

## IGA NPL NSW MENS | ROUND 3 REVIEW



# Olympic's return to winning ways

Bonnyrigg White Eagles and Sydney United 58 FC lead the way at the top of the League ladder after three rounds with both sides holding maximum points following three wins. In the weekend's match of the round, Sydney Olympic overpowered the brave challenge of ten-man Blacktown City FC to return to winning ways after a defeat in Round 2. At the bottom of the table, both Marconi Stallions and Rockdale City Suns scored their first point of the season with the sides sharing the spoils in a scoreless Saturday evening clash at Ilinden Sports Centre.

## Sydney Olympic 2 Blacktown City FC 1

Sydney Olympic put aside the disappointment of losing its first match of the season at Sutherland last weekend with a very hard fought 2-1 defeat of Blacktown City FC at Belmore.

Midfielder Kingsley Williams had the Blues ahead on 11' minutes with a well-taken finish following some hassle from Elsid Barkhousir. Blacktown City's afternoon got a little worse only 4' minutes later as defender Zac Caimcross was shown a straight red card for a last man foul on Barkhousir.

Despite the numerical disadvantage, and deficit on the score board, the visitors fought tooth and nail to get back into the encounter, led magnificently by Travis Major and Matthew Mayora. Just prior to the break Ryuji Miyazawa and Matt Lewis combined for Harris Gaitatzis to snatch an equaliser, much to the delight of the visiting supporters.

With just over 20' minutes remaining, Troy Danaskos threw his name into the ring as a candidate for goal of the season with a tremendous 30-yard strike. The effort was magnificent, finishing in the back of the net off the underside of the crossbar. The result in the end, probably much deserved by the home side, though credit too for Blacktown City who put in a mighty effort on a difficult afternoon.

## APIA-Leichhardt Tigers 1 Sutherland Sharks 1

APIA-Leichhardt Tigers dominated the Sharks for large spells in this encounter, though in the end were forced to settle for a share of the spoils against Sutherland Sharks on Good Friday. Led marvellously by experienced campaigner Nicola Rizzo, who is doubling as the side's assistant coach, the Tigers took the match to the Sharks from the outset, giving the side the greater share of possession over the first 60' minutes.

Nikola Taneski netted for the home side prior to the break with a well-constructed, well-finished strike. The youngster, with his back to goal, turned magnificently with an exceptional effort on the edge of the penalty-area before driving his diagonal effort past Nathan Denham.

The Sharks second-half response was more positive, though the Tigers should have doubled its lead via Keith Shevlin who headed over the crossbar from close-range.

Robbie Stanton's men did find their equaliser moments before the 70' minute mark when a goalkeeper error presented Perry Moustakas with the easiest of finishes. Panni Nikas' set-piece delivery appeared to be easy pickings for goalkeeper Ryan Norval, however the ball somehow slipped from his grasp, allowing Moustakas to equalise.

## Manly United FC 1 Blacktown Spartans 0

At Cromer Park, Manly United FC made it consecutive wins with a hard fought 1-0 defeat of Blacktown Spartans. Both sides created chances throughout the encounter though in the end, Brendan Cholakian would prove to be the match-winner.

A teasing cross from Matt Sim was only partially cleared by the retreating Spartans defence, allowing Cholakian a look-in on goal, one that he did not need a second invitation as he forced the ball into the back of the net to secure the win.

The Northern Beaches side has made a very positive start to this campaign with six-points to show from a possible nine over the opening three rounds.

## Bonnyrigg White Eagles 5

### Central Coast Mariners Academy 1

Bonnyrigg White Eagles further illustrated its intentions with another fine performance that saw the side hand the new boys to the competition, Central Coast Mariners Academy, a heavy 5-1 defeat. Last season's top goal scorer Robbie Younis netted four of his side's five goals, overturning an early one goal deficit to set up the win.

Chris Payne returned to stun Bonnyrigg in only the 27' minute with a cheeky lob over White Eagles goalkeeper Matthew Nash.

The White Eagles drew level from the penalty-spot, just before half-time, before Alex Mansueto turned in Mitchell Long's cross, after the re-start, to make it 2-1.

Younis added his side's third shortly after, heading home Bo

Hyun Chun's precise cross from the left.

Despite the best efforts from the Mariners' James Monie and Chris Payne, Younis netted his hat-trick when heading home Tynan Diaz's cross from the right.

The result was completed in the 77' minute when Younis' opportunistic finish saw the striker send an ominous warning to the rest of the league – the White Eagles now three-from-three.

## Rockdale City Suns 0 Marconi Stallions 0

Both Rockdale City Suns and Marconi Stallions scored their first point of the season after a scoreless Saturday evening encounter at Ilinden Sports Centre. Despite both sides lacking confidence heading into the match, the Stallions' Shane Webb and Suns' Alec Urosevski both went close to finding an opening in the first-half.

The Suns chances of finding a win took a massive tumble late in the first-half when Urosevski was shown a red card for a poorly timed tackle on Webb. The ten men of Rockdale City continued to press in the second-half, and despite conceding a number of chances to the Stallions, could possibly have snatched it via Adam Casey who beat James Chronopoulos late on, though sent the ball the wrong side of the post.

## South Coast Wolves 1 Sydney United 58 FC

Sydney United 58 FC continued its unbeaten run with a third win on the trot. The trip to Wollongong to face South Coast Wolves is always a difficult one, though as has been the case in each of the Reds' opening three matches, Sydney United 58 FC put together a tremendous performance to secure the win.

Ricky Zucco had the Wolves ahead in only the 9' minute when his cross from the left somehow eluded Reds goalkeeper Marko Bozic, finishing inside the top right-hand corner.

The Reds drew level early in the second-half via the penalty-spot; once more via the right boot of captain Luka Glavas.

The win was again sealed by Mirjan Pavlovic – as was the case against Rockdale City Suns one-week earlier – the goal arriving only moments after Zucco was directed to the dressing sheds after picking up his second yellow card for the evening. Pavlovic finished with aplomb past Daniel Collison to seal the three-points for Sydney United 58 FC.

-By Joseph Carlucci