



Sunny side up for Gooner Tirovski

those who were, they're saying that under Lee the training sessions are a little shorter and sharper and in organising everyone to play the game at a higher tempo with the sharpness and speed required to play that way. "That has been the biggest change for the boys I think and for me it has been more tactical awareness and the fact the boss likes to lay out his formation early so that everyone has the time to get used to where they are supposed to be and familiarise themselves."

Tirovski is a Gooner, an Arsenal fan for those who don't know and not because they are a successful side in England but for the overall style and philosophy instilled under Arsene Wenger. "I followed the side before Wenger arrived and for me it's simply a case of Arsenal and that is it."

"My favourite player was Ian Wright as a kid because it was almost impossible for the defenders to close him down most of the time as he was such an instinctive player but I have to say my all-time favourite Arsenal player has to be Dennis Bergkamp as he was just the ultimate."

We break from the interview for a short while whilst this scribe reveals a couple of things regarding the Dutch master and when the greenness of envy subsides the slightly disconsolate midfielder continues. "I went over there six times and managed to get to see one game but I did also drive a long way to watch them in the UEFA Champions League when I drove to Glas-

gow and back in one day." It's pointed out that this is a minor trek as you can go from Sydney to Lismore in thirteen hours and not even leave the state let alone the country but when the laughing stops it is conceded that the pair of us are very disappointed with the fortunes of the club in 2011. "It's been one of those years with regrets and what ifs so for many fans it seems to be the club are always second and don't seem to have that winning instinct when it comes to the 'bigger' games and perhaps there needs to be a change in some of the personnel to shake it up."

"Teams like Manchester United have some players who are maybe not as gifted as those at Arsenal but they have that winning attitude under pressure where they can win a game in the 93rd minute whereas Arsenal seem to be able to lose them."

It brings us neatly back to Rockdale and whether they have the Red Devils attitude. "I think really we have not had a fully fit squad to pick from week to week but to our credit I feel we have coped quite well. "We seem to have come in to games undermanned at times maybe (Tirovski was on the bench for the game with South Coast Wolves due to illness but still joined combat as a substitute) and we are still trying to balance the team out a little at the moment and I think we are not far away from (Sterrey) having a full roster to select from which means competition for places will be stronger and that is always a good thing."

"When that happens we will be a stronger unit but until then we might win one late or lose one late, like it did against Bonnyrigg, but we'll all be out there doing our best for Lee and the club." When speaking with the Suns coach and players it is evident they have set themselves the target of a Top Five finish as a minimum mark of achievement and anything less will be seen as a season of underachievement. "We are not here to make up the numbers and all the players have a Top Five finish as a minimum. The supporters know the players who have come in and the expectation of all is high and Top Five is a must otherwise there will be an awful lot of disappointed people."

"I know we have put that pressure on ourselves but we now we have the squad to get there and it's just a matter of taking the opportunities that come our way to get there. If we follow the instruction and advice of the coach and take things in our stride then we should do it."

It becomes difficult to argue with anyone who possesses the confidence and belief in team mates, coach and club with the conversation and aura almost infectious but without wishing ill to any club it would be marvellous to see this young central midfielder achieving stage one of the plan and then seeing where stage two takes him, and not just because he too is a Gooner!

By Micky Brock

At just 27 years of age, Rockdale City Suns midfielder Sash Tirovski is well travelled having played with West Sydney Berries last season and formerly with Bankstown City Lions, Sydney Olympic and Sutherland Sharks to name but a few. So how has he slotted into his latest side. "The major change for me has been the attitude and professionalism of Lee (Sterrey). "He came to the club and shook things up a little and tried to get everyone, the club and all the boys on the same page and looking forward and getting everyone to realise what this club can potentially do in this league."

Many will point to a slow start to the Suns season but the ladder told a different story and there are no excuses from anyone at the club as Tirovski continued. "I wasn't here last season of course but for

NSW Premier League Round 8 Preview



Sydney Olympic's David Gullo in action against Bankstown City FC on Saturday (Photo by Gavin Leung)

Further concern for Bonnyrigg will be the fact that the Wolves' away record has been quite impressive, with the side performing better – results wise – away from John Crehan Park. In a must win game for the White Eagles, action aplenty is expected at Bonnyrigg Sports Club on Saturday evening. At Seymour Shaw, Sutherland Sharks face Marconi Stallions with kick-off set for 7:00 pm.

