



By George Stavroulakis

Joyce's future in doubt

After being dumped out of the A-League finals by Adelaide City, Melbourne City coach Warren Joyce isn't giving anything away on whether he'll extend his stay at the club.



Joyce's side were 1-0 losers at Coopers Stadium on Sunday night, falling victim to a Ben Halloran goal in the final minute of extra time. **After the** match, Joyce refused to outline whether he'd be in the dugout next season.

"I don't think it's the appropriate time to talk about that tonight," he said. "It will come out in due course. I'm as raw and as disappointed as all the players."

City's exit was more dramatic but just as tough to take as last year's finals departure at the hands of Newcastle Jets in the semi-finals.

Then, as this season, City travelled away for a final against a club with a far smaller budget.

Then, as this season, City went into the match after having not lost to their opponents.

And then, as this season, City could see themselves as the better team on the night, but also losers on the night.

"It's tough to take," Joyce said. "We created the best chances. Their keeper's made some worldie saves. Tonight we've missed guilt-edged chances."

"We're really low now and really disappointed. But that's life and there's a lot of worse things that happen in life."

The loss leaves City executives with a tough call on whether to offer the Englishman a new deal.

The club hierarchy has backed Joyce to implement a cultural revolution at the club, where hard work is valued above star power.

They've also blooded more youngsters than any other A-League club. **But they're** not winning.

City, the richest club in the competition thanks to its links to Manchester City, has never finished in the top three and realised its goal of qualifying for the Asian Champions League.

Last season they were close, finishing fourth and almost landing in the club's first grand final.

This season they fell backwards, finishing fifth after their exit to Adelaide.

Joyce was irked by the suggestion this season has represented regression.

"If you want to say that's regression from last season, look at progression in the football club," he said. "It's not something even I'm thinking about."

"I'm stubborn and I've got a bit of pride and I know different things have gone on this season but if you think we've regressed, write it."

"I don't think we have."



Ultra Football Team of the Week and Wollongong Wolves Football Club's Thomas James jets back in after a week off after notching up a brace over the weekend while fellow teammates Nick Littler and James Stojcevski follow suit. Although on the receiving end of a 2-0 loss, Hakoah Sydney City East FC's Ryan Norval pulled out a number of saves to keep the scoreline v Sydney United 58 FC respectable. Speaking of United 58, Glen Trifiro and Matthew Bilic won their spots while APIA Leichhardt Tigers FC's Chris Payne and Rockdale City Suns Football Club - Ilinden's Alec Urosevski were other notable mentions alongside Sydney Olympic FC's Alejandro Sanchez Zac Mackenzie.