



NBL	
	
CROCODILES	UNITED
81	69
Blanchfield 27, Conklin 24, Gladness 12	McRae 14, Barlow 13, Worthington 12, Kickert 12
at The Cage	

No Crocodiles tears, coach urges finals focus

MELBOURNE United coach Darryl McDonald has challenged his players to put Sunday night's shattering home loss behind them.

United gave up fourth spot on the NBL ladder with an 81-69 loss to Townsville at the State Netball and Hockey Centre.

Adelaide is now fourth and United faces an uphill battle to

NICK SMART

reclaim the spot with six games left in the regular season.

"I've told the guys let's not worry about everybody else," McDonald said.

"If we take care of our own business, we'll be just fine."

Melbourne meets bottom-placed Wollongong away on Friday night before playing the

Hawks at home on Saturday week.

Last week summed up United's season — winning in Perth against the high flying Wildcats before dropping a home game against the lowly Crocodiles.

"We were playing a team (Townsville) with nothing to lose; they aren't in the finals race," McDonald said.

"We are in it and we stink it up on our home floor."

"We lost in New Zealand, go to Perth and beat them and then come home and lose at home. That's hard for me to fathom. That just kills me because I know we are so much better than that."

"I don't know, maybe it is me. Maybe I need to find a way to motivate these guys. We got

up by 10 points, but again we struggle to put teams away."

Melbourne's other games in the run home are Cairns (away), Townsville (away) and Sydney (away and home).

"We're just not a very good team at the moment, it is as simple as that," United co-captain Nate Tomlinson said.

"We're inconsistent from week to week."

Muscat laments sharing points

MELBOURNE Victory coach Kevin Muscat cut a forlorn figure after Sunday night's 3-3 away draw against Perth Glory as he rued his team's failure to secure the three points.

"We scored some very good goals, but in the end we were playing in patches and not for the full 90 minutes," Muscat said. "We conceded some ridiculous goals."

Glory scored twice in the last 12 minutes to salvage a point. Victory led 3-1 through strikes by Fahid Ben Khalfallah, Besart Berisha and Kosta Barbarouses, but Rostyn Griffiths grabbed a goal back and Glory substitute Jamie Maclaran equalised with two minutes left.

"To score three goals away from home, you really should be winning that game of football and I thought we were by far the better team," Muscat said. "How we didn't go on to win the game, I can't come to grips with at the moment."

Muscat said his coaching staff would review the goals conceded.

"When we do concede goals, it just seems like it's very easy for the opposition to score," he said.

Glory now holds a four-

point lead over Adelaide United and third-placed Victory at the top of the A-League.

It was the sixth time this season Glory had come from behind to win or draw and coach Kenny Lowe continues to be amazed at his team's ability to snatch a result from the jaws of defeat.

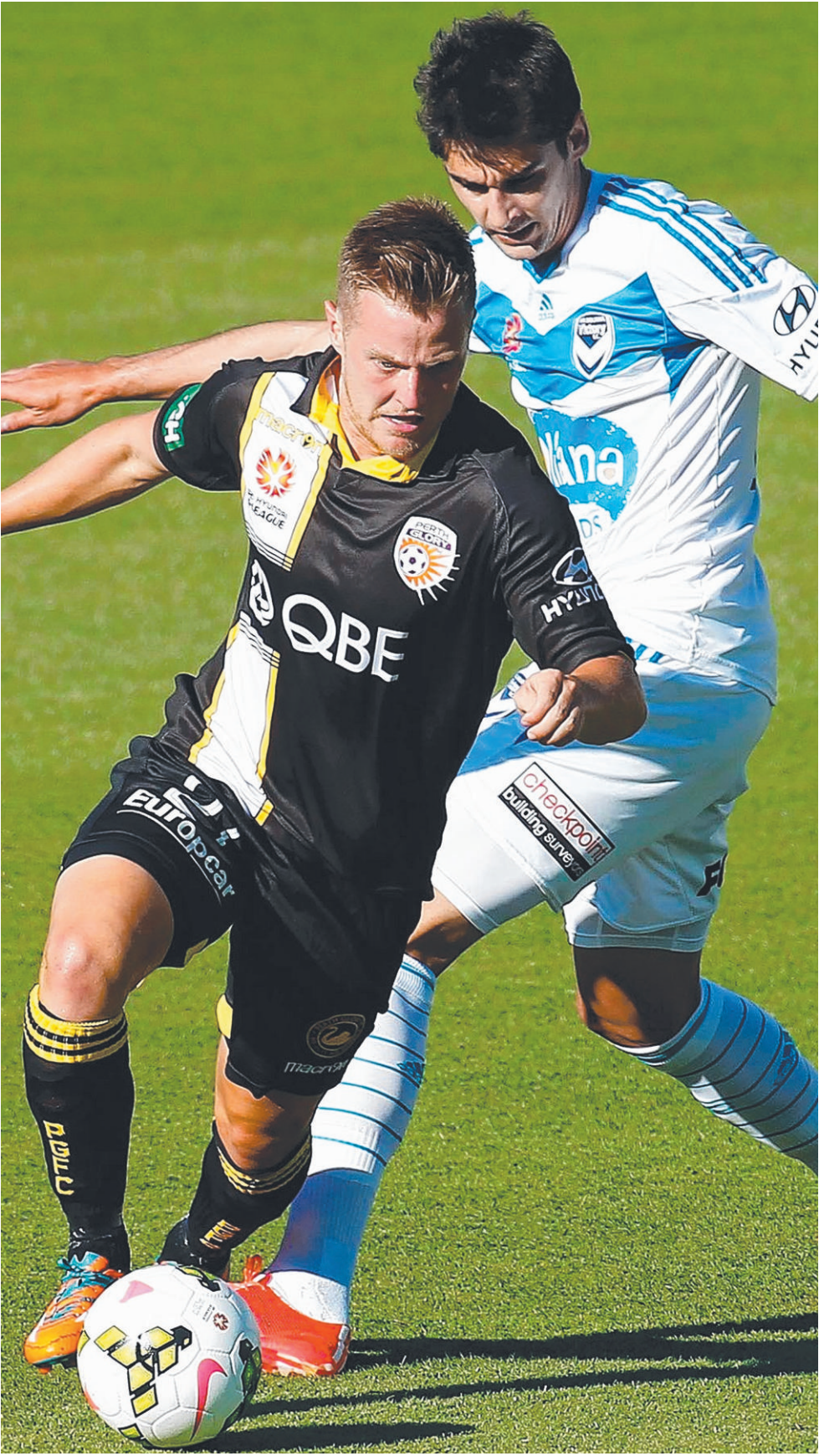
"I'm going to have start looking up the dictionary for some better words — I keep using character and blue collar," Lowe said. "But in any walk of life you've got a bit of adversity and it's how you deal with that. You look at people when they've got a little bit of pain and, I'll tell you what, our lads tick every single box, every single time."

