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Kevin Muscat is back in a big way - and that's good news for Aussie coaches. Plus Mathew Leckie's potential move, the Olyroos' huge test, expansion talk and the A-League shooting itself in the foot.

FORMER MELBOURNE VICTORY BOSS KEVIN MUSCAT TAKES FIRST STEP TO MAKING IT BIG IN EUROPEAN COACHING RANKS

1 MUSCAT'S BIG BREAK

Don't worry about the technicalities, Kevin Muscat's Belgian breakthrough is a huge opportunity for him and Australian football.

Top tier Sint-Truiden wanted to employ Muscat as their head coach after interviewing him in December, but strict Belgian FA rules prevented them from doing so.

In a sign of the challenges Aussie coaches face, UEFA – European football's governing body – does not recognise Asian Football Confederation coaching licenses, so Muscat must complete his Pro License course again, in Europe.

Despite UEFA recommending to the Belgian FA that Muscat be handed a moratorium, the Belgian FA played hard ball, leaving Muscat to be employed in a lesser "technical" role.

There could be a Pro License opening for Muscat in the UK during the March FIFA international window.

In the meantime, Muscat and his Melbourne-raised assistant Luciano Trani – who was headhunted from Perth Glory (analyst) and will start as Sint-Truiden's conditioning coach – are helping oversee their mid-season camp in Spain.

2 KRUSE GIVES HOPE TO VICTORY

Robbie Kruse produced his best display for Melbourne Victory since returning from Europe, in a display that proves that he still has something to offer the Socceroos.

His jinking runs and speed dislocated Newcastle Jets' defence, with the 4-0 win a huge confidence-boost, especially without captain Ola Toivonen, who's carried the team for the first 11 games.

Leigh Broxham's impact can't be understated, setting an aggressive tone early on in place of gun defender Tim Hoogland, who needs arthroscopic surgery after a floating bone was found in his right knee after he reported discomfort.

It's a huge win as Victory enters a hectic month that could define Marco Kurz's tenure, and includes Asian Champions League qualifiers.

4 JANUARY A-LEAGUE MOVES

Most A-League clubs want to make mid-season changes although the club's wheeler-dealers are operating with handcuffs on with no transfer fees and a salary cap to contend with.

Melbourne Victory and Western United could be among the busiest but they still must release players.

United has a visa spot up its sleeve while Victory has in excess of \$200,000 to play with after spending modestly



Scott McDonald wants to leave Western United.

with its visa recruits.

Western United freed up a spot with Connor Chapman, who was among their top bracket of salary cap wage earners, sold to South Koreans Daejeon Citizen FC for a small fee.

5 EX SOCCEROO WANTS OUT

Western United must decide how hard it will go with disgruntled ex-Socceroos striker Scott

McDonald, who wants out.

Showdown talks will continue this week, with United officials refusing to give the ex-Celtic star any assurances of a release, intimating that they dig their heels in.

Brisbane Roar coach Robbie Fowler wants McDonald to beef-up his attack.

McDonald, 36, has played nine games for Western United, scoring once.

> Next Tuesday issue the sequel