

BABEL BLASTS WOUNDED WANDERERS

Melbourne Victory are making a statement and their imports are lighting up the A-League: it's looking like a one-two battle between Aussie coaches at the top of the A-League.

The competition's pre-eminent midfield maestros - Keisuke Honda and Alex Baumjohann - promised a tactical battle and it was no surprise that the match's early tempo reflected their quality, but Honda quickly stole the show with a brilliant header from a Terry Antonis cross in the opening minutes.

What started promisingly ended up a 4-0 rout, posing a few questions for Markus Babel; the Wanderers could slip behind Wellington Phoenix into ninth if the Nix can scrape a point against Perth Glory tomorrow.

Victory's had a knack of recruiting top class imports and this season's proved no different, Honda setting up Raul Baena on the half hour mark for a sensational second. Before halftime Kosta Barbarouses made it three after bamboozling Tarek Elrich into a spot kick. It was rounded off deservedly by Terry Antonis after a brilliant series of combinations.

The Wanderers failed to live up to their Marvel Stadium billing but the Big V were making a statement: Perth Glory have got serious competition in this lot.

«**We won** 4-0 so we can't complain, we started off really well so we let our concentration down, but I'm still satisfied,» Ola Toivonen said.

«**I'm not** a (usual) kind of striker, I like to pass to my teammates as well and I'm looking forward to next weekend. That's what's beautiful about football and teams, you can always improve on something.»

Markus Babel called it «boys against men» and after Tarek Elrich was dominated in an unnatural centrehalf position, the defender was quick to acknowledge his own lacklustre performance against Toivonen.

«**Like hell,**» he admitted. «They were the better team from the start, that's just not good enough if we want to be the best.

«**It's up** to us to turn things around, today we weren't up for it. Sometimes you've got to grind it out to get the result and today was simply not good enough.

«**Our pressure** wasn't good enough and if you try to press a high line against a good team, you can get punished. We're going to really push each other until the next game.»

Melbourne Victory star Terry Antonis was one of the players that punished the Western Sydney Wanderers on Saturday