Bonnyrigg White Eagles and South Coast Wolves kick-off Round 8 on Saturday evening with the White Eagles desperate to find their second win of the season in what has certainly been a difficult start for the reigning Premiers. Bonnyrigg have failed to find the scintillating form of season 2010, struggling to find the fluidity that saw them become the most feared opponent in the NSW Premier League.

Coming off a loss at the hands of Manly United FC last weekend, Brad Boardman & Co. will be looking to quickly get their season on track in front of their home supporters, even though South Coast Wolves promise to be a very difficult opponent. The Wolves have shown their intentions from the opening round, causing all opponents difficulty in breaking down the side and containing strike pairing Sasho Petrovski and Mark Picciolini.

The Sharks showed their resolute side in grinding out a draw with Sydney United last weekend, and the Miranda-based side will be looking to keep their undefeated run intact on Saturday. Marconi Stallions will be grateful for no midweek matches this week after playing four matches in the past two weeks. The Stallions were sluggish against Blacktown City last weekend, though still managed to dig deep and salvage a point late on. The occasion against Sutherland will prove a real test for the Stallions, though similar to the Wolves, the Stallions have been able to pick up some big points on the road thus far.

The final match on Saturday takes place at Melita Stadium when Parramatta FC take on Bankstown City at 7pm. Parramatta FC return to Melita Stadium still in search of their first win of the season. Brian Dene's men made a fine start to the campaign with

some good performances against more fancied opponents, though the wheels have started to fall off somewhat in recent weeks.

The side was flat against the Tigers last weekend, though the team will be looking to bounce back in front of their home supporters on Sunday. The Eagles opponents will be Bankstown City, another side coming off a loss in Round 7.

Coach Blagoja Kuleski will be looking to re-instate some confidence following the 2-5 loss against Sydney Olympic, even though the side has shown their ability to defend well, and hit on the counterattack with the likes of in form striker, Aman Hadid.

A very interesting encounter is expected at Melita Stadium with both sides certainly favouring their chances of a win to get their respective seasons moving in the right direction. Sunday afternoon action starts at Lambert Park with A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt playing host to Manly United FC. The Tigers lifted their game to defeat Parramatta FC in Round 7 and more of the same is expected this weekend. Experienced trio Franco Parisi, Robbie Younis and Nick Rizzo are expected to lead the pack with the additions of Sam Messam and Chris James already having a positive effect on the squad. Manly United FC enter this clash full of confidence following their first win of the season.

The Cromer Park side defeated none other than Bonnyrigg White Eagles in a topsy-turvy encounter, 3-2. In addition to Scott Balderson's double and Adam Foti's return to the scorer's list, Manly United's ability to grind out the result against the White Eagles, despite playing the closing 15' minutes without David Dodd, showed the true character of Craig Midgley's team.

At Lily Homes Stadium, Blacktown City FC meets Rockdale City Suns. The home side has really started to find the feet, and the

performance against Marconi Stallions last weekend was of a very high quality. The problems surrounding the reigning champions has been their inability to finalise in front of goal, and another fine all round performance against the Suns without producing three-points this weekend will count for very little. The Suns run has been very similar to that of Blacktown City, with the Rockdale outfit creating a number of chances in their most recent hitout, only to come undone in the final third with some poor finishing and decision making.

The Suns have proven that defensively they can mix it with the best, though the likes of James Monie and Jason Naidovski will need to start finding the back of the net if the side is going to make a push for finals football. Sydney Olympic and Sydney United meet in a battle between first and third at Sydney United Sports Centre, with fireworks expected between two in form sides.

The Reds will be seething after being held by the Sharks at home last weekend, despite dominating the match, meanwhile the Blues were majestic in their defeat of Bankstown City. Jean Paul DeMarigny's men will continue with their attacking philosophy, meanwhile Peter Tsekenis' Blues have shown they are equally as effective in the attacking third.

The Reds have successfully integrated Mark Rudan into the defensive line, meanwhile Ufuk Talay is closing in on a starting spot as he nears full fitness.

Sydney Olympic should have Alex Smith back after the club's top goalscorer missed the trip to Jensen Park with an injury concern last week, meanwhile the defensive line continues to grow stronger with Richard Luksic and Brett Studman rekindling their old partnership at Bankstown City.

By Joseph Carlucci