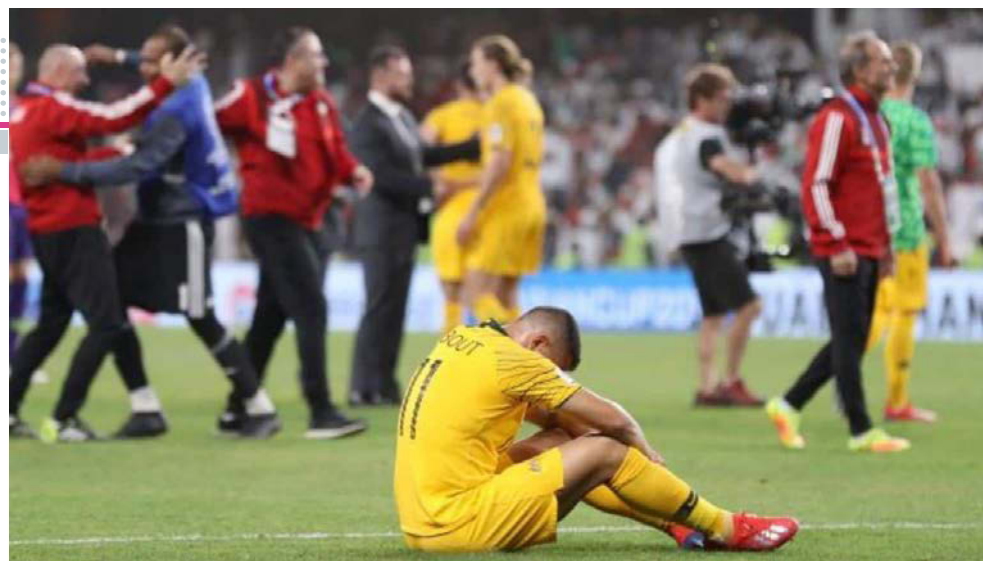


**Former Soccerroo Scott Chipperfield has been announced as the new Illawarra Stingrays head coach for the 2019 National Premier Leagues NSW Women's competition in a huge coup for the proud South Coast club.**



# AFC ASIAN CUP UAE 2019

## UAE — AUSTRALIA 1-0 SOCCEROOS

The Soccerroos lost 1-0 to host nation UAE on Friday at a packed Hazza Bin Mohammed Stadium despite dominating the clash.

Degenek's short backpass in the 68th minute allowed UAE striker Ali Mabkhout to nip in and round Mat Ryan before slotting into an empty net.

That mistake was enough to put the hosts into a semi-final showdown with Gulf rivals Qatar and eliminate Graham Arnold's men.

Australia were much-improved on their at-times sluggish display in the round-of-16 clash with Uzbekistan and appeared to have the match in hand before Degenek's error.

Just moments before birthday boy Apostolos Giannou, starting up front alongside Jamie Maclaren in a revamped line up, thought he'd put the Soccerroos

ahead.

The Cyprus-based striker combined with Mathew Leckie to slot home in the 63rd minute but the effort was ruled out with Leckie offside in the build up.

The first half was probably the most open Australia have been involved in at the tournament.

Buoyed on by their home fans, the UAE made a barnstorming start with Ismail Alhammadi particularly dangerous down the left.

Australia had their chances too, with Trent Sainsbury heading well over despite being completely unmarked from a corner in the fifth minute.

UAE came closest to scoring when Mark Milligan was caught in possession in the 21st minute and the hosts worked the ball to Alhammadi but his strike was well blocked by Ryan.



Mat Ryan was helpless after a poor back pass from Milos Degenek

## Soccerroos vs UAE Player Ratings

*FTBL dissects the action as the Soccerroos exit stage left, succumbing to a 1-0 loss to hosts United Arab Emirates in the Asian Cup.*

### Mat Ryan - 7

**Saved from** Al Hamadi after 20 minutes, and barely had a save to make thereafter. Given little chance of denying Mabkhout after he was sold short by the Degenek back-pass.

