



Last-gasp Cattanach secures point for Manly at Sydney United

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Photos by Gavin Leung

A last-gasp penalty from veteran striker Robbie Cattanach sealed a dramatic 2-2 draw for Manly United FC in a fiery encounter at Sydney United Sports Centre to start the new NSW Premier League season.

The wily striker was pulled down inside the box by Sydney United man-mountain Michael Cindric in the 2' minute of injury time before dusting himself off to slot coolly to goalkeeper Vedran Janjetovic's left to level the scores and end what was an epic duel between the two impressive teams.

It was four seasons in one day at Edensor Park with sun, wind and rain all showing their faces to 500 die-hard supporters, and it was Sydney United who started brightest, using their height advantage to test the Manly defence early on.

Ben Vidaic got on the end of a brilliant cross from Ante Tomic on 11' minutes and had his effort cleared, before a 14' minute corner kick bounced through the defence only for Elsid Barkhousir to sky over the crossbar from six yards out.

Yet, less than a minute later, Manly United hit the lead as Scot Balderson provided a magic ball through to Adam Foti, who cantered behind the last defender and got enough of a touch on the ball to see it dribble past an advancing Janjetovic and into goal just ahead of a scrambling defence.

Manly United were starting to find their feet when the home side barged their way back into the game. An unmarked Damon Collina just glancing a header wide on the half-hour mark and Luka Glavas making a usual nuisance of himself, before Manly keeper Kang ho Lee was inexplicably penalised for taking too long with the ball. Steve Hayes played the indirect free-kick square for Tomic, who had his shot charged down and Glavas belted the rebound over the crossbar.

Sydney United didn't have to wait too much longer for the breakthrough, Glavas controlling a Tomic lob



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brilliantly and then slamming it into the back of the net for a 34' minute equaliser.

2' minutes later, it was Hayes who got his foot on a long ball and played the ball back beautifully for Barkhousir to boot into goal for a 2-1 lead.

The Sydney United boys were pumped, the sports centre rocking and they almost added a third goal just before half-time when Glavas broke clear only for Lee to smother his shot superbly, while Manly United also could have scored after Seung Soo Lee danced past 3-4 defenders and played it to Joey Gibbs who placed his shot over the bar.

Down a goal at the break, Manly United emerged from the dressing sheds with vigour and created five genuine chances, Lee squandering the best of them when Janjetovic played a terrible ball forward while he was outside of the penalty area, and could only watch as Lee struck it straight back past him but just wide of the post, while Balderson was left cursing when he firstly rifled a great ball back from Cattanach over the crossbar from 10 yards out and then had two attempts charged down after Foti had set him up.

Chances were slim at the other end, however, Glavas was unlucky when he lobbed a great ball from Barkhousir over the Manly keeper midway through the term only to see it ricochet off the crossbar and then scrambled out for a corner kick. But it was Manly that mostly looked like scoring as Lee cracked one just past the post and Foti was causing mayhem with his runs and deft touches, finally getting the better of a titanic duel with heroic Sydney United defender Michael Cindric.

With players getting frustrated Manly's David Dodd copped a yellow for running into the back of Ivo Bosnar, and Barkhousir got one for interfering with a throw-in just minutes before full-time, but it was Cindric's clumsy foul on Cattanach in the box in the 2' minute of injury time that had the most impact as Cattanach slammed the resulting penalty into the back of the net for a last-gasp equaliser.

Sydney United coach Jean-Paul de Marigny was pleased with the way his players stood up to a real test from a top side like Manly United:

"It was disappointing that we worked so hard all game just to have the points taken away from us with the last kick of the game," he said.

"I expected Manly to be physical and I was very concerned in the last 15' minutes, but all-in-all I'm happy with the draw for where we are at this stage in our preparation. "The good thing about our side is that they respond to setbacks really well. The boys dug in really hard to maintain the draw and I'm content with that result."

Manly coach Craig Midgley had mixed emotions after nearly walking away from Edensor Park with nothing after creating so many opportunities:

"If you think you can come to Sydney United and get the three-points then you're probably crazy, but I thought we thoroughly deserved the point... losing 2-1 would have been a travesty," he said.

"I told the boys they needed to be ruthless in front of goal so it was disappointing to see so many wasted chances, but there are definitely some good signs there."

Match Stats

Sydney United 2 (Luke Glavas 34', Elsid Barkhousir 36')

Manly United FC 2 (Adam Foti 15', Robbie Cattanach 90'+2' (pen))

Sunday 27th March, 2011

Sydney United Sports Centre, Edensor Park



Referee: Khodr Yaghi

Assistant Referees: Sarah Ho and Jamie Gavin

Fourth Official: Matthew Samosa

Sydney United: 1.Vedran Janjetovic; 3.Mitchell Speers (2.Ricky Perinich 56') (14.Petar Markovic 87'), 4.Michael Cindric, 5.Damon Collina (38.Tomislav Mijic 76'), 9.Elsid Barkhousir, 10.Steve Hayes, 11.Luka Glavas, 13.Ben Vidaic, 19.Mitchell Thompson, 23.Ivo Bosnar, 29.Ante Tomic

Substitutes Not Used: 20.Ryan Norval, 41.Jani Bajramovic

Yellow Cards: Mitchell Thompson 24', Ivo Bosnar 42', Michael Cindric 75'

Red Cards: Nil

Manly United FC: 1.Kang Ho Lee; 2.Jimmy Oates, 5.Marc Richards, 6.Michael Daly, 7.Scot Balderson, 8.David Dodd, 9.Robbie Cattanach, 10.Adam Foti, 14.Seung Soo Lee (16.Thibault Marchal 83'), 21.Joey Gibbs (11.Justin Haywood 50'), Danny Grant (25.Jordan Edwards 46')

Substitutes Not Used: 23.Craig Midgley, 22. Tonu Liband

Yellow Cards: Marc Richards 19', Grant 34', Adam Foti 75', David Dodd 87'

Player Ratings

3 - Michael Cindric (SU)

2 - Adam Foti (MU)

1 - Luka Glavas (SU)

-By Dan De Nardi

