

nsw



By George Stavroulakis



Milos Degenek: Take responsibility for the loss

Milos Degenek has launched a remarkable mea culpa across television interviews and social media this morning, taking full responsibility for costing his «brothers a chance to live the dream.»

Degenek's mistake gifted the sole goal of Australia's 1-0 loss to the United Arab Emirates' to the hosts, as Australia slumped out of the Asian Cup.

The Socceroos defender's 68th minute backpass to Mat Ryan was easily intercepted by UAE's star striker, Ali Mabkhout, who then rounded the Aussie keeper before tucking away the quarter-final's only strike.

Rather than hide from the criticism, Degenek emerged immediately on both Instagram and television to take responsibility for the loss.

«I won't hide away from the fact I cost our country and my brothers the chance to live the dream by winning another trophy,» he posted.

«I don't need anyone to show sympathy or say sorry, it's football, it happened. «It is the biggest honour to be playing for Australia, the country I love, and the month we had here was amazing.»

While Degenek's mistake led to the Socceroos conceding, most of the criticism has been levelled at Graham Arnold for a tumultuous campaign.

Australia opened their tournament with a disappointing 1-0 loss to Jordan, which immediately led to calls among fans for the coach's replacement. After a spirited response to win against Palestine, a shaky 3-2 win against Syria allowed Australia to progress from the group stages.

The Socceroos then relied on penalties to get past Uzbekistan, who had multiple chances to win their Round of 16 match by limited Australia to lackadaisical ball movement.

Degenek had been one of Australia's most consistent performers in both the lead-up and then throughout the tournament, leading to the defender signing a contract with Saudi Arabian giants Al Hilal after Australia's group stage progression.

«He's stepped up this tournament and done fantastically well,» Arnold said.

«Obviously he's hurting at the moment but I'll make sure that he's okay.

«He's a fantastic kid, fantastic professional and he's got a long future with the Australian national team.»

ΣΥΛΛΥΠΗΤΗΡΙΑ

Μας συγκλόνισε βαθιά η είδηση του χαμού της Μαρίας Γεωργιάδου, μητέρας του εξαιρετικού συνεργάτη μας Γιάννη Γεωργιάδη, την οποία είχαμε την τιμή να τη γνωρίσουμε. Η κυρία Μαρία ήταν ένας υπέροχος άνθρωπος γεμάτη αγάπη για τη ζωή και για τον πλησίον της. Με αξιοπρέπεια έδινε μάχη με την ασθένειά της και ταυτόχρονα έδινε τη θετική της ενέργεια στους φίλους. Ας ηρεμήσει και ας είναι ελαφρύ το χόμα που θα τη σκεπάζει.. Από καρδιάς εκφράζουμε τα θερμά όσο και ειλικρινή μας συλλυπητήρια στο σύζυγο της, στα παιδιά της και τους συγγενείς της.

Ο ΚΟΣΜΟΣ



Out of the Asian Cup

They say lightning doesn't strike twice, but just don't tell that to Graham Arnold. Twelve years after the Socceroos were knocked out of the Asian Cup at the quarter-final stage, in his first stint as national team boss, Australia suffered the same fate in the UAE with Arnold again at the helm.

Apart from the exit at the same point, the Socceroos' side of 2007 has little in common with that of 2019. Back then it was the team of the 'Golden Generation', filled with European-based stars fresh off their 2006 World Cup success in Germany. Some of the greatest-ever to wear the green and gold.

But they were inexperienced about the challenges of Asian football and ultimately departed the tournament early.

The 2019 edition is a different animal. While this team boasts some seasoned veterans – Mark Milligan, Mat Ryan, Robbie Kruse, Trent Sainsbury, Matt Leckie etc – there was also a large amount of rookies learning the ropes. It is an outfit in transition.

However, this side cannot claim not to be ignorant about the perils and obstacles of Asia. Australia has been playing in the AFC for more than a decade.

The Socceroos entered the 2019 tournament as defending champions. It was always going to be hard going to defend and retain the title. That job was made even harder with injuries to Aaron Mooy, Daniel Arzani, Mat Leckie and Martin Boyle before the tournament started, and then to Andrew Nabbout and Josh Risdon once it began.

But injuries are part and parcel of professional sport. You cannot moan about what you don't have, you have to move on and work with what you do.

And it was clear that Arnold struggled to do just that.

After the defeat to the UAE he told the media: «We came here to the Middle East and we've performed very well.... I'll be honest - I think that we've done very, very well this tournament.»

Umm, sorry? What? Arnold seems to have a different idea to what performing "very, very well" is compared to most.

Most would say going out at the quarter-final stage, losing to Jordan and the UAE, and labouring to beat both Syria and Uzbekistan would not constitute success. Most would say scoring only six goals in five games, failing to score in three of those matches, was not a success.

I get that Arnold has to be a positive spin on things, has to remain somewhat optimistic. But you can't put lipstick on a pig.

#SokkahTwitter has an excellent bullshit detector.

A LEAGUE Results 16 ROUND



Adelaide United - Central Coast Mariners 2-1
Melbourne Victory - Sydney FC 2-1
Wellington Phoenix - Melbourne City 1-0
Brisbane Roar - WS Wanderers 2-2

A - LEAGUE Table 16 Round

	Team	GP	Pts	W	D	L	GF	GA	+/-
1	Perth Glory	16	37	11	4	1	33	16	17
2	Melbourne Victory	16	33	10	3	3	36	19	17
3	Sydney FC	16	32	10	2	4	29	19	10
4	Melbourne City	16	27	8	3	5	21	16	5
5	Adelaide United	16	26	7	5	4	21	17	4
6	Wellington Phoenix	16	26	7	5	4	24	21	3
7	Newcastle Jets	16	15	4	3	9	15	22	-7
8	WS Wanderers	16	10	2	4	10	23	35	-12
9	Brisbane Roar	16	9	1	6	9	18	34	-16
10	Central Coast Mariners	16	6	1	3	12	16	37	-21

A - LEAGUE 17 ROUND

DATE	HOME	AWAY	VENUE	Kick-Off (AEDT)
Friday, 1 February 2019	Western Sydney Wanderers FC	Newcastle Jets	ANZ Stadium	7:50PM
Saturday, 2 February 2019	Central Coast Mariners	Melbourne Victory	Central Coast Stadium	5:35PM
Saturday, 2 February 2019	Adelaide United	Brisbane Roar FC	Coopers Stadium	7:50PM
Saturday, 2 February 2019	Perth Glory	Wellington Phoenix	nib Stadium	10:00PM
Sunday, 3 February 2019	Sydney FC	Melbourne City FC	Jubilee Stadium	5:00PM