



Excitement-plus in thriller at Lambert Park

29.05.11 21:01

Action shown from Sunday's clash between APIA Leichhardt Tigers v Sydney United. (Photos by Gavin Leung)



It was obvious from the start that A.P.I.A. Leichhardt were ready for the visitors as they tended to out-run their opposition in the early part of play.

Sydney United, with a mix of youth and experience in their team, were also determined not to be overcome by the Tigers aggressive early stance.

In the end, a draw seemed to be harsh justice for both teams, but A.P.I.A. Leichhardt in particular can be very proud of their efforts given that they played part of the game with only nine players, and a large section of the second-half with only ten players.

After the match an exhausted A.P.I.A. Leichhardt captain Franco Parisi spoke with genuine pride about his team.

"Yes, we started very well and if we had have gone into half-time with a two or three goal lead things would have been different," he said.

"In the second-half Jose' sending off, after a Ninja-like save, made the game different but we still prevailed in getting a point because we were the better side.

"Under different circumstances we would have kept 11 [players] and not given away a penalty, and I think we would have had them comfortably."

When asked about morale in the team and about next week's big derby against the Marconi Stallions, Parisi



was equally effusive.

“Our group unity is perfect,” he said. “We feel as if we are just going to keep growing and growing and the three points today would have helped our growth.

“Yes, next week is the big ‘Italian derby’ which we are ready for and we are not worried about their results because we are only interested in our own game, our own results and we’ll make it happen the way we know how to make it happen.”



In fact in the 9' minute it was Sydney United through Steve Hayes who found former Perth Glory player Luka Glavas charging into the box, but Jose Bello-Amigo bravely put his body on the line to prevent the opening goal.

A.P.I.A. Leichhardt's reply arrived in the 17' minute with a well deserved opening goal.

Wandi Jajaw beautifully played a ball for Samuel Messam who delightfully rounded his opponent and scored. It was no more than the determined Tigers deserved at this stage.

A few minutes later there was a double chance that went begging for the home side when Parisi played a nice ball for Messam who fired against the legs of an out-rushing Vedran Janjetovic, but somehow the ball fell straight back to Parisi who fired just centimetres over the crossbar.

A free-kick from Parisi in the 23' minute almost slipped through the grasp of Janjetovic who had to recover quickly to collect his spilt ball.

Glavas could have equalised for Sydney United when Daniel Rezo, who had just entered the playing arena after a tactical change by Jean-Paul De Marigny, fed him the ball but Bello-Amigo bravely saved at his feet.

Jajaw then replied for the Tigers when he showed Mark Rudan too much pace as he rounded him perfectly, but in the end was thwarted by a lovely Janjetovic save.

Parisi was back at it for A.P.I.A. Leichhardt in the 42' minute when he fed Messam a tremendous ball, but the big Kiwi somehow placed his well-timed shot just wide of the intended target.

In the second-half, it was chance after chance for both sides but the two sending offs almost cost A.P.I.A. Leichhardt the entire game.

Sydney United equalised in the 51' minute when a Hayes shot rebounded dangerously off the turf and Bello-Amigo spilt the ball.

In the goalkeeper's attempt to recover the ball there was a slight collision with Ben Vidaic. For the referee, it was not only a penalty but also a sending off offence much to the dismay of the home side's bench.

Stefan Giglio came on for a sacrificed Jajaw and his first task was to take the ball out of the back of the net after a beautiful Glavas spot kick that sent him the wrong way.

Rezo should have scored in the 61' minute but fired just wide before Sydney United took the lead with an



incredibly lucky goal just afterwards.

Giglio made three rapid-fire saves off Sydney United strikes – each time fisting the ball away – before eventually it landed straight on the head of Michael West who knocked it unfortunately into his own goal.

It was harsh justice for young Giglio who had literally entered the lions' den and for West who was definitely one of the most consistent performers for the Tigers.

After that point, both sides had great chances. Messam, unmarked after a beautiful Nicola Rizzo cross from the left, volleyed weakly into Janjetovic's open arms.

Mathew Bilic then couldn't force the issue at the other end from close range thanks to young Giglio's bravery in diving at his feet before the Tigers equalised in the 76' minute through the ever green Mark Byrnes.

It was Rizzo with the lead up work who found Byrnes in a position to thread the ball home for the much deserved goal before a delighted home crowd.

Marlon Vass rose high to meet a corner just afterwards and it appeared that his header was destined to go in, but somehow it crawled across the face of goal and ended up just wide.

Perhaps through frustration, perhaps through sheer exhaustion, but in the 80' minute Vass was sent off.

After receiving a yellow card for a late challenge, he seemed to say something to referee Lewis who immediately brandished the red. It was dissent in the eyes of the whistle blower and that's all that matters in the end.

After the game De Marigny, Sydney United's astute mentor, was clearly frustrated too that his side didn't claim all three points.

"It was very frustrating," he said. "I tried something and changed it early on, but I thought in the second-half we could have scored a few more goals.

"We did cause them problems but unfortunately we didn't take advantage of it.

"It's something that we have to learn to take advantage of having more players [after the initial send off]; you work hard to create advantage in the game but there is no point in having the advantage if you don't take it.

"Things just don't happen that way and today was definitely two points lost for us."

Meanwhile, in the Grade-20s, A.P.I.A. Leichhardt defeated Sydney United 2-0.

Match Stats

A.P.I.A. Leichhardt Tigers 1 (Messam 17', Byrnes 76')

Sydney United 2 (Glavas 51' (pen), West 63' (og))

Sunday 29th May, 2011

Lambert Park, Leichhardt

Referee: James Lewis

Assistant Referees: Adam Coombes and Nick Backo



Fourth Official: Jamie Gavin

A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers: 1.Jose Bello-Amigo; 2.Mark Byrnes (8.Anthony Hartshorn 79'), 3.John Kelso, 4.Cole Tinkler, 5.Michael West, 7.Stephen Kayes, 6.Marton Vass, 11.Nicola Rizzo, 14.Sam Messam, 10.Franco Parisi, 17.Wandi Jajaw (40.Stefan Giglio 51')

Substitutes Not Used: 15.Brad Bartels, 16.Damir Prodanovic, 18.Nathan Millgate

Yellow Cards: Vass 80', Kayes 83'

Red Cards: Bello-Amigo 51', Vass 80'

Sydney United: 1.Vedran Janjetovic; 3. Mitchell Speers, 38.Tomislav Mijic (8.Shane Lyons 58'), 21.Mark Rudan, 4.Michael Cindric, 23.Ivo Bosnar, 10.Steve Hayes, 6.Milan Bosnar (18.Daniel Rezo 26'), 15.Ufuk Talay, 13.Ben Vidaic (42.Mathew Bilic 73'), 11.Luka Glavas

Substitutes Not Used: 30.Michell Osmand, 20.Ryan Norval

Yellow Cards: Cindric 70'

Red Cards: Nil

Player Ratings:

3 - Steve Hayes (SU)

2 - Mark Byrnes (ALT)

1 - Franco Parisi (ALT)

-By Joe Russo

