

Ο ΚΟΣΜΟΣ - The English Sports Section

NSW Premier League Round 1 Preview

The 2011 NSW Premier League season kicks off this weekend in what already promises to be a tightly contested competition even at this early stage.

The usual 'heavyweights' Bonnyrigg White Eagles, Sydney United and Blacktown City FC will again start as favourites though an eye must certainly be kept on the likes of Sydney Olympic, Marconi Stallions, A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers and Rockdale City Suns, without forgetting the 'unknown' to come from new boys Parramatta FC.

Proceedings commence with only one match on Saturday at Seymour Shaw Park between Sutherland Sharks and Blacktown City FC. Saturday evening matches with kick-off set for 7:00 pm.

The Sharks have proven time and time again that they are a mammoth obstacle to overcome on home soil, and Robbie Stanton's team again promises to build their foundations for 2011 with an impeccable home record. The Sharks have recruited well in the off season and will be looking to unleash the likes of Panny Nikas, Nick Tsattalios, Lachlan Cahill and Matthew Bailey – each player very capable of bringing the winning feeling back to the Shire.

They will again be led by the services of George Souris while the likes of Jim Bakis, Nick Stavroulakis, Mike Katz and Chris Price will be also out in full force pushing for a Shire win.

Blacktown City FC will have their work cut out with a lot of pressure on the defending champions, though the experience of coach Mark Crittenden – who has retained a large bulk of last season's championship winning side – will play a huge part in the side's chances for success this season. Inspirational captain Luke Roodenburg will pull the strings in midfield, and with such a passionate player leading the group, a Blacktown City win, even at Seymour Shaw, should not be put past



New Kids On The Block:
Parramatta Eagles will make its debut in the NSW Premier League when they tackle 2010 Premiers Bonnyrigg White Eagles on Sunday at Melita Stadium

the side.

On Sunday afternoon, Rockdale City Suns and A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers promises to be the pick of the 'Sunday action' at Ilinden Sports Centre. Both sides are coming off strong 2010 campaigns with the Tigers performing admirably in the second-half of the season, losing only once against Marconi Stallions before being bundled out by Sydney United in extra-time in the finals series.

The Tigers offseason signings have managed to 'gel' well with the group as the side aims to start the campaign on the front foot following the poor first seven rounds of 2010.

The Suns turned many heads in 2010 in their first season back in the top flight. 2011 sees Lee Sterrey take over the reins at the club, and the experienced Sterrey has already shown his influence on the group with a fine pre-season. The Suns were always a tough side to beat at home, and Sterrey will certainly look to add three first-up

points to the ladder this Sunday in front of the Rockdale City supporters.

At Melita Stadium, the NSW Premier League will have a first 'official' look at new boys Parramatta FC in a very demanding debut against 2010 Premiership winners, Bonnyrigg White Eagles. Coach Brian Dene will look at veteran Angelo Petratos to assist with guiding his players on the field. Petratos, at the age of 42, possesses a wealth of knowledge and experience that will be essential for Parramatta FC's chances this season. The home side may even hand a debut to latest signing Almir Dizdagic who will be expected to find the goals for Parramatta FC.

The White Eagles have a point to prove after clinching the Premiership race with ease last season before stumbling in the Championship decider. Brian Brown's side has been strengthened with the additions of some very talented players, and expectation across the League will be for a White Eagles win in this opening match.

South Coast Wolves open their campaign with Sydney Olympic visiting the South Coast at John Crehan Park. The Wolves have arguably made the biggest signing of the off season, securing the prized signature of former Newcastle Jets forward Sasho Petrovski. His experience and prowess in front of goal will no doubt serve the Wolves well in 2011, though the side will need to be at its best with a new-look Sydney Olympic visiting town.

The Blues, this season in the hands of Peter Tsekensis, have been tipped by many as Bonnyrigg's biggest threat to the title. With an established group of players comprising the likes of Robert Mileski, Chris Triantis and Richard Luksic, the Blues do seem to have their best playing roster seen in recent years.

Sydney United will set out to improve on the third place obtained last season with the new season objective

to reach the grand final. The Reds face Manly United FC at Sydney United Sports Centre, and coach Jean-Paul De Marigny will be eager to unveil the hard work carried out over the pre-season. The Reds boast a number of impressive signings – on top of the solid squad retained from 2010 – though arguably two names stand out. Ufuk Talay and Mark Rudan will vest the Red of Sydney United this season following successful stints in the A-League.

