



By George Stavroulakis

NOT ENOUGH: MILICIC WANTS MORE FROM HIS MATILDAS

Matildas coach Ante Milicic would like to see his side recognise when to up the tempo and when to kill the game as they advance to the last 16 at the World Cup.



For all of Sam Kerr's magnificence against Jamaica, the Matildas are yet to put together a 90-minute performance at the World Cup.

Having navigated a bumpy passage through the group stage of the World Cup, coach Ante Milicic is hopeful his side can use the experience as the tournament shifts gears into the knockout phase.

"We're well aware that we need to improve and get better if we want to match our ambition of getting deep in this tournament," Milicic said, after seeing off Jamaica 4-1 in their final group game.

In patches, the Matildas have been scintillating - the opening half against Italy, the 20-minute spell that yielded three goals against Brazil and for much of the night against the Reggae Girlz.

But certainly not after the break against Jamaica, when Khaija Shaw inspired the world's No.53 ranked side to run rings around the Australian midfield.

"We get nervous on the ball and then we lose our playing structure," Milicic said. "We're playing the ball into midfield players that are marked or under pressure.

"So once we stick to our principles and play our playing style we're in control, but there's phases in the game that we move away from that and then that's when we struggled.

"It's a brave playing style, it is. But when we get it right, we look dangerous and then we're a lot in control."

Australia's prize is a round-of-16 clash with Norway on Sunday morning (AEST). Against the Scandinavians Milicic said his side needed to understand when to hit the accelerator and when to back off.

"We just need to move the ball a little bit quicker and get the ball in those central areas," he said. "That's where we get done, in transition.

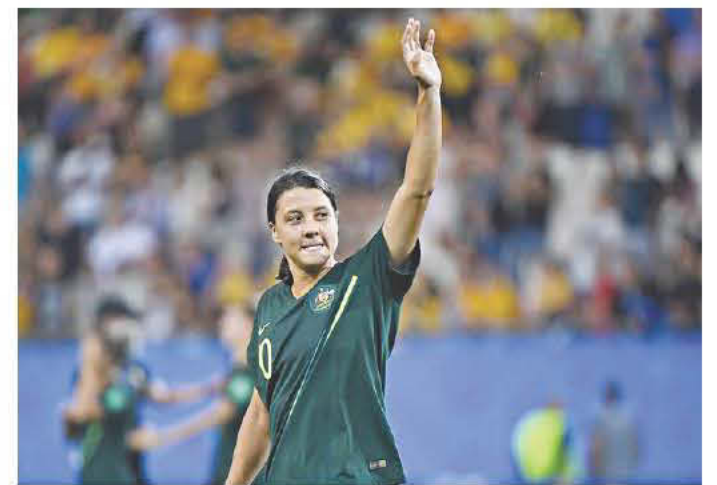
"At times we need to realise we don't have to score from every attack. We need to keep it, go on one side, come back out and go the other way and be patient.

"But in the end it's 4-1, we go through to the next round as second in a tough group and we back ourselves."

Milicic said injury-struck pair Tameka Yallop (corked calf) and Clare Polkinghorne (hamstring) were on track to contend for roles against Norway

The world hails Sam Kerr's four-goal haul

Sam Kerr has been showered with praise after a record bag of four goals against Jamaica at the Women's World Cup.



WHAT THEY'RE SAYING ABOUT SAM KERR'S INCREDIBLE FOUR-GOAL WORLD CUP HAUL THAT DESTROYED JAMAICA

"A dream," Sam Kerr, on Twitter.

"Sam Kerr you are bad lady," Heather O'Reilly, a former World Cup winner with USA, on Twitter. "We, as an Australian footballing community, should be thankful that we're witnessing one of the best players in the world live. I'm very fortunate to work with her and coach her," Matildas mentor Ante Milicic. "She's a joke. She just shows up doesn't she.

Whenever you need her she's a superhero like that. We are very lucky to have her on our team," teammate Steph Catley.

"If Sam Kerr tells you to suck on that one you best believe you will be truly sucking on that one," Twitter user @anndeejam.

"It doesn't get any better than that. The kid's just resilient, she's a goalscorer and she plays for the badge, her country, I just like where her attitude is - especially in the box. You can't teach that. It's something she has," Jamaica coach Hue Menzies.

Three things we learnt: Jamaica v Australia

The Matildas are going to Nice after finishing second in the group.

"She's phenomenal, its just incredible to be able to play with someone of her calibre, her ability to finish is clinical, she is inspirational to me and it's amazing to be able to play next to her," teammate Chloe Logarzo.

"Massive result. Congratulations Matildas and Sam Kerr with four goals," retired Socceroo Tim Cahill.

Kerr has 4 goals and Australia beats Jamaica 4-1

Sam Kerr scored four goals, one shy of the World Cup record and the most by an Australian, in a 4-1 victory over Jamaica on Tuesday night at Grenoble, France, that advanced the Matildas into the knockout rounds

Kerr tied American Alex Morgan for the tournament lead with five goals.

"I actually wanted more after that, being my selfish self," Kerr said.

Australia advanced to the round of 16 for the fourth consecutive tournament following three straight quarterfinal eliminations. The Matildas finished second

in Group C and will face Norway in Nice on Saturday on the first day of the round of 16.

Kerr scored on a header off Emily Gielnik's cross in the 11th minute, doubled the lead with another header in the 42nd and completed the hat trick in the 69th. She scored again in the 83rd minute to give her 36 goals in 80 international appearances.

Australia had stumbled at the start of the tournament with a loss to Italy but rebounded with a come-from-behind victory over Brazil.

Lisa De Vanna made her 150th international

appearance, one shy of the Australian record set by Cheryl Salisbury.

Jamaica got its first World Cup goal when Havana Solaun scored in the 49th.

The first Caribbean nation to make the World Cup, Jamaica lost all three matches and was outscored 12-1. But the Reggae Girlz won hearts in France with their underdog story: Disbanded more than a decade ago, the team was revived in 2014 by Bob Marley's daughter Cedella.

"It doesn't matter what the score is, we just kept playing and believing," Reggae Girlz coach Hue Menzies said.



Australia's Sam Kerr, right, scores her side's opening goal during the Women's World Cup Group C soccer match between Jamaica and Australia at Stade des Alpes stadium in Grenoble, France, Tuesday, June 18, 2019.