### Rhyan Grant - 7

**Copped (somewhat amusing)** boos from the home fans every time he touched the ball - presumably due to his "unethical" haircut.

**Hurled several** deep long throws into the area in the dying minutes of the game.

### Trent Sainsbury - 7

**Scored the** opening goal against the UAE back in 2015, and almost repeated the trick with a free header from a corner in the first five minutes, but the PSV man mistimed his jump and nodded over. Outstanding positional reads to cut out several promising Emirati attacks.

### Milos Degenek - 4

**Let Mabkhout** out of his sight for what might've been a costly moment, but the striker couldn't connect with the cross. Otherwise solid throughout the first half, and picked out Giannou with a line-splitting pass.

**His horror** moment came in the 68th minute, when a hospital back-pass fell well short of Ryan and straight into the path of Mabkout,

who rounded the goalkeeper and scored with ease. Mohammed Abdulrahman may have clipped his heels, but it was never enough for a VAR intervention.

### Aziz Behich - 6.5

**More cautious** with his overlaps than his colleague on the opposite flank. Generally solid and wasn't often beaten down his side, but wasn't much of an attacking threat.

### Mark Milligan - 7

**Committed a** woeful turnover in the middle of the park that should've resulted in the UAE opener, but Al Hamadi couldn't make him pay.

**Unnecessary foul** on Bandar gave away a dangerous free kick on the stroke of halftime. From the resulting set piece, a zonal mix-up between he and Sainsbury let Mabkhout in for a free header, but the 2015 Golden Boot winner couldn't keep the effort down.

**Didn't have** the imagination or passing range to bridge the gap between himself and the front four. Committed to 50/50 balls in his usual tenacious manner, but it was quite frankly bizarre that he remained on the pitch as Australia chased the game.

### Jackson Irvine - 5.5

**Plenty of** energy, but his use of the ball lacked imagination, and he failed to take advantage

of several headers from set pieces.

**Nearly started** a fight in stoppage time when he wrestled a prone UAE player to his feet, which will no doubt have won him some admirers in living rooms across Australia.

### Chris Ikonomidis - 7.5

**A tricky** customer for UAE to deal with, and his set piece delivery was consistently dangerous. Had a good opportunity in the first half but his left-footed effort lacked conviction. Just short of a crucial cutting edge in the game's final throes.

### Robbie Kruse - 8

**Australia's best** player. Tremendous work rate as usual, and provided some incisive forward runs. Thought he'd won a penalty in the first half, but the referee dismissed it and the VAR opted not to review. A particularly brilliant dribble through a tight area set Ikonomidis through, but only resulted in a corner. Unlucky to be substituted after an impressive display.

### Jamie Maclaren - 6

**Teed up** well by Grant's clipped cross, but couldn't quite get enough purchase on his header. Far less isolated than in previous matches, with the lines more stretched and teammates closer to him.

**But did** he ever really look like troubling the scorers? Replaced after an hour by Leckie.

### Apostolos Giannou - 7

**Threw his** weight around upfront, inadvertently injuring a UAE defender in the process. Held the ball up well and supported Maclaren. Decent effort on his left foot forced Eisa into action, but it was at a very saveable height for the keeper.

**Had the** ball in the net in the second half but Leckie was ruled offside in the build-up.

### Mat Leckie - 6

**Teed up** Giannou with a knockdown, but was correctly adjudged offside and the goal was disallowed. Headed over from a corner when promisingly placed. Clashed heads with Juma at the end of the game and mis-controlled a volley at the far post with his head swathed in bandages.

### Awer Mabil - 6

**A foot** wide of the top corner when he tried to curl one. Attempted a Ronaldo-style free kick from distance but hit the wall.

### Andrew Nabbout - 5

**Coming back** from injury, Nabbout looked so rusty he might as well not have stepped on the pitch. How must Massimo Luongo feel with a half-fit player promoted ahead of him?