

Socceroos tick the box 5-0 with real battle next week

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PERTH

ANY risk of complacency was extinguished last night as the ruthless Socceroos tore minnow Bangladesh to shreds in last night's 2018 World Cup qualifier.

Coach Ange Postecoglou was almost offended at any pre-game suggestion of experimentation or a flogging, but there was a hint of both as his youthful squad clearly heeded the message, dismantling the star-struck visitors 5-0.

Mathew Leckie opened the scoring in the sixth minute and from there the floodgates opened in front of a boisterous 19,495 crowd at nib Stadium, as Tom Rogic starred and celebrated his first Socceroos start in 18 months with a maiden goal.

Veteran Tim Cahill only played the last 30 minutes, kept in cotton wool for Tuesday's undoubtedly tougher clash away to Tajikistan.

Bangladesh, 173rd on the FIFA rankings, at home will probably be the easiest match of the group, but try telling that Leckie or Tom Rogic.

Both had a sense of purpose about them, with Leckie now able to stop fielding questions about his goal drought (he had scored one goal in 25 internationals prior).

After groin issues cost Rogic a definite World Cup and Asian Cup spot, he was reveling in the freedom he hadn't enjoyed since groin issues began plaguing him several years ago.

Playing at the top of a four-man midfield, supported by Aaron Mooy, Massimo Luongo and Mark Milligan, Rogic caused the Tigers heart palpitations with his sharpness and trickery until he was withdrawn on 62 minutes for Lazio teen Ikonomidis.

After Leckie had tapped in a Luongo cutback, Rogic's exquisite first touch allowed him to put Tarek Elrich's cutback into the back of the net just



CUTTING A SWATHE: Goal scorer Aaron Mooy of Australia splits two Bangladeshi opponents in Perth last night.

Picture: WILL RUSSELL/GETTY IMAGES

two minutes later.

Rogic then capitalised on a cutback from Jason Davidson's left, though his 20th minute strike took a wicked deflection.

Nathan Burns, who partnered Leckie up front until Cahill replaced him, reacted

quickest after keeper Mohamed Sahidul Alam parried Leckie's header to tap in to make it four before the break.

Mooy's thunderous strike put the Socceroos 5-0 up just before Cahill was introduced to the delight of the crowd.

Socceroos subs Cahill, Matt

McKay and Tommy Oar (162 caps) had almost as many caps as the combined first XI last night (164), with stand-in captain Milligan (40 caps), Matthew Spiranovic (27) and Leckie (25) the only players with over 20 appearances.

While Cahill was a crowd

pleaser, second-half subs Jackson Irvine and Ikonomidis were playing just their second internationals.

Even against the minnows, the modern-day Socceroos have a sense of purpose, but Postecoglou and the players know Tuesday's clash in Dus-

hanbe will be the real challenge in this FIFA window.

Australia 5 (Mathew Leckie 6, Tom Rogic 8, Topu Barman 20 og, Nathan Burns 29, Aaron Mooy 61) **d Bangladesh 0** at nib Stadium.

Crowd: 19,495. **Referee:** Vo Minh Tri

GUEST SPEAKER
FORMER WALLABIES CAPTAIN & LEGEND
JOHN EALES

KILIKANOON

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