

## **HENRIK MKHITARYAN'S EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW FOR ARMENIAN-SOCCER.COM**

*Agencies, Newspapers and Internet sites can freely reproduce the content, quoting the source: armenian-soccer.com. Any content reproduced will not be used for marketing purposes or sold/transferred to third parties for marketing purposes.*

1. Armenian Soccer: After 2 weeks on FC Shakhtar roster, what is your opinion on the club? Have the reality met your expectations?

Henrik Mkhitarian: Within 10 days I have managed to become friends with all the players. I should say this club has very strong footballers.

2. AS: You will compete with Jadson for a starting lineup place. Do you know his strengths and weaknesses? Is it going to be hard to compete with him?

HM: I do not need to know his strengths and weaknesses. What I have to do is progress so that he does not reach me. I do not consider Jadson as my rival but a teammate. I am really glad that he plays on my position.

3. AS: Have you already managed to communicate with your teammates? What are they like on and off the pitch?

HM: I do not put difference between Ukrainian and foreign players while communicating. They are all very friendly.

4. AS: Due to what factors you have preferred FC Shakhtar to Werder Bremen? These clubs are of equal strength, but German Bundesliga is more competitive than the Ukrainian Premier Liga.

HM: I have never received an invitation to join Werder that is why I have chosen FC Shakhtar. Comparing both clubs, FC Shakhtar is now ranked higher than Werder on the UEFA Club ranking, although Bundesliga is a slightly stronger championship.

5. AS: In 2008, Olympique Lyonnais was interested in your service. How do you view the possibility to return to France? You know the country well and have no adaptation issues.

HM: If there is an invitation from France I will think it over. However, it will be better to improve in some other championship because I also know the French league's unfavorable sides.

6. AS: It is known that Mircea Lucescu is your so-called fan. Have you already felt a special attitude from him?

HM: No, he never puts me higher than the other players. Just the other way around, he is more strict and fastidious towards me.

7. AS: FC Shakhtar is apparently not your last club. Which country's championship do you like more? Where do you see yourself at your career's next step?

HM: I always say that I like England's championship and, if there is a chance, I would be happy to play there for several years. It is early to talk about my career's next phase, because I still have not done or achieved anything in FC Shakhtar.

8. AS: While playing for Metallurg Donetsk you were staying at the club's training facilities. How are things in Shakhtar now?

HM: I am still staying at the training facilities and will be staying until the goals and tasks I face are fulfilled.

9. AS: How do you spend your spare time? Is Donetsk a good city to go out? Are there special places in town that you like?

HM: I do not have spare time because this season's schedule is too tight, that is 2 games per week. All my spare time is taken up by recovery process.

10. AS: Your debut game for FC Shakhtar (vs Obolon) went not so well. What are the reasons?

HM: Yes, my debut game was not successful, but I do not think that just one first game can be decisive. I look forward and think about the next games.

11. AS: You were not on the lineup for the UEFA Champions League game against Partizan Belgrade. When do you think you will make your debut in the UCL?

HM: I did not play because, apparently, the coach did not want me to play, that is, he did not see me on his tactical scheme for that game. When he thinks I can be useful for the team I will play.

12. AS: Please comment on FC Shakhtar's chances to make it to the UCL play-offs. Many think that the Group H is not so hard.

HM: I should say that our task is to make way to the play-offs and it will not be easy. We gained important 3 points from the first game but it will be more important to get 3 points against FC Braga.

13. AS: Talking about the 2 games Armenian National Team had played: explain, please, what happened during the game against FYROM, was it psychology again?

HM: There is no need to make tragedy of that, because nothing really happened. We now have to be happy about the way we play. Over the last years we hardly managed to play two consecutive games in a stable manner and now everything is going on as planned.

14. AS: You and Sargis Hovsepyan are the leaders of our National Team. What are the chances that things happened during the game with FYROM will not happen in 2 weeks during the game against Slovakia?

HM: Who knows what will happen tomorrow? We always go out to the pitch to win, but there is no guarantee what will happen on the pitch.

15. AS: Everyone expected that this time around our National Team will have a good start in EURO 2012 qualifying stage, but it went like it went, we got 1 point out of 6. In this connection, can you please estimate our team's chances for this qualifying stage?

HM: Who said that we should necessarily gain 6 points in first two games? I am again saying that no team is secured from defeats. Neither we understood how could we lose against FYROM, but it happened as it happened.

16. AS: Do you have an idol among footballers?

HM: Zidane.

17. AS: Do you agree that a footballer who wants to progress to a high-class player, especially on your position, should possess some intellectual assets?

HM: Not only on my position. A player on every position must be intelligent to overcome all the difficulties to become a strong footballer.

18. AS: Do you agree that our National Team should be better managed by a high-class foreign specialist?

HM: If you have a whole bunch of good players a coach could change just something, not much, to achieve the result. But if you mean a coach as a good psychologist, that could change a lot.

19. AS: Thank you for your time and we wish you success both in club and the National Team.

HM: Thank you.