

## NSW PREMIER LEAGUE ROUND 17 (Re-scheduled round) – PREVIEW

By Joseph Carlucci

The NSW Premier League regular season draws to a close this weekend with the Round 17 clashes – previously re-scheduled due to a weekend washout following heavy rain across the state last month – to answer a number of questions posed by the top-five ahead of finals football.

Sydney Olympic and Sydney United will be battling for the top spot, with the Reds in need of a massive favour from A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers if they are to stand a chance of pipping the Blues for the Premiership title.

Meanwhile, Sutherland Sharks, Blacktown City FC and Bonnyrigg White Eagles – already sure of a top-five finish – will be all mathematically in the hunt for a third-placed finish. Sydney Olympic plays host to the Tigers at Belmore Sports Ground on Sunday afternoon, and the Blues have the luxury of holding their Premiership aspirations in their own hands. The Blues, who hold a one-point lead over Sydney United, can clinch the Premiership with a win, though Peter Tsekens' men will do best not to underestimate a Tigers outfit that has hit their straps over the past month.

The Blues showed they bounced back following poor showings against Sydney United and Rockdale City Suns with a fine performance against Bonnyrigg White Eagles last weekend, even though the team was denied the win late-on via Blake Powell's freakish goal in the 89' minute.

Tsekens will again be looking at his playmakers Robbie Mileski and Chris Triantis to make things happen in the attacking third, with Phil Makrys pulling the strings in the centre of midfield.

A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt will have nothing

to lose come Sunday as the Tigers would like nothing less than to spoil their former NSL rival's Premiership aspirations. The Tigers have proven their ability to play a strong passing game across the park over the past month, with the side claiming the scalps of Manly United FC, Bankstown City and Sydney United following a disastrous first three-quarters of the season. Caretaker coach Billy McColl has instilled the confidence that went missing following last season's finals finish, and the Tigers will be out to finish the season on a high with a strong performance at Belmore. Sydney United's chances of finishing Premiers depends ultimately upon Sydney Olympic's result, though the Reds will still need a win at home against fellow finalists Blacktown City FC.

Coach Jean Paul De Marigny will be after more of the attacking football his side has produced this season in what will be a serious test against Blacktown City. Luka Glavas and Ben Vidaic have both hit their straps at the business end of the season, as goalkeeper Vedran Janjetovic has been in exceptional form behind Mark Rudan & Co. across the backline.

Blacktown City too have managed to find consistency in their performances over the second part of the season, though the side will be reeling following the home loss against Manly United FC last weekend. The side twice had the lead against the Northern Beaches side, though went down 4-2 with late goals overwhelming the defending champions. Positives for the reigning champions have been the form of captain Luke Roodenburg and Milorad Simonovic, meanwhile Sean Rooney and Travis Major have shown consistency in their performances, which augurs well

for the side's tilt at defending their title in the finals series. Sutherland Sharks' run home into the finals series has been less impressive with the side coming off consecutive losses over the past fortnight. The Sharks were second best at Bonnyrigg two weeks ago, and the home loss against South Coast Wolves was certainly not a reflection of a side that has dominated all adversaries at Seymour Shaw.

Coach Robbie Stanton will be looking at his experienced players to lift at Jensen Park against Bankstown City on Sunday – a win will be the perfect remedy to kick-start a firm charge towards finals football.

Bankstown City's season has been a very difficult one with the struggling to find consistency following a mass exodus of players at the end of last season. The Lions will be hoping to see off the season with a win in-front of their home supporters this weekend in a match between two sides that have never failed to produce entertaining battles over the years.

Bonnyrigg White Eagles travel to Ilinden Sports Centre in search of a win ahead of the finals series. The White Eagles have played some good football this season, though the results have not been forthcoming. Brian Brown's men will still be feeling they deserved more than a draw at Sydney Olympic last weekend, and the side will look to 'up the intensity' against the Suns on Sunday. Wally Savor's Suns clinched a hard fought win at Parramatta FC last weekend, and another one this weekend could see the side finish the campaign as high as sixth. Positives for the Suns have been the return to form of Jason Naidovski and James Monie in attack, along with the solid showings of Peter Apolevski and Mirko Jurlic.

A tough encounter is expected with the Suns eager to further frustrate the pre-season favourites for the title this season.

At Cromer Park, Manly United FC will sign off for 2011 with a home clash against Parramatta FC. Coach Craig Midgley, along with the Manly United supporters, will be expecting nothing less than a win against the bottom-placed Eagles. The home side will also be very eager to avenge the 5-1 loss at the hands of Parramatta FC in the reverse fixture earlier in the season.

The Eagles return to Premier League football has been a difficult one with the side occupying bottom-spot on the ladder for a large spell this season. Knowing all too well their capability of beating the Waratah Cup champions, Manny Spanoudakis will be hoping to lift his troops ahead of the Cromer Park showdown as both sides bring to a close their 2011 first grade campaigns. In the final clash of the round, Marconi Stallions and South Coast Wolves meet at Marconi Stadium. Both sides have fallen short of their finals ambitions, though a win for either side could seal sixth-spot on the League ladder – pending Manly United's result against Parramatta FC.

The Stallions were left to rue the home draw against the Eagles two weeks ago, which ultimately ended their finals aspirations. South Coast Wolves on the other hand have collected some very good results in the run home this season, though a number of dropped points over the first part of the season in due course created a mammoth mountain to climb. The clash on Sunday however still promises to be an entertaining event with the Wolves in top-form and the Stallions eager to sign off for 2011 with a win in-front of their home crowd.

### Sutherland Sharks to take on Sydney FC on 31st August

NSW Premier League side Sutherland Sharks will tackle Hyundai A-League outfit Sydney FC on Wednesday 31st August at Seymour Shaw, Miranda with kick off set for 7.30pm. Sydney FC are currently in the middle of its official pre-season campaign and are taking on opponents from both the NSW Premier and Super League competitions with the Sharks being the next target. It will be a chance to see the likes of Nick Carle, Mark Bridge, Karol Kisel, Michael Beauchamp and Pascal Bosschaart to name a few lock horns with some quality Sharks players on show. Robbie Stanton's men will be looking towards finishing the season strongly prior to the NSW Premier League Finals Series and will have



the likes of Panny Nikas, Matt Bailey, Nick Stavroulakis and Hayden Morton to name a few itching to tackle their A-League opponents.

#### Match Details

**Sutherland Sharks v Sydney FC**  
**Wednesday 31st August**  
**Seymour Shaw Park, Miranda**  
**7:30pm**

Admission: Adults \$10 – Kids Under 16 Free  
**\*Canteen, bbq and bar facilities will be available on the evening**



### South Coast Wolves to take on Newcastle Jets

NSW Premier League side South Coast Wolves will be taking on Hyundai A-League outfit Newcastle Jets on Wednesday 31st of August at Memorial Park, Corrimal with kick off set for 7pm.

The Wolves will be using this match as one of their final games of the season as the NSW Premier League season winds up while the Jets will be further enhancing its

pre-season prospects going through their paces prior to the commencement of the Hyundai A-League.

Admission is \$5 for Adults while Children Under 16 are free.

### 2014 FIFA World Cup Asian Qualifiers – Third Round – Group D – Match Day 2

**Saudi Arabia v**  
**Qantas Socceroos**

**Tuesday, 6 September, 2011**

Prince Mohammed Bin Fahad Stadium, Dammam, Saudi Arabia  
 Kick Off: 8.30pm AST  
 (3:30am (AEST),  
 Wednesday 7 September