



Around the Grounds

NSW PREMIER LEAGUE ROUND 13 – PREVIEW

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By
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Round 13 NSW Premier League action commences on Saturday evening with the two lowest placed teams on the League ladder – Parramatta FC and South Coast Wolves - meeting at Melita Stadium.

The Eagles, still with only one win to their name, need points desperately to close the gap on the Wolves. Caretaker coach Pat Marando has been able to instill some additional self belief in his troops since taking over the top job recently, with the side scoring an impressive win in the Waratah Cup against Sutherland Sharks, though it is the run in the League that remains a huge concern for the newly promoted side.

Parramatta FC failed to make the most of the numerical advantage for over an hour against Bonnyrigg White Eagles last weekend, conceding a late goal to return from Bonnyrigg with nothing to show. Weight of expectation remains on the shoulders of Almir Dizdagic, even though the striker has started to find the back of the net in recent weeks. Defensively, the side will need to keep things tight against the Wolves this weekend, if the side is to collect its second win of the campaign.

South Coast Wolves run has been disappointing in terms of results, though the side has certainly given a good account of themselves with some positive performances. The Wolves have troubled each of their more fancied opponents over the first part of the season, and with some better finishing in the front third and stronger marking across the backline, the side may have certainly been sitting higher up on the League ladder.

A must win match for both sides this Saturday, with the rest of the competition separating itself from these two sides on the ladder.

At Seymour Shaw, Sutherland Sharks will be looking to bounce back from the narrow loss at Blacktown City FC last weekend. A rather difficult match for the Sharks at Lily Homes Stadium, Robbie Stanton's men were disappointed to lose out courtesy of a messy own goal. With the return of Panni Nikas to the group following a brief trip to China along with Nick Stavroulakis' return from injury – the latter got 85' minutes under his belt last weekend after two weeks off - the Sharks will be confident of a return to winning ways on their home pitch.

The travelling Manly United FC side will need to be at their best to return to Cromer Park with something on Satur-

day night, especially coming off a break following the wet weather in Round 12 that saw their clash with Sydney United cancelled. Craig Midgley's side, which does include a number of less experienced players, has certainly shown its worth with some promising performances in both the League and Cup competitions.

A win on Saturday, with the catch-up match against Sydney United still to come, the Cromer Park outfit still stands a good chance of closing in on a finals berth come the end of the regular season.

On Sunday afternoon, a top of the table clash between first-placed Sydney Olympic and third-placed Blacktown City FC is arguably the match of the round.

The Blues have shown throughout the campaign thus far their ability to play good football, and with the side now playing the entire second part of the season on their newly renovated Belmore Sports Ground, Peter Tsekennis' men look unstoppable at this point. Despite the goals starting to dry up a little for top marksman Alex Smith, the rest of the side has pitched in with Phil Makrys and Todd Bamber finding the back of the net last weekend against the Wolves.

Blacktown City FC however will be no pushover for the League leader as Mark Crittenden's men have certainly found their groove after an indifferent start to the campaign. Defensively, Blacktown City have been very sound – despite the 3-0 loss against the last week in the Waratah Cup, where a number of first team players were rested. Crittenden will be looking at his midfield engine comprising Milorad Simonovic, Mitch Long and Travis Major to get forward and support Luke Roodenburg and Mitchell Duke, as this side has proven its ability to get into goal scoring positions. The team however will need to take any chances against a Sydney Olympic side that concedes very little position to opposing teams.

At Jensen Park Bankstown City and Rockdale City Suns meet in an eagerly awaited derby. With three points separating the two sides on the ladder, a win for the Suns will almost certainly end any hope of the Lions making a late rush for the finals. The Suns on the other hand still sit in a decent position to make a bid for the top five, though the side will need to find some consistency in this second part of the season. Most

pleasing for Rockdale City is the

recent return to the scorer's sheet of both Jason Naidovski and James Monie, though both men will need to make it a regular occurrence in front of goal for some Suns success.

The Lions season has been extremely inconsistent, though Blagoja Kuleski has managed to unearth some decent young talent. The likes of Aman Hadid have been exceptional findings for the side, though the expectation of the supporters is for the side to add to the three wins from twelve matches thus far.

A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers and Bonnyrigg White Eagles meet at Lambert Park on Sunday with the two sides living extremely different moments of form at the moment. The Tigers, sitting six points behind the White Eagles on the ladder, need to make a stand at this point of the season if the finals series is to become a realisation this season. Against the White Eagles, the likes of Franco Parisi and Nicola Rizzo need to be on their game, in anticipation of Robbie Younis' return to the playing field.

Bonnyrigg White Eagles are on a roll of sorts at the moment with some positive results over the past month. Victories over Sutherland Sharks, Sydney Olympic and Parramatta FC send the side into this fixture full of confidence, despite newest arrival Jared Lum's unavailability on Sunday due to suspension. A victory against the Tigers on Sunday will see Bonnyrigg move into the Top-Four on the ladder.

In the final match of the round Sydney United and Marconi Stallions meet in the weekend's second derby. The Reds come off a weekend with no football following the washout at Cromer Park in Round 12 as Jean-Paul DeMarigny's men will be out to put an end to a lean run in recent weeks which included a fourth round Waratah Cup loss against NSW Super League side Hills Brumbies.

Marconi Stallions have grown with each match this season as Luke Casserly's side has become a real contender for finals football. Led by captain Nahuel Arrarte, who has been in exceptional form this season, the side has flourished with a strong backline and goals being spread out amongst the field. Andrew Mailer, Daniel Petkovski and Matt Gordon have scored some real beauties in recent weeks as Marconi continues to play for a return to the Top-Five.

A real battle is expected at Sydney United Sports Centre on Sunday.

Round 13			
TIME	HOME TEAM	AWAY TEAM	VENUE
7:00 PM Sat 18/Jun	Parramatta FC	vs South Coast Wolves	Melita Stadium
7:00 PM Sat 18/Jun	Sutherland Sharks	vs Manly United FC	Seymour Shaw Park
3:00 PM Sun 19/Jun	Sydney Olympic	vs Blacktown City FC	Belmore Sports Ground
3:00 PM Sun 19/Jun	Bankstown City	vs Rockdale City Suns	Jensen Park
3:00 PM Sun 19/Jun	APIA Leichhardt Tigers	vs Bonnyrigg White Eagles	Lambert Park
4:00 PM Sun 19/Jun	Sydney United	vs Marconi Stallions	Sydney United Sports Centre

