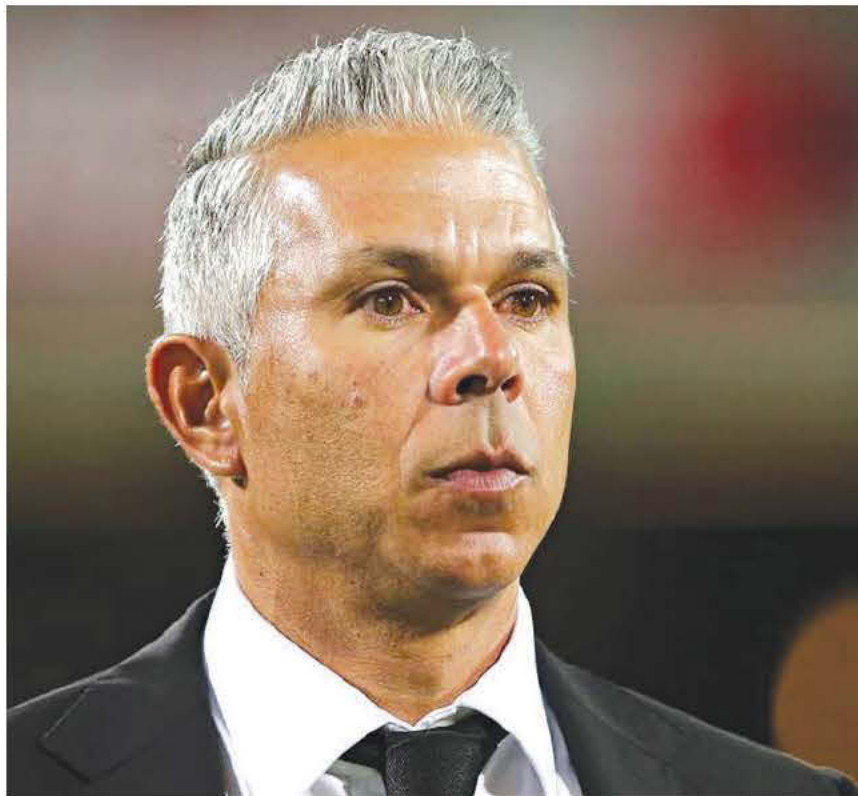


nsw



By George Stavroulakis



Corica defends Sky Blue stars, blaming 'humidity'

Sydney FC coach Steve Corica was quick to defend his star front three after the Sky Blues' 2-1 loss to Brisbane Roar at Suncorp Stadium.

Coming into the match, Sydney FC's talismanic front-three were tipped to tear a leaky Brisbane Roar defence to shreds, with the Roar previously winless under interim coach Darren Davies.

But the Sky Blues' misfiring attacking trio wasted several opportunities in the opening 60 minutes, and although they took the lead through Danny De Silva, eventually shipped two late goals to sink to their fifth loss of the season.

«**We started** very well, we played very good in the first half and defensively we were strong,» Corica said.

«**The only** thing we didn't do, was score more goals.

«**In the** second half, we turned the ball over a couple of times and they countered us, scoring two goals.»

Despite Milos Ninkovic blazing over an open goal and lacklustre performances from Adam le Fondre and starting debutant Reza Ghoochannedjad, Corica refused to single out a poor performance.

«**There was** no complacency,» he said. «We played well, we just didn't finish the job off when we had the opportunity, that's what it comes down to.

«**(Ghoochannedjad)** played well, but I think he got a little tired. He and Adam (le Fondre) combined well. Milos Ninkovic always plays well for us.»

After missing the opportunity to leapfrog Melbourne Victory to within two points of table-topping Perth Glory, Sydney will now be hoping a draw between the two sides keeps them within touching distance.

Perth in particular have a winnable run of matches in front of them, facing the likes of Brisbane, Western Sydney Wanderers and an inconsistent Melbourne City side.

The Sky Blues face Central Coast Mariners before tough matches against Wellington Phoenix and Adelaide United, while Melbourne Victory face Wellington before the Melbourne Derby.

«**We got** sloppy with the ball,» Corica lamented. «The humidity got to them, you switch off for a moment and we've got to fix it next week.

«**Definitely three** points missed today, we wanted to close the gap on Perth Glory. We'll have to wait and see what happens (between Perth and Melbourne Victory).»

Mooy stars, Ryan slumps, Socceroos suffer in England

The British Isles are no longer the safe haven for Socceroos they used to be.

Aaron Mooy's assist couldn't save Huddersfield Town from slipping to a 2-1 defeat against Arsenal, while Mat Ryan copped three goals in Brighton Hove & Albion's 3-1 loss to Burnley. **Both Socceroos** are having tough domestic seasons, with Mooy's Terriers now six points adrift at the bottom of the English Premier League.

Ryan's Seagulls have a larger safety net in 14th place, but have now lost six games on the trot, and the Socceroos' shaky performance in goal against Burnley did

Chris Hughton's side no favours. After Brighton was saved by the woodwork twice in the opening half hour, Burnley began to run riot after opening the scoring through Chris Wood. Ryan then brought down Ashley Barnes, who sealed the result for struggling Burnley.

Mooy was back to his eclectic best in moments against the Gunners, but a spirited performance and a typical-Mooy assist couldn't prevent Arsenal from taking all three points.

Huddersfield look an almost-certainty to suffer relegation this season, with Mooy already linked to potential moves to a series of mid and lower table Premier League sides.

Jackson Irvine and Massimo Luongo also suffered losses in the English Championship. Luongo's QPR almost recovered from 4-0 down to draw even, were it not for a missed 92nd minute penalty.

Irvine's Hull City are much improved this season, sitting 12th in the Championship after narrowly avoiding relegation last season. QPR are 15th and experiencing a harrowing losing streak.



A LEAGUE Results 18 ROUND

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



A - LEAGUE Table 18 Round

	Team	GP	Pts	W	D	L	GF	GA	+/-
1	Perth Glory	18	43	13	4	1	38	17	21
2	Melbourne Victory	18	36	11	3	4	40	23	17
3	Sydney FC	18	35	11	2	5	32	21	11
4	Adelaide United	18	30	8	6	4	26	21	5
5	Melbourne City	18	28	8	4	6	22	19	3
6	Wellington Phoenix	18	27	7	6	5	25	25	0
7	Newcastle Jets	18	19	5	4	9	21	24	-3
8	WS Wanderers	18	13	3	4	11	26	40	-14
9	Brisbane Roar	18	12	2	6	10	23	39	-16
10	Central Coast Mariners	18	6	1	3	14	18	42	-24

A - LEAGUE 19 ROUND

DATE	HOME	AWAY	VENUE	Kick-Off (AEDT)
Friday, 15 February 2019	Newcastle Jets	Melbourne City FC	McDonald Jones Stadium	7:50PM
Saturday, 16 February 2019	Wellington Phoenix	Melbourne Victory	TBC	5:35PM
Saturday, 16 February 2019	Adelaide United	Western Sydney Wanderers FC	Coopers Stadium	7:50PM
Saturday, 16 February 2019	Perth Glory	Brisbane Roar FC	nib Stadium	10:00PM
Sunday, 17 February 2019	Sydney FC	Central Coast Mariners	Leichhardt Oval	5:00PM