



By George Stavroulakis

Rudan's huge praise for locked down Kiwi midfielder

There have been a number of turnaround fortunes in New Zealand's capital this season, but none more prominent than a 22-year-old midfielder's.



Mark Rudan was full of praise for Alex Rufer after locking the Kiwi down to a Wellington Phoenix contract until the end of the 2019/20 season.

Rufer's extension comes a day after 36-year-old goalkeeper Glen Moss signed terms on the same length deal, as Wellington attempt to ensure an element of stability given the ongoing threat of Roy Krishna and Rudan's departures.

Five-cap New Zealand international Rufer has been a star-turn for the Nix this season, as his combative and intelligent displays alongside Mandi Sosa in the heart of

Wellington's defence have allowed his side to play a flamboyant, fast-paced and aggressive style.

They're performances that have played a large role in shooting Rudan into the spotlight, so the Aussie coach had no hesitation in doing the same for his (newly secured) midfielder.

"Considering he is only 22, he plays with such composure and intelligence, but I still believe he can go further," Rudan said.

"I knew he had the potential, from his previous time at

the club and he is another that took control of his future, got his head down and worked hard."

Rufer - who first signed for Wellington at 17-years-old - was simply happy to be fulfilling his potential.

"I've always had confidence in my own ability and I'm happy I've been able to express that fully this year under Mark," Rufer said.

"He has instilled the confidence I was perhaps lacking in previous seasons and believe I can now progress even further."

SIMON CITED FOR REF ABUSE



Central Coast Mariners veteran striker Matt Simon has been cited by the FFA for launching a tirade at a referee over the weekend after he was sent off in injury time on Friday night.

Simon appeared to swear repeatedly at the referee and abuse him as he tried to argue over his second yellow and subsequent dismissal in the match against Brisbane Roar at Gosford.

An FFA statement this evening confirmed the plea explain and added: "Simon has an opportunity to provide a submission by 5pm (AEDT) on Monday, 4 March 2019.

"The sanctions applicable for a breach of the FFA National Code of Conduct include a reprimand, a fine and/or suspension from participation in a match or matches."

His club added: "The Central Coast Mariners will take this opportunity to review all options available to the club, and provide an update in due course."

A LEAGUE Results 20 ROUND

WS Wanderers - Perth Glory 1-1
Newcastle Jets - Adelaide United 0-0
Melbourne Victory - Melbourne City 1-1
Wellington Phoenix - Sydney FC 0-1
Central Coast Mariners - Brisbane Roar 3-5



A - LEAGUE Table 20 Round

	Team	GP	Pts	W	D	L	GF	GA	+/-
1	Perth Glory	20	47	14	5	1	43	18	25
2	Sydney FC	20	39	12	3	5	34	22	12
3	Melbourne Victory	20	38	11	5	4	42	25	17
4	Adelaide United	20	31	8	7	5	27	24	3
5	Melbourne City	20	29	8	5	7	24	23	1
6	Wellington Phoenix	20	28	7	7	6	26	27	-1
7	Newcastle Jets	20	23	6	5	9	24	25	-1
8	WS Wanderers	20	17	4	5	11	30	42	-12
9	Brisbane Roar	20	15	3	6	11	28	46	-18
10	Central Coast Mariners	20	7	1	4	15	22	48	-26

A-LEAGUE 21 Round (split round)

DATE	HOME	AWAY	VENUE	Kick-Off (AEDT)
Friday, 1 March 2019	Sydney FC	Adelaide United	Leichhardt Oval	7:50PM Saturday, 2 March 2019
Saturday, 19 January 2019	Sydney FC	Newcastle Jets	Jubilee Stadium	5:35PM
Saturday, 19 January 2019	Melbourne City FC	Perth Glory	AAMI Park	7:50PM
Sunday, 20 January 2019	Melbourne Victory	Wellington Phoenix	AAMI Park	5:00PM
Sunday, 20 January 2019	Central Coast Mariners	Brisbane Roar FC	Central Coast Stadium	7:00PM