



## TONY POPOVIC.. “I THINK WE NEED TO LEARN SOME LESSONS..”

An upset loss to Central Coast at home has left reigning A-League premiers Perth with just one win from their first four games.

**P**erth coach Tony Popovic says the reigning premiers have lessons to learn as they look to avoid falling further behind the A-League's pacesetters.

Sunday's upset 2-1 defeat to Central Coast Mariners at home has left the Glory fifth on the ladder with just one win from their first four games.

Central Coast hadn't won in Perth in six years, and since the start of the 2014/15 season they had just five away victories to their name.

But the Mariners defied the odds, snatching an early lead courtesy of Danny De Silva then scoring again through teenage star Sam Silvera just before halftime and valiantly defending a second-half Glory onslaught to claim the three points.

Silvera stole the show in his first A-League start, picking the pocket of sleepwalking Glory substitute Jacob Tratt and curling in a superb low finish from a tight angle.

Popovic lamented his side's "lethargic" start, noting that while Central Coast had a bye last weekend, Perth had made the long trip to Wellington for a 2-1 win over the Phoenix.

The Glory will hit the road again next weekend, travelling to Newcastle to face the Jets on Saturday before themselves having a bye.

"I don't think we need to bounce back, I think we need to learn some lessons from that first half," Popovic said.

"The second half, we totally dominated and we really pressured them and they had everyone

behind the ball but I always felt a goal was coming.

"And the players, you could see believed a goal was coming. But maybe we left a bit too much to do in that first half.

"Defensively, we were not good."

Off-season recruit Osama Malik was substituted off in the second half after suffering a hamstring injury.

Popovic also took aim at the match officials for not handing a second yellow card to Mariners defender Jack Clisby for a late challenge on Ivan Franjic in the 66th minute.

"It totally changes the game," Popovic said.

"I was extremely disappointed because the ref actually reaches down to his pocket to give him a yellow and for whatever reason, he

doesn't go through with it.

"It doesn't really matter whether he had a yellow or not. It's a clear yellow-card offence and the referee comfortably gave those out in the first half for similar challenges."

Elsewhere, Melbourne City overcame an early scare from Wellington to snare a 3-2 victory at AAMI Park and climb top of the ladder.

City's higher goal tally puts them ahead of second-placed Western Sydney, who played out a 0-0 draw with Brisbane on Saturday.

Western United conceded two early goals against Melbourne Victory but rallied to defeat their crosstown rivals 3-2 at Marvel Stadium.

Sydney FC hammered Newcastle 4-1 on Friday night at Leichhardt Oval for their third win of the season.

## Graham Arnold .. *"From 2005 to today we've had the money but not the right structure."*

**Socceroos coach Graham Arnold believes a lack of structure, not finances, has resulted in Australia's top talent failing to hit the heights of the 'Golden Generation'.**

**T**he squad which beat Uruguay to reach the 2006 World Cup finals boasted 16 players competing in the top leagues of Europe.

That total included established Premier League players Harry Kewell, Mark Viduka, Mark Schwarzer, Brett Emerton and Lucas Neill as well as Spanish-based John Aloisi and Italian-based Mark Bresciano.

In contrast Arnold's squad which faced Nepal and Taiwan in World Cup qualifiers last month had just two Premier League players - Brighton pair Mat Ryan and Aaron Mooy - as well as Bundesliga-based Mathew Leckie and Brendan Borrello.

Most of Arnold's players are plying their trade in lower-ranked European leagues such as the

Scottish Premiership, England's lower-tiers or in Asia.

Arnold says it's no coincidence Australian players have struggled to make their mark in Europe's top leagues since the Crawford Report led to the overhaul of the game's administration and the foundation of the A-League in 2005.

"I've put those types of details to the board and to a lot of people because in the 35 years I've been involved in the game at national team level, from 1983 to 2003 we had the structure right but no money," Arnold told AAP.

"From 2005 to today we've had the money but not the right structure."

Australia's players' union released a study into the 'Golden Generation'

last month.

The study found common factors such as playing backyard soccer at a young age, early exposure to senior football and connection to a particular club were common factors in the development of the pool of talent born between 1972 and 1984.

The report follows 2017's Player Pathway study which had among its findings a lack of professional minutes for young players being a big part of their stunted development.

Arnold has made a point of emphasising to players they will face the axe from his Socceroos setup if they are not regularly starting at their clubs.

His son-in-law Trent Sainsbury



has recently completed a move to Israel's Maccabi Haifa after being frozen out at Dutch giants PSV Eindhoven.

Australia's brightest talent - playmaker Daniel Arzani - has also been warned by Arnold he may need to seek a new club if he can't

break into Celtic's first team before January following his return from a serious knee injury.

Arnold added: "As long as the boys are playing minutes, and playing a lot of minutes in club land, that's the most important thing for me."