

NSW FOOTBALL

NSW Premier League Major/Minor Finals Week 2 Preview

The top two sides from the NSW Premier League regular season will lock horns on Sunday afternoon at Belmore Sports Ground in their bid to secure a spot in October's grand final.

Sydney Olympic start with home ground advantage against Sydney United, however Jean Paul De Marigny's men will be full of confidence after handing the Blues a demoralising defeat at the same venue in Round 19. Peter Tsekenis' Blues have certainly turned the corner following their drop in form at the back end of the regular season, as recent results against A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt Tigers, and more impressively, a 1-0 defeat of A-League side Sydney FC last weekend, have the Premiers running high in the confidence department.

Sydney Olympic have benefited from the return of Alex Smith following his stint at Gold Coast United, with the striker picking up from where he left off earlier in the season with his goal scoring abilities. The Blues have remained solid defensively with Richard Luksic and Brett Studman proving a mountain to climb for adversaries, meanwhile Phil Makrys' dominance in midfield has given the likes of Robbie Mileski and David Gullo free reign moving forward. Sydney United's attacking football philosophy has reaped some positive rewards this season, though the side's inability to kill-off a ten-man Sutherland last weekend must carry some concern for the Edensor Park side's supporters. The Reds played over an hour with a numerical advantage against the Sharks, though failed to find a winner before eventually prevailing in the

penalty-shootout. De Marigny will look to Steve Hayes and Ufuk Talay to dominate in midfield against the Blues – the first side to settle in the middle of the park will certainly be in with a strong chance of victory. There is no questioning the Reds' goal scoring capabilities with Luka Glavas, Elsid Barkhousir and Ben Vidaic no strangers to finding the back of the net. Defensively the Reds will need to be on the ball with Smith posing a huge threat, Michael Cindric could be the man given the nod to look after the striker on Sunday. In a match between two former NSL clubs, fireworks will be expected on Sunday with the winner securing the first grand final spot for the 2011 competition. On Saturday evening, Sutherland Sharks and Blacktown City FC face-off in an elimination semi-final at Seymour Shaw in what promises to be another entertaining battle

between two sides that possess contrasting styles. The Sharks, who have done it tough without the likes of Yianni Fragogianis and Sam Awad over the past month, will be sweating on the fitness of midfield maestro Nick Stavroulakis for this clash. The Sharks number 14 missed the Sydney United encounter due to a calf strain and will certainly be required for this clash on Saturday. Coach Robbie Stanton will have to make do without the services of experienced campaigner Jim Bakis after his straight red card against Sydney United, with Todd Halloran expected to fill the void out on the right. Sutherland Sharks have been tremendous at home this season, especially under lights at Seymour Shaw, and the supporters will be expecting nothing less than a win against Blacktown City. Mark Crittenden's side proved just how much



character it possesses with an instrumental final 10' minutes to overturn a one-goal deficit and keep their championship hopes alive against Bonnyrigg. Crittenden's second-half substitutions with the introduction of Ray Miller and Adam Jenner turned his side's fortunes around as captain Luke Roodenburg again led

the way with a phenomenal work rate. Blacktown City have proven difficult to break down defensively this season, and Patrick Gatt and Zac Cairncross will need to be at their best to fend off the Sharks attacking prowess led by Panni Nikas. As is the case with the Sydney Olympic – Sydney United encounter, the midfield

battle at Seymour Shaw will be a telling one with key head-to-head battles between Milorad Simonovic and Mitchell Long against the likes of Stavroulakis and Nikas for the Sharks. With both sides placing their respective finals campaigns on the line, it will be all out attack from the opening whistle.

GRANVILLE ASSOCIATION SCORES SUCCESS IN PARRAMATTA MELITA EAGLES BATTLE

LAWYERS for the Granville District Soccer Football Association believe they have gained "a significant success" in the legal battle over Melita Stadium at South Granville. The association and PCYC NSW earlier this month instigated legal action against Parramatta Melita Eagles Sports Club over a sub-lease they believe the association purchased for the ground.

The association and the sports club have run the Parramatta FC team that plays there since Granville purchased the team from the PCYC last year. However, the sports club, which has the head lease on the ground, will not issue the sub-lease. The club claims the purchase wasn't executed correctly, and could exclude them from a role in Parramatta FC. The Supreme Court last week gave orders for

the immediate use of the ground. The association's lawyer, partner Craig Powell, of Thomsons Lawyers, said he was happy with the result. "His honour's orders are a significant success for GDSFA's operations," Mr Powell told the association. "We confirm that Melita is to honour and otherwise comply with the terms of the sub-lease, as if it had been validly assigned to Granville and districts

soccer association."However, we note that, as it has done so for a number of years, Melita is permitted reasonable access to Melita Stadium."The association said it needs the sub-lease as part of the criteria for Parramatta FC's participation in the NSW Premier League. However, Parramatta Melita Eagles Sports Club president James Chetcuti said the association should also honour a

participation agreement."We still have the heritage and legacy component we have to protect," he said of the club, which has roots in the former Parramatta Melita soccer club, established in 1956."And those terms were that we play in red and white, have the eagle on the chest and can't change the name from Melita." The next hearing is set for October 19.