



PERTH GLORY COACH TONY POPOVIC EXPECTS MELBOURNE VICTORY TO BREAK OUT OF THEIR FUNK AND BE CHALLENGING FOR HONOURS AT THE POINTY END OF THE A-LEAGUE SEASON.

The pressure is rising on new Victory coach Marco Kurz after guiding his side to just one win and two draws from seven games.

It's left the Victory in 10th spot ahead of Friday night's pivotal clash with Glory at AAMI Park.

Perth have also endured a slow start to the season, with Popovic's men posting just one win and three draws from their first six games to slide to seventh.

But the blowtorch is far more intense on the Victory right now, and Popovic expects the perennial title contenders to bounce back.

"Melbourne Victory is probably with Sydney FC as the biggest club," Popovic said. "They're a massive club that at the moment is underachieving.

"I certainly know they're a club that I still expect to be at the pointy end of the season when it gets to the end."

Popovic guided Glory to Premiers Plate honours in his first season in charge of the Perth-based club.

But things haven't gone to plan this season, with injuries and late arrivals hampering Glory's cause.

Perth were thumped 3-1 by Sydney FC last week, but Popovic was at least enthused by the number of chances his team created in that game.

He feels it's just a matter of time before the goals go

in, and he's embracing the hard questions being asked of the team.

"By our points compared to last year (we) are seen to be underachieving... these questions and expectations are fair on us because of what we achieved last year," Popovic said.

"We want to be that club where we have the media questioning 'why is it not the same as last year?' as opposed to being content with where we're at, because that's what everyone was accustomed to at Perth Glory in the past."

Glory are already nine points adrift of second spot, and they can't afford for that gap to widen if they are to be serious title contenders.

"It's not a point of we don't care where we are on the table - of course we care," Popovic said.

"But we also put things in perspective. When you're playing poorly, you know you're a fair way way. But we're not playing poorly."

Glory defender Osama Malik (hamstring) will miss a third straight game, but fellow centre back Alex Grant is expected to slot back in after serving his one-match ban.

ALDRED

ROAR HAVE 'TEETHING PROBLEMS'

Tom Aldred admits Brisbane Roar will have "teething problems" this season but he is confident the club is not afar from producing a complete performance.

Roar have only claimed a solitary win so far this season and currently sit in eighth spot on the ladder with two draws and three losses from their first six matches.

The Queensland outfit went down 2-1 to Wellington Phoenix last weekend and Englishman Aldred was one of the players Brisbane coach Robbie Fowler singled out for defensive lapses.

"We are a new team, lots of new faces and there's going to be teething problems getting that whole performance, being resolutely defensively and scoring goals going forward," Aldred conceded.

"We've seen a bit of both at the minute, it's about now as a team putting that together and getting the perfect performance together at both ends and both boxes.

"We're not far away, we've seen that in games and in different moments. There's a lot of games to come and we're looking forward to really nailing that down and achieving success along the way."

Aldred said there was a strong feeling of disappointment in the Roar squad after the

Wellington defeat.

"Obviously the first game of the season probably performance-wise we weren't where we need to be to win football matches," the defender said.

"We know it's probably our most disappointing performance, but football provides you with an opportunity to correct that wrong. Saturday's a prime example of that back at Suncorp in front of our home fans.

"It gives us an opportunity to put that right. We're looking forward to being back at home." Roar take on the Mariners on Saturday afternoon.

Aldred hailed the debut of 17-year-old Jordan Courtney-Perkins, who has recently featured against both Melbourne City and Phoenix.

"Jordan, for his age, he's probably more of a man that I've ever seen at that age," the 29-year-old said.

"It was great to see him feature and I think he'll have a long career ahead of him. He's definitely ready for first-team football and he's done well.

"He's one for the future and one for the present."

A-League Round 8

29.11. Melbourne Victory - Perth Glory
 30.11. Brisbane Roar - Central Coast Mariners
 30.11. Newcastle Jets - WS Wanderers
 01.12. Western United - Sydney FC
 01.12. Adelaide United - Wellington Phoenix

A-League 7nd Round Results

Perth Glory - Sydney FC 1 : 3
 Adelaide United - Melbourne Victory 3 : 1
 Wellington Phoenix - Brisbane Roar 2 : 1
 WS Wanderers - Melbourne City 2 : 3

A-League 7nd Round Table

TEAM	MP	W	D	L	GOAL	Pts
1 Melbourne City	7	5	1	1	16:11	16
2 Sydney FC	6	5	0	1	14:7	15
3 Adelaide United	6	4	0	2	12:8	12
4 WS Wanderers	6	3	1	2	8:7	10
5 Western United	7	3	1	3	8:8	10
6 Central Coast Mariners	6	2	1	3	7:10	7
7 Perth Glory	6	1	3	2	7:9	6
8 Brisbane Roar	6	1	2	3	6:8	5
9 Newcastle Jets	5	1	2	2	5:8	5
10 Melbourne Victory	7	1	2	4	7:11	5
11 Wellington Phoenix	6	1	1	4	7:10	4