

## All Whites Win in Wellington

You could say it was a \$13 million save. But to Tony Lochhead, the man who thought he'd cost New Zealand a spot at the biggest sporting show on earth, Mark Paston's heroics were priceless. For 88 minutes on Saturday night, Westpac Stadium was abuzz. But for the other two, there was almost a deathly silence.



It is the 51st minute and referee Jorge Larrionda rules Lochhead has brought down Bahrain's Abdulla Omar inside the box and awards a penalty. It is surreal. Despite a record crowd of 35,194, you could have heard a pin drop.

Lochhead's heart was firmly entrenched in his mouth as he contemplated the potentially devastating scenario, given that a 1-1 draw would have seen Bahrain qualify on the away-goals rule.

"I thought I had cost us a trip to the World Cup," the Phoenix defender said. "I thought I'd done enough to get there but [Omar] just managed to get in front of me. I didn't really touch him that much, but he went down pretty easily and the ref pointed to the spot. It was such a nerve-racking moment but Pasty has come up with an unbelievable save and he's saved my skin, big time."

"It wasn't a good feeling, but when he saved it I was celebrating as if I had scored myself."

All Whites captain Ryan Nelsen had his money on Paston to save the shot of Bahrain's rangy centre back, Sayed Mohamed Adnan.

Nelsen, who led manfully, was fifth in line to take a penalty in the eventuality of a shootout and he had lined up himself against Paston in training last week.

"I can remember taking a penalty at practice and looking up and seeing Pasty, and I couldn't see any of the goal.

"I just saw this big guy in front of it, so I knew he had a chance of saving it and in the end he pulled off a world-class save."

"I said to him before the Bahrain game that for us to go through we're going to need a world-class keeper and world-class saves, and throughout 180 minutes he proved incredible."

Paston, 32, the Phoenix goalkeeper who hails from Hawke's Bay, was swamped by his team-mates after the final whistle. They knew how big a part he had played in getting the team to South Africa.

But the big stopper, who probably would not have even been playing on Saturday had Glen Moss not been suspended, was typically down to earth after the initial euphoria.



This is not the whole page, but it gives you an idea of what the layout should be like.