



By George Stavroulakis

# MARINERS SACK MULVEY AFTER 8-2 DRUBBING

**Central Coast Mariners swiftly axed Mike Mulvey in the middle of the night after the coach vowed he wouldn't quit despite an 8-2 drubbing at the hands of Wellington Phoenix.**

**Mulvey** was hucked down the tunnel immediately on the final whistle as boos rang out after the Mariners were humiliated at home by Phoenix in front of a record low crowd of just 3,703.

**But although** looking like a dead man walking, he later faced the press to insist he intended to stay on at the club he only joined last April.

**“One thing** I'll tell you is I won't quit,” he said. «I won't walk away. I never walk away from anything. If there's anything that the club needs to do, they'll do it – that's the bottom line.

**«Me myself,** I'm going to front up tomorrow, get back to work, get the team on an even keel and go forward.”

**Just a** few hours later though, Mariners management made the decision for him.

**In a** media release sent out just before 1am,

Mariners pulled the plug on the Mulvey era after 11 months and terminated his contract with more than a year left to run on it.

**The Mariners** are rooted to the bottom of the table with just one win in over a year, and eight points behind Brisbane Roar who have had their own nightmare season.

**It's the** third Mariners coach in a row to exit in March, with Phil Moss and Paul Okon both leaving the club in previous years.

**Mulvey is** also the second head to roll after a loss to Phoenix this season, with Mark Rudan's Wellington side battering Brisbane Roar 4-1 proving to be the final straw for John Aloisi in December.

**The Mariners** statement read: «Central Coast Mariners can today advise that the club has parted ways with Head Coach Mike Mulvey, effective immediately.

**«Mulvey joined** the Central Coast Mariners

during the Hyundai A-League 2018/19 pre-season.

**«With six** games remaining in the Hyundai A-League 2018/19 season, the club will issue a statement when a decision has been made regarding who will lead the team during this period.

**«At this** stage, there are no other changes to the club's other coaching and football support staff.»

**It added:** «Central Coast Mariners wish Mulvey all the best in his future endeavours and thank him for his service to the club.»



# ARNOLD NAMES HIS OLYROOS

**Graham Arnold has named the first Olyroos squad of his new era for the upcoming AFC U23 Championship qualifiers in Cambodia later this month.**

**Arnold named** a 24-player\* squad to venture to Kuala Lumpur and onto Phnom Penh for Australia's matches against Cambodia, Chinese Taipei, and Korea Republic.

**A mix** of A-League-based players and eight professionals currently contracted abroad will gather in south-east Asia next week as Australia prepare to compete in Group H of qualification from March 22 to 26.

**Following the** week-long camp in Kuala Lumpur – which will include friendly fixtures against Malaysian Super League side Petaling Jaya City FC (14 March) and the Malaysian U-22 National Team (17 March) – Australia will shift its base to Phnom Penh where a first place finish in Group H would seal a place at the 2020 AFC U-23 Championship.

**Australia would** also qualify for the 2020 AFC U23 Championship if the squad finish as one of the four best second-placed teams in qualifying. The fifth-best second-placed team from the 11 groups will also qualify if Thailand – who have qualified automatically for the tournament as hosts – finish as either Group K winners or runners-up.

**Arnold said** that with many Asian nations rapidly improving across the continent, the time spent together ahead of the qualifiers will be critical to Australia's aim of securing a place at the 2020 AFC

U23 Championship – a tournament that will serve as Asia's qualification path for the 2020 Summer Olympics in Tokyo.

**“We have** had three short camps in Canberra with the squad and during that time we have looked at 38 players,” Arnold said.

**“The week** that we have together in Kuala Lumpur will be vital in preparing us for the challenges that we will face in Phnom Penh, and we certainly appreciate the support of all the clubs that are releasing their players to participate in what is an important tournament for Australia.

**“While we** are in Malaysia we will develop our key principles of play and focus on how we believe we can successfully navigate Group H and secure our place at next year's AFC U-23 Championship in Thailand.

**“Our three** matches in Cambodia represent our first step on the path to next year's Olympic Games, and everyone involved with our squad is eager to help Australia return to the men's football tournament for the first time since Beijing in 2008.»

**A-League-based players** in Arnold's squad will miss only one round (22) as the 2020 AFC U-23 Championship Qualifiers are being held in a FIFA window.



## Olyroos match schedule

**Petaling Jaya City FC v Australia U-23 (Friendly)**

**Date:** Thursday, 14 March 2019

**Venue:** TBC, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

**Kick-off:** 9.00pm (local); 12.00am +1 (AEDT)

**Malaysia U-22 v Australia U-23 (Friendly)**

**Date:** Sunday, 17 March 2019

**Venue:** Shah Alam Stadium, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

**Kick-off:** 8.45pm (local); 11.45pm (AEDT)

**Australia U-23 v Cambodia U-23 (2020 AFC U-23 Championship Qualification – Group H)**

**Date:** Friday, 22 March 2019

**Venue:** Phnom Penh Olympic Stadium, Phnom Penh, Cambodia

**Kick-off:** 6.30pm (local); 10.30pm (AEDT)

**Chinese Taipei U-23 v Australia U-23 (2020 AFC U-23 Championship Qualification – Group H)**

**Date:** Sunday, 24 March 2019

**Venue:** Phnom Penh Olympic Stadium, Phnom Penh, Cambodia

**Kick-off:** 3.30pm (local); 7.30pm (AEDT)

**Korea Republic U-23 v Australia U-23 (2020 AFC U-23 Championship Qualification – Group H)**

**Date:** Tuesday, 26 March 2019

**Venue:** Phnom Penh Olympic Stadium, Phnom Penh, Cambodia

**Kick-off:** 3.30pm (local); 7.30pm (AEDT)