



Around the Grounds

Special Feature: APIA's very own Tinkler

The Tinkler name has become a household name as of late and the NSW Premier League has its own Tinkler. New Zealander Cole Tinkler joined the APIA Leichhardt Tigers this season and has starred in the centre of defence. "I'm hoping to find out if I am related to (Nathan Tinkler) to be honest," Tinkler said. "I am really enjoying my time at APIA. It is a fantastic club who is well organised and they try to be as professional as possible. For a league like this to be as professional as you can makes a huge difference." The 24 year old played for Auckland City before joining the Macarthur Rams in the NSW Super League last season. And Tinkler is hoping his team's performances will give him a chance to pinch an A-League contract. "The main aim I came over here was to keep playing and try to play professional football," he said. "This league has some really good players in it and even in our team we have people like Chris James who you can see is a really good player and others like Franco Parisi. I think having players like that in the league with the amount of experience they have can only be good for it. If the team has a good run and we do well obviously players from our team can be recognised." APIA host the high flying Sutherland Sharks at Lambert park on Friday and Tinkler hopes the team's first win against Blacktown last week will give them confidence for the rest of the season. "We played them pre-season and I know that is not a great indication but I think we can definitely get a result there," he said.

-By Chris Georges

NSW Premier League Round 5 Preview

NSW Premier League action continues over the Easter weekend with Round 5 action commencing on Good Friday. A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers and Sutherland Sharks open the round at Lambert Park in a tantalising encounter on Friday afternoon. The Tigers got their season up and running with their first win of the campaign last weekend, against the defending champions, Blacktown City FC. The win arrived in injury time against the reigning competition winners, and with such a buzz surrounding the Tigers and their fighting spirit, the side will be looking to continue their winning ways against the League leaders. A huge plus for the Tigers is the return from injury of playmaker Nick Rizzo. The former Olyroo scored his side's winner against Blacktown City after coming off the bench, a certain confidence builder ahead of the Sharks clash. Sutherland has been in impeccable form thus far, collecting three wins and a draw from their opening four rounds. The Sharks have proven that they will be difficult to beat at home, though the side will have a tough test against away against the Tigers this weekend. Matthew Bailey has been brilliant with his goals for Robbie Stanton's men, though the collective approach by the entire team has been impressive, resembling somewhat Robbie Stanton's championship winning side two seasons ago, even at this early stage. On Saturday evening, both Manly United FC and Rockdale City Suns will be looking for their first wins of the season when the two teams meet at Cromer Park. Manly United remain unbeaten, though have scored four consecutive draws from their opening four matches. At home the team was impressive against Sydney Olympic last weekend, though some poor finishing cost the side three-points in an otherwise dominant display. Striker Adam Foti has been in great form this season, even though he did not have his best match against the Blues. Foti's presence in the attacking third, along with that of Robbie Cattanaich, will be key to the home side's chances of finding goals. The Suns too need points to get their season started, and Lee Sterrey's men will be perfectly rested for this clash after the weekend off in Round 4 due to the wet Sydney weather. Rockdale City will need to exorcise the demons following the significant 6-1 defeat at the hands of Sydney United, though the signs are positive for the side who has proven to have compact defensive and mid-field lines. The Suns have carved out chances up front in their matches to-date, though goals have not been free flowing for the side, something coach Lee Sterrey will hope his men turn around at Cromer Park. Despite numerous changes in the off season, the momentum does seem to be with Bankstown City after four matches with the side sitting in equal second spot on the ladder - three points behind the leading Sutherland Sharks. The Lions, for the first



time in a long while now, enter their showdown with stern rival Blacktown City FC as favourites this weekend as the reigning champions still search for their first win of the campaign. Bankstown City will look for more of the same from new signing Aman Hadid who singlehandedly setup the Lions win against the Wolves last weekend with an impressive brace. Despite facing a Wolves onslaught late in the game, Blagoja Kuleski's men administered proceedings well in the second-half to pinch the winner and grind out the result. Blacktown City FC need to get their season on track before they fall too far behind the top sides. Mark Crittenden's men have shown signs of returning to the form displayed by the champions last season, though some poor finishing, and an inability to perform consistently well over 90' minutes has proven the side's undoing. Captain Luke Roodenburg will again play a vital part, as his absence from the start of the Tigers match last weekend was visible. With Mitch Long returning to the squad last weekend, and Roodenburg expected to start the match at Jensen Park, a much more consistent showing is expected. Youngsters Travis Major and Ray Miller too will be expected to shine as Blacktown City certainly do not want to fall too far behind the Top Five at this early stage of the season. As is always the case when these two sides meet, fireworks are expected at Jensen Park on Saturday. On Easter Monday, the remaining three Round 5 matches take place with Marconi Stallions and Bonnyrigg White Eagles starting the proceedings at 3:00 PM at Marconi Stadium. Both sides had last weekend off with their respective matches rescheduled due to waterlogged pitches, so both sides will be ready for this match come Monday. The Stallions sit a point clear of the winless White Eagles on the League ladder - six points off top-spot, which is a bit of a concern for both these sides that have strong ambitions of challenging for the title. The Stallions will be looking to make the most of their home ground advantage with more goals expect-



ed of Matthew Mayora. Mitchell Mallia too has shown he is returning to the fine form he displayed in the competition last season, and this will be vital for Luke Casserly's side against the defending Premiers. Bonnyrigg White Eagles' results have been disappointing, though the side is still unbeaten and have dominated all three of their matches to-date. Brian Brown will be looking for some cooler heads in front of goal, with the White Eagles squandering a number of chances thus far. Arguably, this clash is one to keep an eye on this weekend as both sides attempt to place their case for a shot at the title, even at this early point in the season. Over at Melita Stadium, Parramatta FC will undergo the Sydney Olympic test as the Blues visit South Granville. The new boys have already proven they can mix it with their more fancied rivals, though the side is still searching for their first win of the season. Sydney Olympic do play a much quicker free flowing game with their midfield players a constant threat on the counterattack. This match will prove a good test for both sides, as the Eagles are very difficult to break down, meanwhile the Blues too pose a strong defensive line. The home supporters will also get their first official look at new signings Brodie Mooy and Matthew Osman as they look to get a win on 'home debut' with their new club. In the final match of the Easter weekend, Sydney United play host to South Coast Wolves at Sydney United Sports Centre on Monday at 4:00 PM. The Reds look the goods this season and are always a difficult adversary when playing at home. Jean Paul DeMarigny has a good mix of youth and experience at his disposal, and the side has already shown some very impressive signs for a serious tilt at the title. The home fans are awaiting Mark Rudan's official return to the club with his debut in the competition, meanwhile Ufuk Talay has already shown his worth with cameo appearances against Marconi Stallions and Rockdale City Suns. The visiting Wolves, although with a mammoth task ahead of them, have already shown they are more than capable of causing an upset away from home. Coach Trevor Morgan caused a number of upsets away from home last season, and already has the scalp of A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers this season. Former A-League striker Sasho Petrovski has not disappointed the South Coast with some very important goals, and all round influence on the players around him, no doubt assisting the Wolves shot at finals football.

- Joseph Carlucci