

BAD DAY AT THE OFFICE FOR MITCHELTON

Taringa Rovers 4 (Lacey, Davani, Aysen 2)
Mitchelton 1 (Balzat)
HT 2:1

Taringa's early season promise, which had recently looked in danger of evaporating, was back with a bang in their home fixture with the in-form Mitchelton. The visitors, who had won their last three games, started brightly enough and opened the scoring as early as the ninth minute. Andrew Balzat was given too much room 25 metres from the Taringa goal and his left foot drive zipped past the surprised Gerard Kelly in the Rovers goal.

On the quarter hour the home side spurned a glorious opportunity to equalise when top scorer Reza Aysen missed a penalty after Mitchelton keeper Ben Wicks needlessly felled Andrew Imrie. Wicks received a yellow card for his misdemeanour but Aysen put his spot kick way too close to the Mitchelton custodian and he saved easily.

Aysen was looking out of sorts in front of goal, but he turned provider just after the half hour when his pass to Brad Lacey left the winger with enough space to drill his shot under Wicks for the equaliser. Moments later Mermer missed a golden chance to restore Mitchelton's lead and his side paid for the mistake in the 39th minute. Daniel Dreger whipped in a free kick from the right hand side and Alex Davani met the cross with a spectacular diving header that gave Wicks no chance. Just before the break Damien Pilat struck a post for the visitors when his shot flew through a posse of defenders but rebounded back into play.

The second half was a scrappy affair with Mitchelton huffing and puffing but creating little in the way of genuine opportunities. Pilat struck a thunderbolt straight at Kelly and Jason Poggi almost got on the end of a cross from Mermer. Despite their dominance of the ball nothing seemed to be going right for Greg Brown's side and with six minutes left on the clock Aysen confirmed the win with the third goal for Rovers. Things went from bad to worse for the visitors when Mermer was dismissed for dissent just before time, then Aysen, who had been a virtual spectator for most of the half, added Taringa's fourth right on full time.

Rovers coach Alan Waller admitted it was a crucial win for his team. "It was a battle and we expected that. We had a bit of luck today and it's a good three points for us. Some people had been saying that the wheels had fallen off for us and we needed to win today to show people that we are still a tough side to play."

THIRTEEN IN TWO GAMES FOR GOAL HUNGRY ROVERS

Rochedale Rovers 6 (Panic, Stojakovic 2, Thomas 2, Maas)
Toowoomba Raiders 1 (Bosward)
HT 2:0

Fresh form dishing out a thrashing to Brisbane City last week, Rochedale Rovers carried on where they left off with a comfortable win at home to Toowoomba. Rovers will be looking to use these back-to-back wins as a springboard for a run of form that will project them to the league position that many had predicted at the start of the season.

Their performances this year have been of a high standard and now the results are starting to come - along with the goals. The first one came on the half hour when Alex Panic added to his 5 goal haul from last week. This was followed by a second just moments later from youngster Cole Stojakovic who looks to be an exciting prospect.

Toowoomba had posed some problems for the home side in the opening 20 minutes but from then on it was all Rochedale. They made it 3-0 when the Raiders' Liam Riedy lost the ball on halfway and allowed Greg Thomas in to score. It was a similar goal from the same player soon after to make it 4-0 and it was looking at one stage as if Rovers could emulate their seven-goal scoreline from the previous week.

Stojakovic added the fifth with an exquisite volley before the Raiders scored a consolation goal through Jason Bosward just 5 minutes before the final whistle. There was still time for Rochedale to add a sixth though when Nick Maas came off the bench to score and complete the thrashing for Toowoomba.

Raiders coach Peter Broadfoot was pragmatic about the defeat. "We were well beaten here tonight. Rochedale were superb and we never really got close to them. We'll keep going though and try to pick up points where we can. The players will keep learning and hopefully that will help us," he said.

For Rovers coach Kieran Cooper it's a different story. He's watched his side really hit their straps in their last two outings and they look like a side on a mission. "We were great when we got ourselves in front but I still maintain that we have played better and lost this season. We're heading in the right direction now though and I'm delighted about that."

