



By George Stavroulakis

6 Best and Worst: Mariners vs Glory

Joel Chianese, Dino Djulbic and Neil Kilkenny were the goalscorers as Perth ran away 3-0 winners over Central Coast Mariners in Gosford. Here's the best and worst of it...



BEST

BIG DINO RISES



In his first A-League goal since 2015, Dino Djulbic towered above a Mariner's backline that know very little of the hardy defensive days of the old NSL to tuck in a beautifully lofted header.

It was a great milestone moment for not only Djulbic, who's having a perfectly-timed career renaissance among the old guard at Perth Glory, but for the league itself.

A little reminder that even after 14 years of A-League football, there's still need for a sturdy Yugoslavian centreback to rifle in a header in front of an empty crowd.

MILLAR & DAVIDSON DO BATTLE



One of the most exciting developments this season has been the rise of the fullbacks - one of modern football's most interesting trademarks now alive and kicking Down Under. Two of this campaign's most exciting products, Matt Millar and Jason Davidson, happened to be right up against each other tonight and Millar more than held his own, even attracting a few nervy moments from his former Socceroo marker.

It was a tantalising, entertaining microcosm of an otherwise dreary encounter, but for the purist it was a taste of what's to come. Sure, the Mariners are among the worst teams in A-League history. But they're the worst team in the best standard of competition Australia's ever produced.

IKONOMIDIS' DANCE MOVES



There was a moment in the first half where Chris Ikonomidis, like a plastic bag blowing in the wind, simply danced and weaved among the Mariners shuddering defensive line.

Taking it out then cutting in, with a sense of confidence that's so rare among 23-year-old Australian footballers. Just what he should do next is the big question: does he serve another tenure in the A-League - assuming he believes he can continue to develop under Tony Popovic - and impress himself as one of the league's best players?

Or does he take off to Europe once again and risk another season on the bench, or worse, for a greater coaching standard and level of competition. There are a lot of determining factors at play here, but at 23, only one thing is clear. His next move has to be the right one.

WORST

RIDICULOUS PENALTIES



It happens all the time. You're sitting there watching your team and you're a goal or two down, but there's still hope. You're making runs, working back into it, when suddenly a central defensive midfielder, a fullback or worse of all, a centre-forward, puts in a mind boggling challenge on their maestro attacking midfielder.

It's the sort of ridiculous challenge Diego Castro laps up for breakfast and it killed the game entirely. Sorry Jacob Melling, you're our worst of the match. I liked you better bald.

NO MERCY FOR MARINERS



Games at Gosford are becoming a little hard to watch, especially given nobody else is.

The crowd is becoming so desolate and uninspired at Central Coast Stadium that it sounds eerily similar to a training ground drill, which makes it unsurprising that the quality of football is so flat.

There's now only one home match remaining this season for tired Mariners fans, but it's going to take a lot more than a holiday to entice many Gosford locals back to the club.

STAJ ISN'T A SHOW-STOPPER

If Alen Stajcic is the man to rebuild the Mariners, and let's face it, there aren't a lot of pedigreed coaches throwing their hands up for this one, then it has to be with a more attacking style.

It's a little bit of a Catch-22 at this point, this team are not his squad and he's in a tough position, trying to ensure an underdone, low-confidence squad doesn't get smashed so he's in contention for the extended role, while also attempting to win a few games playing a half-attractive brand of football. Against Perth Glory it's a damn-near-impossible ask and their next match against Melbourne Victory will be no better. The real challenge will be in the club's last two games this season as they get to take on Western Sydney Wanderers and Melbourne City. It may be necessary for Staj to put a little more on the line...