



By George Stavroulakis

# SOCCEEROOS PLAYER RATINGS VS JORDAN

The Soccerroos have never previously managed to steal three points in Jordan – but tonight they did a smash and grab and made a hasty getaway just as the home side was closing in on them...

## Mat Ryan - 8.5

**You can** tell when the Soccerroos are dominating because Ryan's the first to become happy-go-lucky. He loves to bound out of the penalty area and chest balls down to teammates. He's never quite satisfied with having nothing to do, but when Ryan's happy, the Soccerroos are happy.

**Conversely, you** can tell when the Soccerroos are under pressure, because Ryan is constantly pointing and shouting. This game was a tale of two halves, both told by Mat Ryan's body movements.

**His skill** and remonstrations – and Jordan's lazy finishing – are the only reasons we leave Amman with three points. Now if only all his yelling could actually get us to mark our opponents from set pieces and crosses...

## Rhyan Grant - 6

**He was** quiet throughout the first half, a product of Jordan's lack of attacking impetus and our own ability to bypass the slow build-up through our fullbacks and attack directly through the midfield. He, like every Soccerroos defender, was caught out from set pieces in the second. He was particularly poorly matched against Yaseen Al-Bakhit, who spun him constantly.

## Brad Smith - 7

**Smith was** the more involved of the two fullbacks, to mixed effect. He's clearly a solid option in this position from an attacking sense, but failed to build on the excellent performance he offered against Chinese Taipei.

**His through** balls were a little off, his defensive work a little lacking. He was the least confident of our defenders without the ball. But overall, he still seems to offer more than Aziz Behich when we're in possession.

## Trent Sainsbury - 6.5

**In the** first half, it was fantastic to see Sainsbury back in the Soccerroos fold and back in fine form.

**Now that** we've seemingly given up on hopes of Trent fulfilling his true potential in Europe, as long as he's playing regularly, he's one of the Soccerroos' most consistent performers. **Hell, if** he saves his best for us, well...we'd be mad to complain.

**He did** almost let us down early in the second half, looking as shell-shocked as the rest of his teammates when Jordan suddenly sprung to life. But, he survived Al-Bakhit and we all lived to tell the tale.

**Then towards** the end he completely fell apart – and was essentially useless after the 90th minute.

## Milos Degenek - 6.5

**It could** just be his experience playing alongside Sainsbury

that's led to Degenek seeming so much more composed and efficient than Bailey Wright, or the lumbering giant Harry Souttar that we reserve to beat up the little kids in our group.

**But we** think Ange Postecoglou, his former manager at Yokohama F Marinos, also had an exceptional influence on Degenek's career.

**He now** plays with the same poise and purpose on the ball as Sainsbury and he's a little more physically intimidating to boot. Same issues from set pieces though and several times seemed to be caught floundering.

## James Jeggo - 6

**He was** very capable in that first half and keeps the tempo running effortlessly with accurate, fluid first-touch passing.

**But it's** easier to see his weaknesses against an attacking opposition, where he tends to become invisible quite easily. He's not exactly a top-class defensive midfielder and he doesn't seem to have excellent range in his passing either, which limits us when we're under pressure.

## Awer Mabil - 6

**He's quite** inconsistent at national level, even within games. We find ourselves constantly admonishing his lack of efficiency, yet simultaneously recounting mostly positive performances at the end of each match.

**Mabil's let** off the hook a little by our dire lack of creativity in most positions. Of course, losing the ball is par for the course when you're an exciting winger. But his passing and decision-making also leaves a lot to be desired.

**Ultimately, he** may find it hard to keep his spot unless he can contribute more – and Boyle's short cameo in his position put him to shame.

## Aaron Mooy - 8

**He and** Jackson Irvine have carried us through every remote challenge we've faced for as long as our recent memory spans.

**Once again,** he was crucial in allowing us to build attacks, transition from defence, retain possession...all the good stuff, he did it.

**We rely** so much on his dictating, that we really struggle when we need to raise the tempo or maintain pressure because that's not his natural game. We basically always end up playing Mooy-ball, whatever Arnie says. His set-pieces were generally disappointing though.

## Jackson Irvine - 8

**We are** very chuffed with Jackson. He gets our coaches award for most improved player over the past 12 months and he's been our most surprising asset throughout these qualifiers.

**The one** issue we have that he is an erratic finisher.

**That he** actually scores goals for us, is testament to the fact that he puts himself in so many dangerous positions that even a stopped clock is right twice a day (also, playing against Nepal doesn't hurt).

**To put** this in context, Jackson, you have 34 caps and you've only scored one more goal than Harry Souttar. Please address this, love, Arnie.

## Adam Taggart - 8

**It was** a big opportunity for Tags, taking on the toughest opponent in our group with Jamie Maclaren out of the fold, and he took it with aplomb.

**It was** a brilliant run and finish and this is one of the few instances where the striker really does deserve all the credit for a narrow victory.

## Tom Rogic - 8

**He may** have wilted a little towards the end of the match, but to see him in full bloom is so striking that we're too overwhelmed to see any faults.

**Whatever formation** we have to use to allow Rogic to play at his magnificent best, we simply have to use it. We don't have anyone like him and we're a little afraid we're not going to have anyone like him again.

**It's a** crime against humanity for him not to be playing for Celtic or the Soccerroos. In fact, he looked a lot like someone who was either playing for a career or putting himself in the shop window.

**Please, Tam,** make the right move and get back to where you rightfully deserve to be.

# SUBS

## Mitch Duke - 6.5

**We need** to see more of him, but we're already pretty sure we prefer him to Apostoulos Giannou.

## Martin Boyle - 7.5

**Likewise, we** prefer him to just about everyone with performances like that.

**He clearly** hasn't been brought up in the Australian system because while everyone else (bar Rogic) seems restricted by some imaginary force-field, Boyle can literally just skip onto the field and start taking people on.

**In games** like these with two cagey, sort-of-good, sort of shit teams doing battle, a player like Boyle makes all the difference.

