



By George Stavroulakis

## A-League

# THE STANDOUT STARS WHO SHONE IN ROUND THREE

Round three of the A-League brought with it two extreme ends of football. On the one hand, there was the scintillating derby between the two Sydney sides, with Western Sydney picking up first blood.



**On the** other, there was the largely forgettable Brisbane Roar vs Melbourne Victory fixture, which ended 1-0 to the Vucks, as Robbie Fowler continues to search for that elusive first managerial win. **Last season's** Premiership winners Perth Glory also finally got themselves on the winning books, as Phoenix end the round with three losses from three. **Elsewhere, Western** United's first derby ended in dismay as they fell to a 10 man Melbourne City, while Adelaide United came back from one goal down to take the points on a windy evening at Newcastle. **Here is** a look at five standout performances from round three of the A-League.

## Daniel Lopar

**Western Sydney** Wanderers were able to claim their first Sydney derby win in 980 days at the Bankwest Stadium, and it is largely down to just how much of an immense presence their new goalkeeper was. **Every time** Sydney's lethal striker duo of Adam Le Fondre and Kosta Barbarouses found themselves in on goal, the Swiss keeper was there, standing tall in the face of adversity. **The differences** between Lopar and last season's Vedran Janjetovic are stark. While last season, Wanderers fans would quake in their boots when the ball was anywhere near their keeper, now there is a calm and assured presence manning the sticks. **He even** produced a clutch moment which will be tormenting Sky Blues fans for a while as he grabbed a loose ball on the edge of the goal line and defiantly shook his finger, confident that the ball had not crossed the line. **Indeed, there** can be no better compliment to a player's performance than your fans editing your Wiki page, which is exactly what happened following last night's stellar display.

## Jamie Maclaren

**Another game,** another couple of goals for J-Mac. **Maclaren is** scoring for fun for both club and country, and his brace tonight propelled his side to a morale boosting 2-1

victory against their new Melbourne rivals, Western United, despite being down to 10 men.

**A lot** has been said about how the Socceroo always manages to find himself in the right position at the right time, with some labelling him as a 'tap-in merchant', but the winner he scored last night was pure class.

**The forward** pounced on a Brillante clearance by beating the defensive line and found himself one on one with the keeper. Maclaren takes a half-volley and connects it sweetly, Filip Kurto had no chance, and spurred his side to an improbable victory following the red card.

**The question** for Maclaren is, what next? He's clearly too good for the A-League, nine goals in 11 appearances since joining City earlier this year, but his last experience overseas was bittersweet and inconsistent, with fallow spells in between several moments of magic. Can he nail it in Europe at the second time of trying?

## Riley McGree

**At the ground** McGree announced himself to the world with his Puskas contender, he pulled off another scarcely believable goal, this time from a corner. Unfortunately for the Newcastle Jets, this time McGree was on the opposing team. **His 'olympic** goal' completed the turnaround for Adelaide United as they fought from one-nil down, with both goals coming from the former Club Brugge midfielder.

**After an** average season last year where he never completely earned the trust of now departed Melbourne City coach Warren Joyce, the 20 year old is now once again reminding Australian football fans of his immense talent.

**McGree's brace** was just reward for a wonderful display and caps off a brilliant week for himself and the team following their FFA Cup victory in mid-week, where he was also on the scoresheet. The midfielder's ability to make late darts into the box combined with his clinical finishing means that he could be in for a big season.

**Now it's** up to his coach Gertjan Verbeek to continue to get the best out of one Australia's most exciting talents.

## Diego Castro

**In his** 100th A-League game, Diego Castro reminded us once again exactly of the quality he is capable of on his day with a vintage display as his delightful passing and quick feet tortured Wellington Phoenix defenders.

**Castro assisted** the first goal as he went on a dazzling run, taking out two of his markers before squaring a ball for his teammate Bruno Fornaroli. There was still some work for the Uruguyan to do, but it would have been impossible with the work of El Maestro.

**He may** now be 37 years old and an A-League veteran, but you wouldn't be able to tell with the way he plays. There's a particular fun to his game that is not only fun to watch, but also brings results.

**Of course,** his splendid display came courtesy of some lacklustre Wellington defending as they gave the Spaniard far too much time and space whenever he was in possession. Full credit to Castro for taking advantage of what was on offer, but if Phoenix don't know by now that you have

to closely mark Perth's most threatening forward, they might never learn.

## Thomas Deng

**Truth be** told, picking a fifth standout performance was a bit difficult for this round. Although there were some exciting derbies, there were not too many players aside from those already mentioned that warranted a mention here.

**Still, Melbourne** Victory's defender gets the call-up after he kept the Brisbane Roar Irish tandem of Jay O'Shea and Roy O'Donovan quiet and help his team to a clean sheet.

**Roar were** largely direct in their play, which meant that Deng had to regularly compete in the air, winning four of those aerial duels, as well as making seven interceptions.

**The Socceroo** has sometimes struggled to play out from defence, but his passing was reliable on Friday night and he hardly put a foot wrong.

**After ascending** quite quickly to the Victory starting 11, his performances have plateaued a bit in recent times, but hopefully these types of games once again become the norm.

## A-League 3rd Round Table

	TEAM	MP	W	D	L	GOAL	Pts
1	Σίδνεϊ Ουόντερερς	3	3	0	0	5:2	9
2	Μέλμπουρν Σιτι	3	2	1	0	4:2	7
3	Σίδνεϊ	3	2	0	1	5:4	6
4	Περθ Γκλόρι	3	1	2	0	4:3	5
5	Γουέστερν Γιουνάιτεντ	3	1	1	1	3:3	4
6	Μέλμπουρν Βίκτορι	3	1	1	1	2:2	4
7	Αδελαΐδα Γιουνάιτεντ	3	1	0	2	5:6	3
8	Σέντραλ Κόστ Μάρινερς	2	0	1	1	2:3	1
9	Νιουκάστλ Τζετς	2	0	1	1	2:3	1
10	Μπρισμπέιν Ρόαρ	2	0	1	1	1:2	1
11	Ουέλινγκτον ΦίνιΞ	3	0	0	3	2:5	0

### A-League 3rd Round Results

Western United - Melbourne City 1-2  
Wellington Phoenix - Perth Glory 1-2  
WS Wanderers - Sydney FC 1-0  
Newcastle Jets - Adelaide United 1-2  
Brisbane Roar - Melbourne Victory 0-1

### A-League Round 4

01.11. Sydney FC - Newcastle Jets  
02.11. WS Wanderers - Brisbane Roar  
02.11. Melbourne Victory - Western United  
03.11. Melbourne City - Wellington Phoenix  
03.11. Perth Glory - Central Coast Mariners