



By George Stavroulakis

# SIZZLING STRIKE SIGNALS CODE'S FINAL WHISTLE AS NEWCASTLE JETS BEAT MELBOURNE CITY

IT WAS A WINNING STRIKE THAT DESERVED MUCH MORE CONSIDERING THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CONTEST AS NINTH-PLACED NEWCASTLE UPSET SECOND-PLACED CITY AT AN EMPTY MCDONALD JONES STADIUM.



Dimi Petratos jostles with Nathaniel Atkinson (left) for the ball.

A spectacular 20m strike from Steve Ugarkovic has given Newcastle a 2-1 A-League win over Melbourne City in what is likely to be the final match of Australian professional sport for the foreseeable future.

With Football Federation Australia expected to announce the coronavirus-inspired suspension of the A-League season on Tuesday morning, the result of the Round 26 game on Monday night may end up as little more than a future pub-quiz question. The likely decision from FFA comes after the NRL on Monday announced the suspension of its season, leaving the A-League isolated as the last national competition still standing. It is a shame there was nobody to witness the 77th-minute winner from Ugarkovic as ninth-placed Newcastle upset second-placed City at an empty McDonald Jones Stadium. The midfielder, now with four goals for the season, struck a piledriver from well outside the box and found the back of the net off

goalkeeper Tom Glover's outstretched hand. Nick Fitzgerald had given Newcastle a deserved edge at the break with a composed finish in stoppage-time after a pinpoint long ball from Dimi Petratos. Fitzgerald cut back twice onto his left foot to make space before burying the chance for his first A-League goal since scoring for City against Brisbane in the 2017-18 finals series.

Newcastle had the better of the first half, firing off eight shots to City's three, with four to nil on target.

Roles were reversed after the break as City increased the pressure on Newcastle until substitute Florin Berenguer nodded in the equaliser at the back post off a cross from Craig Noone in the 71st minute.

Jets keeper Glen Moss who has announced he will retire at the end of the season played the final five minutes of what is likely to have been his farewell match.

The FFA were aiming to wrap up the season with a condensed schedule, but the federal government has since advised against "non-essential travel" within Australia because of the coronavirus threat, leading to the postponement of all of the country's other football codes.



Wes Hoolahan turns the ball from Adrian Luna (left).

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