellent sports facilities. He would return to train with Kitchee SC every summer. Perhaps unsurprisingly, his LinkedIn profile says that he “excels in extremely competitive, pressured environments”.



Matt Orr played in the US for a while, including at IMG Academy, known for its exceptional facilities. Photo: @mattorr8/Instagram

Orr made an eventual return to Hong Kong and Kitchee SC after graduating from Syracuse University in New York as a scholarship athlete.

His shocking departure from Kitchee SC



Matt Orr signed his first professional contract with Kitchee SC after returning from the U.S. Photo: @mattorr8/Instagram

Orr dedicated a substantial portion of his life honing his skills with Kitchee, so it came as a shock for local football enthusiasts when the player chose to sever his 17-year relationship with his boyhood team.

“I was looking for that next challenge, because domestic football in Hong Kong is not the highest level. I was always looking to move on eventually. The right opportunity came, and I felt the time was right now, so I made that step into China,” said Orr in an interview with local media.

Currently signed to China League One club Guangxi Pingguo Haliao, Orr’s future looks bright indeed.