



Around the Grounds

NSW Premier League Round 5 Review

Sutherland Sharks continue to lead the way in the NSW Premier League with a one-point lead over Sydney United and Sydney Olympic on the League ladder after Easter weekend action – the Reds with a match in hand. The Sharks were forced to dig deep on Good Friday and come from behind to share the spoils at Lambert Park against A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers. Trailing 1-0 after 9' minutes, following Anthony Hartshorn's well taken header from a Stephen Kayes cross, the Sharks drew level in the 29' minute. Panni Nikas combined well with Chris Price to send the latter through on goal as Price kept his cool to round goalkeeper Stefan Giglio before slotting home. The Tigers had chances to win the match late on though Sharks goalkeeper Nathan Denham was in great touch, denying the Tigers and salvaging top-spot on the ladder for Sutherland. On Saturday evening at Cromer Park, Rockdale City Suns scored their first win of 2011 defeating Manly United FC 1-0. A second-half penalty from Sash Tirovski handed the Suns a 1-0 win, a much needed confidence booster for Lee Sterrey's men. In a topsy-turvy encounter, where both sides dominated proceedings at different stages, the Suns held their nerve to seal the win that sees the side move off bottom-spot on the League ladder. At Jensen Park, defending champions Blacktown City FC notched up their first win of the season with a very hard fought 3-1 defeat of Bankstown City. Aman Hadid had the home side ahead on 24' minutes as he got in behind the Blacktown City defence to slot home. The lead was short lived as Travis Major was on hand to drive home following a goalmouth scramble to draw the two sides level on 31' minutes. On the stroke of half-time, Mitchell Long had the champions ahead with a well-taken goal, breaking the spirits of the Bankstown City players. Despite the Lions' best efforts, Travis Major's 52' minute free-kick gave the visitors a two-goal lead, one that Mark Crittenden's men cleverly administered for the side's first three-pointer of the season. On Easter Monday at Marconi Stadium, the Stallions played 50' minutes against defending Premiers Bonnyrigg White Eagles with ten-men following the dismissal of Matthew Mayora prior to the interval. In a very tightly contested match where the White Eagles made most of the running, Marconi remained well organised in defence and continually frustrated their opponent. Nathan Elasi created two clear scoring chances in the second period, along with Daniel Severino's constant threat via the set-piece, though Nahuel Arrarte nearly stole the points for the Stallions 8' minutes from time with an exceptional run out of midfield. The Stallions captain cleverly beat three markers to go one-on-one with Phil Zabaks, though from a tight angle and on his less preferred left foot, Arrarte failed to hit the target. In the end, a very important point for the Stallions, meanwhile Bonnyrigg remains winless in 2011 with four draws from as many matches to date. Sydney Olympic bounced back to winning ways at Melita Stadium with a narrow 1-0 victory over Parramatta FC. Robert Mileski set the scene for Alex Smith in the 8' minute with a tantalising through ball. Smith beat the offside trap and coolly slotted the ball past Anthony Costa to open the scoring and maintain his exceptional run of goals in this early part of the season. Sydney Olympic did control proceedings though were forced to sweat it out by a very good side on the counterattack. Parramatta FC's Kataiba Elrich should have grabbed the equaliser in the closing stages, however volleyed his effort over the crossbar with the outside of his boot from 6-yards, much to the disbelief of the Parramatta FC supporters. Sydney United kept the pressure on Sutherland Sharks with a very impressive showing in their 2-0 defeat of South Coast Wolves. Luka Glavas (7' minute) and Ben Vidaic (22' minute) led the strike force for Jean Paul DeMarigny's side, scoring a goal each in the first-half to set up the win. Trailing Sutherland Sharks by one-point on the ladder, the Reds still have a match in hand following the rescheduling of their clash with Bonnyrigg White Eagles due to a waterlogged pitch last weekend.

-By Joseph Carlucci



Peter Tsekenis...
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Special Feature: Olympic Fan, Player, Legend and Coach

For those who have followed the career path of Peter Tsekenis from the early days would probably say; 'Sydney Olympic player now coach and former coach of Bankstown City Lions' but most are unlikely to have delved a little deeper into the background or bothered to take the time to find out any more than that. He has actually been a Sydney Olympic fan since his early days when he was taken along to their games by his family and, as you do, grew up wanting to play for his boyhood club, following in the footsteps of his childhood heroes. But, unlike most of us, he fulfilled the dream and to many he is quite rightly hailed as one of their greatest players. He came through the youth ranks and into the side when in the old NSL and spent 9-years playing at the top level with them making many a telling contribution in matches and although being lauded at times, never honestly received the full plaudits his unselfish play deserved but it isn't something he dwells on and as is often the case. When not on the field or coaching, he is a very intelligent chap to speak to with an often insightful comment or witty riposte. "I thought the time was right for me to take over at the club. Everything fell into place and I felt the right people were there (behind the scenes) so it made my decision a little easier but it was something I hoped to do one day." Noted as a tigerish player in his day he is also known as being a winner, as mentioned by goalkeeper Paul Henderson in a recent interview, and it is this infectious enthusiasm that has Olympic playing some of their brightest football in years. It would come as little surprise if they were to give the Grand Final make up a real

good shake this season and although it's early days yet with that particular piece of silverware some way off in the distance, the early signs have been very positive indeed. Henderson looks solid at the back and in Alex Smith they have a striker who appears to be scoring for fun but it will be the second part of the season where things should really come together as due to renovation work at Belmore Sports Ground, they play just about all of the early rounds away from home which means on the run-in at the business end of the campaign they will secure home advantage. "It's true the second part of the season should be to our advantage but obviously with no home matches until then we really need to hang in there on our travels. "If we are thereabouts after Round 11 then hopefully things will be in our favour but there are no guarantees in football except you never know how things will turn out. "We'll take each game on its merits but we will be disappointed if we don't make the Top Five at least, as will every other team in that situation." The things is, when Peter comes out with comments like that you can never tell whether he is being serious or not as they are generally accompanied by a wry smile and a twinkle in the eye. Another thing that is for certain though, Olympic are playing pretty football, a winner is at the helm and they will be a side to watch with great interest this season. Tsekenis is a living Sydney Olympic legend but only time will reveal how his reputation at the club will be enhanced and if enhanced it is to be, couldn't happen to a better fan of the club really.

By Micky Brock

*All articles courtesy of Football NSW.

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