



# FEATURE: TUGGERANONG UNITED'S EYES ARE ON THE PRIZE

MAY 4, 2022

2021 was a year to forget for Tuggeranong United FC. Relegated from the top tier with no wins to their name was an ignominious way for this storied club to end their association with the top-flight.

Fast forward eight months and the club underlined their determination to return to the National Premier League with a rollicking 5-0 success over ANU FC at Greenway which, coupled with a 4-0 win over Yoogali and a narrow defeat to title favourites Queanbeyan City, has them well-placed early on.

Tuggeranong United's Head Coach, Mitch Stevens, was extremely pleased with the win on Sunday as the young collective begin to morph into the kind of style that Stevens' demands.

"There's not much to say, that first fifteen minutes was phenomenal. We were just on the front foot getting those early goals," Stevens said. "That first half performance was excellent, there's not a lot I can say other than that it was absolutely superb."

Having such a strong first forty-five minutes, with scoring two goals in just the first five minutes through new signings namesake Luke Stevens and Sam Walker, Stevens ensured his side remained grounded and focused heading into the second half.

"The key talking points at half-time were probably about respect. We knew today that ANU was a good side and 4-0 is an unusual score line at that time of the game," he admitted.

"We knew that they'd come out and we knew there would have to be a response from them. Against a good team like that, I don't think it's done after 45 minutes."

An immense drop-off in pressure was seen in the second half after being ahead by those four goals and Stevens admitted that it was partially intentional after such a demanding week of football.

"We played 120 minutes in a mid-week fixture against West Canberra Wanderers in the Australia Cup Qualifying, the match going into extra-time.

"Today we saw it as an opportunity to be slightly conservative with our defensive pressure, so it was a way of trying to minimise chance of injury or anything like that."

After getting relegated last year, Stevens said there is a big focus on getting back into the first grade NPL and he knows what needs to be done

"I think Tuggeranong United deserve to be in Premier League, I thought it was disappointing the way it happened last year. There was definitely a need for a re-build," Stevens said.

"It probably came at a time where it was necessary so aspirations for the season include our promotion first and foremost but just establishing the culture of what we do. We've got some really great young kids and it's all starting to come from the cycle so it's about a continuation as well."

Heading into their Round 4 match-up against Brindabella Blues this weekend, Stevens will take the necessary amendments at training to ensure a quick recovery in time for the next game. Stevens has high hopes for his Tuggeranong United squad and their performances of late have showcased the determination in working their way back into the top league.

"We've got to see how the boys recover after a big week, so we'll tailor this week's training to make sure that we get everyone as close back to that 100% mark," he said.

"We have talked about bread and butter and as disappointing as the Cup was and we thought we could've won that game; we want to be consistent.

"We want to be winning every game in the league, so it's now sort of going back to that weekly turn-around, winning games and all eyes on the prize at the end of the year."

Tuggeranong United will aim to begin that consistency against the Blues and will continue shooting for a spot back where they believe they belong, in the National Men's Premier League.

Words: Sonia Emanuel



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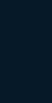
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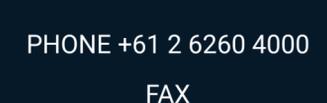
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