

Marco Rojas showed in 20 minutes he can provide the spark to reignite Melbourne Victory's A-League title ambitions and is primed to run rings around Melbourne City in Friday's derby. Plus, world football's talking points in Duva's XI.

Marco Rojas shows he's ready for derby spotlight with sparkling cameo against Perth Glory

Marco Rojas has returned to Melbourne Victory in time to cause headaches for crosstown rival Melbourne City in this week's A-League derby.

The Kiwi winger showed in a brief cameo against Perth Glory he was ready to ignite Victory's campaign and would be capable of having a huge say in the club's finals prospects.

Plus, tension at PSG involving one of world football's top young talents, an A-League debut born in Melbourne's west and plenty more in this week's Duva's XI.

1 ROJAS DERBY READY

Melbourne Victory fan favourite Marco Rojas is primed for a key role in Friday night's derby in a vital impact role as a frightening front four edges closer to uniting.

The Kiwi could not impact Victory's 2-2 draw away to Perth Glory in one of the games of the season after being sent on for 20 minutes.

Rojas looked sharp – creating with every touch and offering respite to a fatigued and under siege Victory, with Ola Toivonen and Andrew Nabbout subbed off while Robbie Kruse (rested) stayed in Melbourne.

He looks set to hit his straps by May's finals series and with Glory sitting a point behind second-place City, Fornaroli is one of the biggest obstacles between City and a maiden A-League title.

Fornaroli was on track to becoming City's first club legend. Now he could cost them a maiden title, with Glory's unbeaten run stretching to eight games.

OLYMPIC DIET

Slimline Nick D'Agostino revealed the secret to his Olyroos success lay in the kitchen.

Despite playing just 14 A-League minutes leading into Tokyo 2020 qualifying, D'Agostino became the hero with three key goals – including the decisive third place playoff against Uzbekistan – as they broke a 12-year hoodoo.



Marco Rojas looked sharp in a late substitute appearance for Victory in the 2-2 draw at Perth Glory.

GULUM'S RELEGATION BATTLE

Ersan Gulum made his first appearance on the bench of his Turkish club after joining from Western United..

Revered in Turkey, Gulum answered an SOS from his former coach Tamer Tuna, a former assistant of Turkey national team boss Senol Gunes.

Gulum is now in a relegation scrap with Antalyaspor, where he sat on the bench alongside ex Germany striker Lukas Podolski. He has taken on a mentoring role, with a view to becoming an assistant coach in future.



Ersan Gulum in one of his last games for Western United before moving to Turkey.

SCOUTING OLYROOS

Australia's Tokyo 2020 qualification has given the A-League's Under-23 players a pep in their step, with spots up for grans in Graham Arnold's Olyroos squad.

Overseas-based Daniel Arzani (Celtic) and Harry Souttar (Fleetwood Town) should come into the final 18-man squad.

Locally, Riley McGree – the only one of the suspended quartet whose ban finishes prior to Tokyo 2020 – Louis D'Arrigo (Adelaide United), Anthony Lesiotis (Melbourne Victory), Jake Brimmer (Glory), Joel King, Harry van der Saag (Sydney FC), Cameron Devlin (Wellington Phoenix) and Sebastian Pasquali (Western United) will all be watched closely.



Banned Olyroo Riley McGree has been in fine form for Adelaide United this season

Match Centres



PRIDE OF THE WEST

Defender Tomi Uskok's debut was a milestone for Western United who somehow escaped from Newcastle with a draw in searing heat. **Uskok was** born and bred in the west and went through the ranks of the region's most famous club, Melbourne Knights.

While United appeared to be a title contender just two months ago, a battle is now on to make the top six.