



Around the Grounds

Current NSW Premier League table toppers Sydney Olympic progressed to the Quarter Final stages of the prestigious Waratah Cup after downing fellow rivals Blacktown City FC 3-0 in what was their first match for 2011 at a picturesque Belmore Sports Ground on an Antarctic Wednesday winter's evening. From the onset, both coaches had a few key absentees omitted from their respective squads, Blacktown City coach Mark Crittenden had his attacking pair of Mitchell Long and captain courageous Luke Roodenburg rested while Peter Tsekenis had Robbie Mileski (suspended) David Gullo and Richard Luksic sidelined. The cold and windy conditions took its toll early in the match as both teams needed a couple of minutes before settling into the game but it was the home side who had the first real chance as NSW Premier League leading goalscorer Alex Smith smashed a long range shot from 25-yards but failed to trouble Blacktown City keeper Simon Jaeger. The message was clear early though that both teams were testing each other in midfield but Olympic went at it again in the 19th minute when Chris Triantis had his right foot shot from outside the box saved by Jaeger. A minute later and it was the visitors turn to have a crack with Chris Bedzo receiving a lovely ball inside the box but his looping header had no zing on it inside the six-yard box which Paul Henderson comfortably saved. The moment of truth however came in the 22nd minute as the home side opened the scoring via the penalty spot. Blacktown City FC defender Luke Austin was adjudged to have fouled Japanese import Takayuki Omi inside the box after the zippy attacker played a neat one-two before he was up-ended with referee Adam Weir awarding the penalty much to the delight of the 250 spectators who braved the cold conditions. Up stepped Smith who smashed his kick on the right of Jaeger's post which gave Olympic a 1-0 lead – it was the Olympic star's first goal since his double against APIA Leichhardt Tigers in Round 6 of the NSW Premier League competition. The game then fizzled out after the first goal with half-time seeing the Blues one-nil up but there was to be more action in the second half as the fans witnessed two more goals. Drama hit Blacktown City FC in the 52nd minute as Olympic's livewire left-footer William Angel took on Blacktown defender Patrick Gatt – the latter dragged him down in the box with Weir awarding a second penalty of the match. Much to the dismay of the Blacktown City players and dug-out, the penalty stood and the money was on Smith to score his second. The Gold Coast United bound attacker though had his penalty saved by Jaeger but much to his relief, the ball rebounded straight to his feet and he made no mistake from five-yards as he smashed the ball in the back of the net to give Olympic a two-goal buffer. The game was then put beyond doubt for Crittenden's men in the 64th minute as Blues defender Jerry Kalouris attacked the space on the left hand side and whipped in a fantastic ball where Emmanuel Giannaros rose comfortably to head home Olympic's third and final goal of the match. Not content with the score-line, Olympic went searching for a fourth and nearly found it via a

Waratah Cup Round 4:

Sydney Olympic progress to Quarters with victory over Blacktown

trademark free-kick by Phil Makrys but his resulting shot was saved well by Jaeger. Both coaches used all their substitutes as the game again hit a standstill but Blacktown almost grabbed a late consolation goal right on full time when Travis Major had his shot inside the box saved by Nenad Vekic with the final whistle bringing applause to Sydney Olympic who ran out 3-0 victors on what was a polished performance by the home side. Sydney Olympic coach Peter Tsekenis was pleased with his troops showing especially after their disappointing 3-0 loss last weekend to the Bonnyrigg White Eagles. "Leading up the game we had a pretty poor result on the weekend with our loss to Bonnyrigg which sometimes is a good wake-up call and I wanted to see how the boys responded. "I used some boys that hadn't played for a while and I thought it came together, the pitch was good, a bit cold, but we knocked the ball around well and I thought we were far superior tonight. "We managed to score our goals and came away with it pretty comfortably but make no mistake, Blacktown are no s-louch team, they're a good side but I was of course happy with the end result."

With the potential of winning the club's first silverware just around the corner, Tsekenis stated that the club would of course continue to get closer to lifting that Waratah Cup but hinted that the competition was Olympic's main focus. "Once it gets closer you start to give yourself every opportunity to get closer to the Cup but the competition is our main focus. We want to bounce back to form at home on Sunday against the South Coast Wolves, but it was great to come away with a first home win after a long layoff from Belmore in front of some good support, especially in this weather which was great to see." The surface at Belmore was kept in immaculate shape and Tsekenis praised the condition of the surface which will see the Blues play their remaining eleven matches at home. "It is a good pitch, it's had a lot of attention but I know the players enjoyed playing on it tonight, we'll just need to carry on in having that winning attitude in making our ground a fortress to play at." The mood was visibly different in the opposing dressing sheds as Crittenden lamented that Olympic were just too good on the night. "We were outplayed by a better side to be fair – it was cold, but it was cold for both sides. "We've had a very good six weeks playing wise - we won three on the trot, we obviously had a tough ten days ago with the tragic passing of Tyler, but I cannot take anything away from Olympic, they were good, very solid all over the park and totally outplayed us." On the topic of the 'big man', the unfortunate loss of Tyler did have a huge effect on the side but to Blacktown's credit, they've remained as one and have dedicated the rest of the year to big stopper.

"We've got a photo of Tyler on the wall, we'll never forget the man, he's a mate of ours and always will be. "The club have done everything they could to make sure we got through this all together. We've offered all the support we can to his family and the boys - we're just trying to head forward, unfortunately that's something that you need to do, you need to move on and not dwell on it, but we'll be playing for him."

Match Stats

Sydney Olympic 3
(A Smith 22' pen, 52, E Giannaros 64')

Blacktown City FC 0

Wednesday 8th June, 2011

Belmore Sports Ground, Belmore

Referee: Adam Weir

Assist Referees: Stephen Lucas and Jerry Bitas

Crowd: 250

Sydney Olympic:

1 Paul Henderson (20 Nenad Vekic 86'),
2 Emmanuel Giannaros, 3 Brett Studman,
4 Ibrahim Haydar, 6 Alex Smith
(7 Phil Makrys 65'), 8 Chris Triantis
(17 Mitchell Stamatellis 70'), 14 William Angel
(26 Brad Di Salvo 86'), 15 Tod Bamber,
16 Peter Triantis (31 James Gikas 78'),
18 Jerry Kalouris, 23 Takayuki Omi.

Yellow Cards: J Kalouris 58', B Studman 65'

Red Cards: Nil

Blacktown City FC:

1 Simon Jaeger (David Bradsevic 81'),
3 Mitchell Duke (15 Ray Miller 70'),
5 Patrick Gatt, 6 Luke Austin, 8 Chris Bedzo,
9 Kain Rastall (4 Travis Major 65'),
11 Milorad Simonovic (36 Kevin Oliviera 78'),
13 Matt Lewis, 17 Adam Jenner,
18 Bruno Pivato, 19 Zac Cairncross
(6 Matthew Pressello 35').

Yellow Cards: A Jenner 18', Z Cairncross 24',
P Gatt 71'

Red Cards: Nil

-By Mark Stavroulakis



Action shown from Wednesday evening's clash between Sydney Olympic v Blacktown City in round 4 of the Waratah Cup. (Photos by Carlos Furtado)