SIX OUT OF SIX FOR PALM BEACH

Palm Beach 2 (Fung, Costello)
Pine Rivers 1 (Smits)
HT 0:1

After losing last week's top of the table clash to Souths Utd, Pine Rivers were determined to make amends against a Palm Beach side whose 100% record had been rarely threatened so far this season. Clayton Koch's Rivers team were a little unfortunate against Souths and the same run of luck followed them to the Gold Coast.

They managed to take the initiative against the Sharks and were dominating the early possession. Rivers were also having the better of the chances and they took the lead just after the half hour with a good goal from Tim Smits. Aaron Thiesfield found Corey Hagell on the right hand side and his ball into the box was met by Smits who made no mistake with the finish. It was a deserved lead for Rivers and they could have increased their advantage considerably before half time but several gilt-edged chances went begging.

The home side were clearly rattled and came out with a new energy in the second period. The equaliser came 20 minutes into the second half when the ball was cleared from the Rivers box after a goalmouth scramble. It only landed in front of Palm Beach striker Daniel Fung though and he crashed his volley through the defence and past the helpless Troy Reed in the Rivers goal. The game became tense and physical in the closing stages as both sides went for the win. The hosts were on top and with confidence high they looked the more likely scorers as they sought to retain their perfect record this season. Palm Beach stole the win in the final minutes of the game when Costello, who had returned from injury, went on a run down the left, cut inside his defender, and hit a right foot shot that fooled Reed and ended in the back of the net.

Sharks coach Karl Herdle has now watched his team against some of the top sides and likes what he sees. "I thought it was a game of two halves as they say but we deserved it in the end. I was disappointed to concede a goal but we did enough and took our chances when it mattered. That's all we can do and we are playing well at the moment," he said.

Pine Rivers coach Clayton Koch was clearly disappointed when he spoke directly after the final whistle. "We feel like we have been doing enough to get points against the other top sides but we have only taken one out of our last nine now. Things didn't go for us at all tonight and I feel like we were on the wrong end of a number of crucial decisions that could have changed the game."

SHOCK WIN FOR EASTS AT PERRY PARK

Brisbane Strikers 0
Eastern Suburbs 1 (Brownlie)
HT 0:0

If Strikers coach Bobby Hamilton was disappointed with his side's performance against University of Qld last week, then he must be feeling furious today after watching his side go down to Eastern Suburbs at Perry Park. Hamilton sets high standards for his teams and despite winning against Uni' last week the well-travelled coach has demanded more from his charges but they failed to deliver against Michael Brockwell's Easts.

The Tigers have the leakiest defence in the league but they kept a clean sheet against the Strikers who were missing the influential Jamie Lowndes through injury. To make matters worse for the home side the solitary goal was scored by ex Strikers player Paul Brownlie who won it for the Tigers five minutes from time. The goal, which had looked on the cards, was a neat move and when the ball was swung in from the right hand side Brownlie made no mistake with a powerful header into the corner that gave Strikers keeper Antony Hall no chance.

It was a committed performance from Easts and they thoroughly deserved the points. They were hungrier and more determined than their hosts and may even have opened the scoring much earlier with several good chances going to waste in the opening quarter hour. Greg DiLosa had the best of the Strikers chances ten minutes before half time but his clever lead-up work was not matched by the finish and Jason Parks in Easts' goal was able to smother. Parks' display was underlined by a tremendous one-handed save from a DiLosa header just before the break. In the second period Easts' commitment was again proving to be the difference between the two teams and although the Strikers did have opportunities it was clear that this was to be the visitor's day.

As the game wound down to its conclusion, last week's hero Damien Waugh turned villain when he was dismissed for serious foul play. Adam Bennett almost doubled Easts' tally right at the death but in the end the single goal was enough for Easts and they took a well-earned and very welcome three points back to Heath Park. "We wanted this more than they did I think. Everyone was writing us off before the game and I had Strikers fans coming up to me saying that they were looking to improve their goal difference against us. That really spurred us on and it showed on the pitch," Brockwell said.

