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KUWAIT VS SOCCEROOS:

Aussies seal emphatic 4-0 win in Graham Arnold's first match in charge

THE second coming of Graham Arnold is off to a winning start, with his new-look Socceroos registering a 4-0 victory over Kuwait in their first outing.

A 12th minute own goal handed the Aussies a dream start, before Apostolos Giannou's first international goal doubled the advantage just nine minutes later.

Tom Rogic crowned an excellent outing with a late goal before a special moment for debutant Awer Mabil rounded out the emphatic victory not long before full time.

It was Australia's first ever win on Kuwaiti soil.

In what appeared a mismatch in terms of quality, Arnold's men dominated territory and possession in a strong first half, and perhaps were unlucky not to led by more.

But after the break a pair of substitutes spurred an improved Kuwait showing as the game evened out briefly before the Aussie bench powered a strong finish.

"The first half was total domination for Australia, 2-0 at half time probably didn't reflect the amount of balls into the area," said Fox Sports analyst Robbie Slater.

Keeper Danny Vukovic didn't even touch the ball until the 32nd minute but in the second stanza he was forced into a couple of big saves as the home side pushed to reduce the deficit.

The Aussies were in control from the word go and when Robbie Kruse's dangerously-swung cross from the left was headed home by Khaled El Ebrahim the new era was off to a flying start.

Arnold used the clash as an opportunity to hand game time to some exciting young stars. With the pair joined on the park for the closing stages by Mustafa Amini, Tomi Juric, Alex Gersbach and speedster Daniel Arzani, who immediately showed the pace and directness that make him so highly rated.

Socceroos Player Ratings v Kuwait:

DANNY VUKOVIC - 6

A quiet evening for the stopper in just his 2nd cap. Didn't even get a touch in the opening half hour, but made a pair of good second half saves when he was finally called into action.

AZIZ BEHICH - 6.5

Spent most of his time in opposition territory, such was the domination of the Aussies. Looked excellent linking up with Kruse down the left especially for the opener.

MARK MILLIGAN - 6

Handed the Socceroos captaincy for this clash, the veteran was solid in the heart of defence and led strongly. Not really tested as Kuwait's striker received little to no service.

TRENT SAINSBURY - 5

Not the best outing for the centre-back, and he was perhaps lucky to still be on the pitch at full time. Made an error that created a big chance, and a pair of strong challenges within a minute could easily have seen red.



Apostolos Giannou celebrates scoring the opening goal, his first international strike for Australia.

JOSH RISDON - 6.5

Didn't really put a foot wrong defensively and almost managed to find himself a first international goal going forward. Like Behich, was able to sit high for much of the clash, and forced a good stop in the second half after carrying the ball central.

MASSIMO LUONGO - 8

A really assured performance from the midfielder, who was deployed in a deeper role alongside Jackson Irvine. He controlled the tempo, sprayed some good passes and played his role with composure. Makes you wonder why he wasn't used in the World Cup...

JACKSON IRVINE - 7

Handed a start in midfield with Mooy absent and showed his worth. An excellent ball to create the second for Giannou as he patrolled the centre of the park with authority. Copped an injury scare just seconds into the second half, but played on before being replaced on 72 minutes.

TOM ROGIC - 8.5

The Wizard of Oz has been urged to take his game to the next level for the national team, and enjoyed a strong night in Kuwait. Looked to get in between the lines and spur the Aussies forward and was rewarded with a goal late on. A strong showing as he rifled off four shots and delivered 12 balls into the box.

ROBBIE KRUSE - 7

Got proceedings off to a strong start as his dangerous ball forced an own goal after just 12 minutes. Another strong delivery to tee up Leckie just before half time, but there was no reward. Substituted after 64 minutes.

MATHEW LECKIE - 6

A quiet game by his lofty standards. The winger got into

some good positions, including the one where he was handed a golden chance by Kruse. But on that occasion he scuffed his shot into the turf.

APOSTOLOS GIANNOU - 6.5

DANIEL ARZANI - 7

What a player this kid is. Exciting from the minute he entered the field of play, as he displayed trademark speed and agility to torment the Kuwait defence. Created a great chance just four minutes into being on the pitch... how isn't he getting a chance at Celtic?!

TOMI JURIC - 6.5

Given 26 minutes to show his worth, Juric created one moment of magic in his five touches. His excellent run and through ball created a debut goal for Awer Mabil.

AWER MABIL - 7

Similarly to Arzani, his pace and willingness to run the ball is a delight to watch. He livened up the attack further in his 18-minute cameo and crowned his debut with a special goal.

MUSTAFA AMINI - N/A

Handed 18 minutes as he returned to the Socceroos fold, he didn't really have enough time to make his mark on proceedings in midfield.

ALEX GERSBACH - N/A

Replaced Risdon with just eight minutes to play, not enough time to make an impact.

THOMAS DENG - N/A

What a moment for the Melbourne Victory defender as he made his international debut. Played just 15 minutes but got the chance to celebrate a special goal.