



Around the Grounds

NSW Premier League Round 16 Review

Sydney Olympic maintained a strong grip on top spot with a business-like performance in the 2-0 defeat of Parramatta FC at Belmore Sports Ground. The Blues, coming off a loss at home against Manly United FC a fortnight ago, got straight down to business from the opening whistle as Robbie Mileski scored with a fine finish after only 23" seconds. The playmaker beat two defenders before curling his effort, from an acute angle, past Anthony Costa in the Parramatta FC goal.

The Eagles were reduced to ten-men on the hour as Kutaiba Elrich was shown his second yellow card of the afternoon. Despite the numerical disadvantage, the Eagles carved out a magnificent chance to draw level. Shayne

Ardel's cross picked out Luke Grima, though Grima's header was perfectly save by Paul Henderson in the Blues goal. At the other end, Sydney Olympic secured the three-points in the 78' minute as David Gullo was on hand to drive home a neat pass by Mileski for the 2-0 result. Sydney United ensured the Blues lead would remain at six-points as Jean-Paul De Marigny's side returned from the South Coast with maximum points following the 2-1 defeat of the Wolves. It was not all easy running for the Reds who found themselves a goal behind after 30' minutes. Jake Duczynski's cross from the left skipped under the body of Sydney United goalkeeper Vedran Janjetovic, and Andres Gomez was on hand to tap home from close-range. Ben Vidaic ensured the sides would go in at the break on level terms as he blasted home a loose ball inside the penalty-area to make the score 1-1. After the break, Elsid Barkhousir, as he has done so many times before for the Reds, found the match winner with a well taken volley. The striker latched onto Antony Golec's flicked attempt, finishing with

aplomb to seal the three-points.

At Ilinden Sports Ground, Rockdale City Suns came from behind to seal a point against Manly United FC. Trailing the recently crowned Waratah Cup champions 1-0 following Adam Foti's well taken opener, the Suns found their equaliser prior to the break via Jason Naidovski. Despite both sides creating chances late on in the match, the spoils were shared as both Manly United FC and Rockdale City sit three-points outside of the top five – the Northern Beaches side still with a match in hand.

At Lily Holmes Stadium, Blacktown City FC gave an under strength Bankstown City side a heavy football lesson with an emphatic 7-1 win. A hat-trick from Luke Roodenburg, a brace from Mitchell Duke and goals to Zac Cairncross and Travis Major (penalty) saw Blacktown home, with Hussein Salameh scoring the only goal for Bankstown via the penalty spot. On Saturday evening, Sutherland Sharks played arguably their best 90' minutes of football this season to score a comfortable 2-0 win over A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers, adding further woe to a

Tigers side that is slipping further down the ladder. Matt Bailey's 15' minute strike from close-range, followed by Panni Nikas' exceptional free-kick 2' minutes later, were enough to seal the Sharks the points. Despite A.P.I.A.'s chances late on, Sutherland remained in control to close out the match and keep the pressure on the top two sides on the ladder.

Bonnyrigg White Eagles came from behind to defeat Marconi Stallions 3-1. Giosue Sama had the Stallions ahead after he drove Christopher Nunes' cross into the back of the net. The visitors kept their lead going into the break, though two goals in 2' minutes midway through the second-half proved to be the side's undoing. Substitute Brad Boardman equalised with a fine diagonal finish, before Brendan Gan scored his first goal for the White Eagles, converting amidst a sea of legs to send Bonnyrigg ahead. Blake Powell added a third for Bonnyrigg 4' minutes from the end, much to the delight of the Bonnyrigg supporters.

By Joseph Carlucci

NSW Super League Round 18 Review

West Sydney Berries' lead at the top of Super League has been reduced to two points after they were held to a scoreless draw at Sydney University while Blacktown Spartans overcame Northern Tigers by a single goal. Macarthur Rams, Spirit FC and St George all won, completing the five but Sydney University lurk close by, just one point behind. The main news of the weekend though came off the park with the decision by the Central Coast Football Association not to enter a team in the FNSW competition next year. This sees an end to the Coast's long reign in such competitions over the past quarter century.

Sydney University v West Sydney Berries

It was a 0-0 draw at Hensley Field as leaders West Sydney Berries shared the points with a resurgent Sydney University, their margin at the top now reduced to two. But there was plenty of excitement and intensity despite the lack of goals. This was always going to be a tight affair, the return to form of Sydney Uni likely to prove a difficult task for the Berries to overcome and it was just that. After two wins in a week, Uni had leapt to fifth and were not about concede that gain in a hurry. They were the more impressive on the night, particularly in a first half in which they dominated play



Steve Karavatakis

but without really placing Phil Zabaks under any clear danger. Perhaps their best efforts came from James O'Rourke, who was wide with a header, and Andre Carle, who skipped past three defenders but was just closed down at the last moment. David McMurray did have the ball in the net, earlier in the night, but that was ruled out for offside. It was a blow for Uni when McMurray went off with an ankle injury after just twenty five minutes, the captain being unable to continue after receiving the knock a few minutes earlier. That offside chance was in

fact, one of three times the ball found the back of the net without any of them counting on the scoreboard. Dimitri Zakilas put one away for the Berries midway through the first half but that was disallowed after Zakilas firstly controlled the ball with his hand. And the Berries also bundled the ball into the goal during the second half, but not before bundling over Trinity Allen first. The league leaders came more into the game once the second half commenced and caused some real concern to Uni. Stefan de Jesus almost caught Allen off his line, the keeper having to backtrack rapidly only for the ball to land on the top netting. But it was John Tsironis who had the clearest opportunity. A quick throw in found Tsironis in space, and time to measure his shot, but the tall striker hurried his effort, skewing his chance across the face of goal. Uni pressed late for the winner and came very close. They brought on Liam McConaghy with just over ten minutes to go, the leading striker having started on the bench after picking up a strain against the Coast mid-week. He looked dangerous as did Kendo Takushima, who almost got the lead after hammering a freekick on target, before Zabaks parried. The Berries also had their chance late, hitting the crossbar from wide, the ball almost dropping in at the far post. The Berries cleared off the line in the dying mo-

ments, the ball very close to going over but they did have the final say. A long throw by Liam McKenna, the ball was cleared to Jack Sobczyk, whose strike flew over. It was the last kick of the game. "I have to admit I am a little disappointed," stated John Calleja. "I thought we played the better football, our passing was better. And I think we deserved to win that one". The omission of Liam McConaghy at the start was a blow as was the early injury to David McMurray. "I thought McMurray was playing well before he went off. And with Liam, we thought that with about twenty to go, we could bring him on to make a difference. He played well too. As did young Nick Nesbitt when he came on. But as it is, we will take the point", he finished. Steve Karavatakis agreed that his side were second best on the night.

"I am disappointed, we had too many passengers," he said. "I feel that we took it a bit lightly and the fact is that you cannot take any game lightly. Uni played really well and deserved to take all the points, really". "It is just going to make it harder for us now, it will really be a tight finish".

West Sydney Berries: 99. Phil Zabaks 6. Nick Tantalos 7. Damon Collina 4. Jack Sobczyk 16. Phil Reilly 13. Ryan Emerton (11. Aram Tayebi 80') 8. Ante Deur (c) 12. Stefan de Jesus 9. Kodjo Adjassou (5. Liam McKenna 46') 10. John Tsironis (3. Louis Duchesne 85') 19. Dimitri Zakilas.

Subs not used: Rgk George Bouropoulos 17. Michael Zevovski.