



Sydney Olympic's Spanish born coach Gorka Etxeberria is eagerly anticipating the start of the 2018 NPL NSW football season.

Having taken over mid-year in 2017, the Spaniard steered the Blues to a very credible fifth finishing playing finals football.

O Kosmos caught up with Etxeberria and discussed his views on the up and coming year, his time in Australia thus far, any new editions in the Blues squad and his message to the Sydney Olympic fans.

## Etxeberria determined to take Sydney Olympic to the top

**OK: How did you see out your first year of Australian football after taking over Sydney Olympic during the 2017 NPL NSW season?**

GE: Even though I took over the team in the middle of the season which was quite difficult, the six months I spent was a great experience.

I feel that I am in a better position now as I have had that experience in preparing for a big 2018 season with Sydney Olympic.

I was impressed with the hunger the Australian footballers showed and it is that attitude that can assist in the development of the Australian game for the better.

**OK: Were you pleased with the overall result of the first team who finished in the top six playing finals football?**

GE: We finished fifth in the NPL NSW competition and I was happy with this

for a couple of reasons. First things first, Sydney Olympic is a historic club and at the moment is going through a rebuilding phase which needs time to grow but I know we will aim for more success moving forward.

Secondly, having arrived mid-year, I had very little time in preparing the squad so to have finished in the top six was a great achievement.

Finally, the players gave it their all, I know at times it wasn't easy, but they all fought till the very end.

**OK: Which players and clubs impressed you in the 2017 NPL NSW season both from your club and from rival teams?**

GE: Several teams in our league impressed me via their quality and potential. One such team that caught my eye was overall winners and Champions Manly United.

**OK: Language barrier, has this**

**been a struggle or have you adapted for the better?**

GE: I feel as though I know enough English to explain myself, my players have assisted me a lot in this area though.

It does get frustrating sometimes as I would love to give my players more information especially in the heat of the moment during matches but sometimes that works in their favour as it may not always be positive words.

**OK: How has your off-season been?**

GE: Off-season has been great so far as it has given me time along with my wife more opportunity to explore this wonderful country.

I have continued to work during the off-season, building the new squad as well as preparing for the new season but I have had the time to visit different beaches, sight-see as well as visit different parts of Australia which has been amazing.