CITY BATTLE FOR UNLIKELY DRAW

Brisbane City 1 (Benning)
Souths Utd 1 (Slaughter)
HT 1:0

With ten league places and 15 points separating these two teams prior to kick off, Brisbane City supporters must have feared the worst when unbeaten Souths Utd visited Spencer Park. City were reeling from a 7-1 home mauling at the hands of Rochedale Rovers last week and it was on the cards that they would receive similar treatment from Peter Tokesi's ruthless side.

In reality it was a different story though. City started brightly and were full of running and energy while Souths were lacking the cohesion and fluency of recent weeks. Souths still had the better of the early chances but Hayward and Uchimura were both guilty of wasting decent opportunities.

City stunned the visitors on 26 minutes when Terry Hughes gave the ball away cheaply in midfield and City went on the break. Jaspal Benning chased a long ball and just managed to hold off Souths defender Ryan Bridge long enough to fire his angled drive superbly into the far corner.

Souths were dominating possession but their final ball can only be described as woeful. Dave Parra almost equalised with a header on the stroke of half-time, but his effort was cleared off the line. The second half continued in the same vein with Souths pressing but receiving little change from the City defence. Not much was working for the visitors with pass after pass going astray and the bumpy Spencer Park surface was clearly more of a problem for Souths than it was for City.

Souths forward Craig Slaughter then became man of the moment. First he was booked for dissent and then his rasping 30 metre drive stung the palms of Nardozza in the City goal. Seconds later Craig Collins swung in a deep cross and Slaughter beat Nardozza to the ball to head home the 60th minute equaliser. Souths pressed hard for the winner and Slaughter could have pinched it but the normally reliable forward wasted one good chance and one sitter. Nardozza was the hero for the hosts right on full-time when he saved bravely at the feet of Slaughter yet again and City held on to register their first point of the season.

For coach Peter Tokesi it was undeniably a game they should have won. "Our touch just wasn't there today and we had too many players off their game. It's definitely two points dropped as far as I'm concerned but you can't always play well every week. Credit should go to City as well because they battled really hard and played to their strengths," he said.

LAST GASP WINNER FOR WOLVES

Brisbane Wolves 0 (Roche 2, Konofilia, Own Goal)
University of Qld 0 (L Wilson, Veltjens, W Sommerville)

HT 3:1

Neither of these two sides had felt the winning feeling prior to the kick off of this game and both coaches must have been getting sick of being told how well their teams were equipping themselves despite not picking up any points. It took Anthony Roche only 30 seconds to show the way for his side with his first goal for the season and then added a second on ten minutes to delight the home crowd. His composure in taking both chances was something that the home team had been desperately looking for so far this season. However in a frenetic first fifteen minutes, Lance Wilson equalised for Uni after the Wolves defence failed to clear.

In the next four minutes the match was turned on its head when Wolves were awarded a controversial penalty which Joel Konofilia blasted past Boyd Kildey in the Uni goal. However referee Denis Silk then sent Darryl Anderson off for what seemed to be the use of an elbow and Wolves were reduced to ten men. They re-arranged their formation leaving Roche to play alone hand up front and were able to hang on to the lead till half time.

Uni came out fired up in the second half and pressured Wolves across the park and it was no surprise when Nick Veltjens was able to capitalise on a defensive lapse and then Uni hit the post with Ghidella well beaten before another great shot by Will Sommerville gave the Uni side a well deserved equaliser.

Uni were well on top and it was a surprise that they did not go on with the job. They created some half chances but failed to break down the scrambling Wolves side for who Mark Hynes was seemingly everywhere. Then with two minutes to go, a cross into the box aimed for Anthony Roche caught a Uni defender wrong footed and he was only able to slam the ball past his own keeper for the cruellest of goals. Wolves were able to withstand the last couple of attacks and were pleased to hear the full time whistle which signalled their first points of the season.