Victory duo Archie Thompson and Scott Galloway missed the Perth trip because of illness but both are expected to be fit for the derby against Melbourne City on Saturday week.

Glory's next game is on the same day, at home to Sydney FC, but it will be without suspended midfielder Griffiths after he picked up his fifth yellow card of the season.

Winger Chris Harold will also be sidelined after suffering a serious ankle injury.

AAP



Scott Jamieson gets away from Victory's Gui Finkler on Sunday, Picture: GETTY IMAGES



Bill Haas yesterday.

HAAS WINS ON RETURN

AMERICAN Bill Haas forged ahead with a 6m birdie putt on the par-4 16th and parred the final two holes for a one-stroke victory in the Humana Challenge at La Quinta, California, yesterday.

Haas closed with a 5-under 67 for his sixth PGA Tour title and first since the 2013 AT&T National. Five players finished in a tie for second, including Matt Kuchar.

"Honestly, if you would have told me I would have done this last week, I would have laughed at you," Haas said. "To be here is an unbelievable feeling."

His father, Jay, won the 1998 tournament. Haas' great uncle, 85-year-old Bob Goalby, was in the gallery at PGA West's Arnold Palmer Private Course. Goalby won the 1968 Masters.

Haas was making his first start since November. He took the break to rest his left wrist, fractured in April when he fell down stairs.

"I played a little bit," he said. "I didn't just put the clubs up."

Title shot in offing

MELBOURNE boxer Will Tomlinson has signed for what he describes as "a career-defining fight" against Mexican Francisco Vargas.

Vargas, 30, is ranked the No.1 super-featherweight contender by both the WBC and the WBO and is unbeaten after 21 fights, with 15 knockouts.

"Wild Will" should be in line for a world title shot if he can topple Vargas in San Antonio, Texas, on March 12.

"This will be a real life-changer if I beat him, which I will," Tomlinson said yesterday.

The Australian fighter relinquished the IBO super-featherweight crown to move to the US a year ago in search of more meaningful titles.

RON REED

DIAMONDS TO HAVE EVERY FACET COVERED

AUSTRALIA'S leading netballers will attend a camp in Sydney this week in preparation for the world championships later this year.

Coach Lisa Alexander and her squad will hold a dress rehearsal for the 10-day tournament in August.

Australia is the defending champion after beating New Zealand in Singapore in 2011.

"We'll be simulating every

AMANDA LULHAM

little detail as closely as possible to the conditions that we will have to cope with in August," said Alexander, who led the Diamonds to the gold medal at the Glasgow Commonwealth Games last year, destroying the Silver Ferns in the final 58-40.

"From when we eat, how we go about our recovery, both individually and as a

team, how we train and prepare for our matches and just playing good old fashioned netball.

"We believe our simulation worked very well for us leading into the Commonwealth Games last year. We get the advantage of being in Sydney, of staying in the hotel that we're going to be based in for the Netball World Cup.

"So we get to see very

clearly what it's going to be like for us at a home World Cup."

Alexander said there was extra pressure on her players to perform at home and she plans to have them ready to rise to the occasion.

"We know that there's an extra responsibility on us as the host nation to make this the best netball World Cup ever," she said.

The Diamonds will

attempt to win back-to-back Commonwealth Games and world championship crowns for the first time since Australia achieved the feat in 1998-99.

The squad to compete at the world championships in August will not be named until June — after the trans-Tasman league series.

Sixteen nations will compete at this year's championships.