



By George Stavroulakis

Graham Arnold has plenty of interest in England's lower tiers, with a promotion-chasing League Two midfielder the latest to put himself on the radar of the Socceroos boss. David Davutovic looks at world football's biggest talking points.

Jordan Lyden emerges as Socceroos bolter after standout campaign with Swindon Town

Graham Arnold is keeping a close eye on England's lower leagues, with several players putting themselves on the Socceroos boss's radar in recent weeks.

Midfielder Jordan Lyden, who featured four times for Premier League club Aston Villa, has played a key role in Swindon Town's push for promotion from League Two.

After a career punctuated by injuries, Lyden is enjoying his most consistent campaign as a professional.

Meanwhile, Melbourne Victory faces a huge task to resuscitate its A-League campaign and wunderkind Erling Haaland keeps making scoring look easy in Germany.

VICTORY SALVAGE MISSION

Melbourne Victory have eight games to save a horror A-League season. **Interim coach** Carlos Salvachua has 10 games left of his Victory coaching audition. If Victory's board had to make a call now, they'd appoint a new boss next season I believe.

Victory is derelict in its duties if it's not searching for domestic and visa options.

If Spaniard Salvachua has a fairytale finish, he too could be considered.

Salvachua will go down in Victory's record books via the drought-breaking Asian Champions League win away to Kashima Antlers.

While some fans relished the street smarts applied in the smash-and-grab win, attempts at a more proactive A-League style has yielded two draws and three losses with some wildly inconsistent displays such as the 1-1 draw at Newcastle on Saturday.

Serious questions must be asked of the recruiting, medical and conditioning strategies this season, for repeat injuries such as those suffered by Tim Hoogland and Robbie Kruse are inexcusable at this level.

If Kruse – who never had a hamstring problem before this season – and Hoogland had been available, Victory would be in the six.

Missing finals is intolerable at Victory and a squad overhaul beckons, with more than a dozen players remain out of contract.

YOKO-CELONA

Yokohama F. Marinos' dismantling of Australia's best team was unsurprising but enlightening nonetheless.

While we have seen Japanese teams gradually increase their technical and tactical superiority since we joined Asia, this was more of a reminder of Ange Postecoglou's quality above a J1 League vs A-League reality check.

"More Barcelona than Barcelona," said one astute ex-Socceroo.

Considering Yokohama was still in off-season, the intensity, sharpness and collective application of strategy was off the charts in the 4-0 win



Jordan Lyden is enjoying a strong campaign for League Two promotion-chasing Swindon Town



Yokohama F Marinos stormed to a 4-0 victory over Sydney FC in the Asian Champions League

over Sydney FC on Wednesday night.

Yokohama F Marinos lost their J1 opener 2-1 against Gamba Osaka at the weekend.

RYAN'S RELEGATION HEROICS

Mat Ryan won't win the keeper of the year award considering the Premier League boasts world class shot-stoppers Alisson (Liverpool), Ederson (Man City), David De Gea (Man United) and Kasper Schmeichel (Leicester City).

His stellar saves late on helped Brighton and Hove Albion nick a crucial point from Europe-bound Sheffield United, with Ryan set to attract rival interest at the end of the season.

Aaron Mooy's set pieces were also key.

MATILDAS CLASH

Less than a fortnight since helping the Matildas pip China to top their Tokyo 2020 qualifying group, Caitlin Foord and Sam Kerr butt heads for English silverware. **Foord made** a goalscoring debut in last night's FA Cup fifth round win over Lewes.

Starting up front, Foord's shrewd burst into the box enabled her to follow up a after Danielle van de



Matildas teammates Sam Kerr and Caitlin Foord are set to clash for silverware in England

Donk's shot was saved.

Foord, who only arrived last weekend, was busy in her 90 minute outing, also hitting the post. The win sets up an FA Cup quarter final clash with North London rivals Tottenham.

She is now a strong chance to start for Arsenal in Saturday's League Cup final against Kerr's Chelsea. The London rivalry is ramping up a notch with the duo competing for the English title along with Manchester City