Out to spoil the party for Sydney United and the Reds supporters will be Manly United FC. The Manly side failed to maintain the fine run of recent seasons in the last campaign, narrowly avoiding the wooden spoon in 2010. Coach Craig Midgley has lost a number of experienced players though is happy to be seen as an 'unknown quantity' heading into the 2011 season with a number of younger players.

In the final fixture of the weekend's matches at Jensen Park, a new look Bankstown City will be out to erase the disappointing 2010 campaign as stern rival Marconi Stallions visit the Lions with kick off set for 6pm.

Blagoja Kuleski has assembled some fine talent across the park, though he will certainly look at his more experienced heads Zlatko Joseski and Stefanos Liavas to reiterate to the new arrivals the importance for a strong start to the campaign.

Marconi Stallions too will have a new look about them with coach Luke Casserly taking over for his first official Premier League match as club coach. The Stallions possess a strong defensive unit and all attentions will surround new signing Matthew Mayora who is expected to lead the Stallions' goalscoring charts in 2011. In all a very important first home match for the Lions following a rather barren run in recent seasons.

By Joseph Carlucci

Leading Australian-Greek newspaper 'O Kosmos' held its second successive special awards evening on Wednesday 16th March at the Bankstown Sports Club acknowledging the efforts of various players, coaches and officials that have taken part in all competitions run by Football NSW in 2010.

Football NSW General Manager Ian Holmes, Football NSW Head of Competitions Bill Kostandas were present on the evening as was Football NSW's Media Manager Mark Stavroulakis who hosted the event.

Former Football NSW Director Jim Ronis and ex-Wollongong Wolves coach and owner of 'O Kosmos' Nick Theodorakopoulos was also present amongst a number of other identities in the round ball game.

'O Kosmos' once again has had a dedicated 16-page sport insert each and every Tuesday highlighting all the football competitions that NSW's runs, something that Football NSW General Manager Ian Holmes was delighted with.

"The outstanding efforts and achievements seen by 'O Kosmos' in publicising and promoting all Football NSW competitions goes above and beyond what we expect and we thank them wholeheartedly for that.

"There is a rich sprinkling of Australian Greek clubs and players who take part in our various competitions and we at Football NSW are proud to see

"O Kosmos" acknowledges Football NSW competitions in awards ceremony

such a diverse and multicultural community amongst a number of others who help promote our sport."

Holmes was awarded for his efforts in acknowledging 'O Kosmos' and was presented with club jerseys by Sydney Olympic, Stanmore Hawks and Gladesville Ryde Magic.

Former North Queensland Fury midfielder Panny Nikas was also on hand for the event and he too praised the newspaper's efforts by awarding his signed jersey to Theodorakopoulos thanking the paper for their support of the code.

Individual awards were handed on the evening as Rockdale City Suns' Paul Dimitriadis was given a trophy for the Most Appearances in the NSW Premier League in 2010.

The Journeymen's Award went to Sutherland Sharks' Nick Stavroulakis while the rising star award went to Sydney Olympic's Mitchell Stamatellis.

Most Improved Player for 2010 was given to Sutherland Sharks' Yianni Fragogiannis while the Golden Boot for 2010 was given to his teammate Jim Bakis who notched up seven for the year.

The Long Service award for 2010 went to four players with George Souris, Angelo Petratos, Peter Tsekensis and Peter Zorbas all receiving these honours.

While in the Distinguished Long Service Award for services to Football, Jim Ronis was given the top award for his involvement with the sport.

New Sydney Olympic coach Peter Tsekensis took out a second award on the evening winning the Distinguished Long Services award for football while former Socceroo Peter Katholos was given the 'Legends Award' for his services to the game.

The major award of the evening was the 'O Kosmos' Player of the Year award and that was awarded to Marconi Stallions' talented goalkeeper James Chronopoulos who had an outstanding 2010 season in the NSW Premier League and continues to impress with his consistent displays for his club.

The Kosmos were well backed this year in its sporting department as Panos Nikolaou (Editor), George Stavroulakis (Sports Editor), John Mavridis (Football Writer) and George Margiolis (Page Layout) were all involved in promoting the NSW Premier League and various other Football NSW run competitions.