

By George Stavroulakis

Manly United no longer the quiet achievers

Reining PlayStation®4 National Premier Leagues NSW Men's Champions Manly United are yet to reach their potential and will only get better, coach Paul Dee has declared ahead of the start of the 2018 season. Last September the northern beaches side stunned Premiers and favourites APIA Leichhardt Tigers in the championship decider to clinch their first title in 22 years.

Dee, returning to the club this season after a work secondment to Melbourne in 2017, believes his side has plenty of room to grow and is confident their recent success will be a platform for even greater glory in the future.

"Each season we set out to improve on the previous year and even though we won the title last season the goal remains the same this time around," he said.

"The club has been on this growth path for a number of seasons and it was an incredible feeling to finally reap the rewards.

"To see the pure elation on the face of the players and officials who have given so much to the club was something that is sure to stay with me for a long time.

"This is just the start for the club and the goal for this campaign is to build from the grand final win and perform consistently at this high level."

Player retention was the motto for Manly's off-season business with the club keeping most of the players from their Championship winning squad.

One big name who

won't feature will be winger Dejan Pandurevic who departs after securing a professional contract in Serbia.

While Manly United has yet to splash out in the transfer market, Dee revealed the club is actively in the market for new talent.

"I'm really proud the team has stuck together," Dee said.

"That was the most important thing for me coming into this season. A few players

have moved on and we have elevated some standout players from our Under 20s team.

"We haven't brought in any big name acquisitions just yet as the focus was on re-signing players but that doesn't mean we won't.

"We are in the market to make a signing or two but we aren't going to bring a guy in just for the sake of it. If the right player in the right role becomes available we will make a move but otherwise we are happy with the squad we have."

With his side coming into 2018 as reigning champions, Dee knows his team will be a target and is using this preseason to steel his team for the gruelling campaign ahead.

"Quite simply this season we will be looking for greatness in everything we do," he said.

"We know we need to achieve that because every team in the league will be working harder than before to beat us.

"It is going to be a bigger challenge this time around but it's one everyone at the club is ready for."

No turning back for APIA Leichhardt Tigers

APIA Tigers midfielder Franco Parisi

Unfinished business will be the driving force behind APIA Leichhardt's 2018 season, legendary Tigers' midfielder Franco Parisi has revealed.

The Lambert Park club ended a 38 year premiership drought last season, but defeats in the grand final and Waratah Cup final has left APIA hungry and determined to make amends.

While the club will be without former coach Daniel Cummins this season, Billy McColl has returned to lead the side for this campaign with his sights set on making 2018 APIA's most successful season to date.

After tasting Premiership success last season, Parisi admitted the squad are more driven than ever to achieve success in every competition.

"The message is quite simple - we are driven to

win every game we play," Parisi said.

"I think it would be fair to say we have moved on from our grand final defeat last season but it is definitely going to be something which will inspire us to improve.

"Billy has brought his unique approach back this season and it is different to how Daniel had us playing but I'm confident we will be in a strong position to compete for titles once again."

It has been a busy offseason for APIA in the transfer market with Howard Fondyke, Zach Mackenzie, Lachlan Roberts and former Melbourne Victory striker George Howard joining McColl's side.

Luke Turnbull, Adrian Vlastelica, Matthew West, Dominic Cox and Sean O'Connell have all departed the club season.



However, it's the return of young striker Jordan Murray for his third season with APIA which Parisi believes fans should be the most excited about.

"Jordan has been great for us ever since he joined the club and every season he has developed into a more complete player," Parisi said.

"He has been really impressive so far this preseason and I think he will once again be a key contributor."

Although going short of saying APIA will be the

favourites for the title this season, Parisi was adamant his side would definitely be in the mix for back to back Premiership wins.

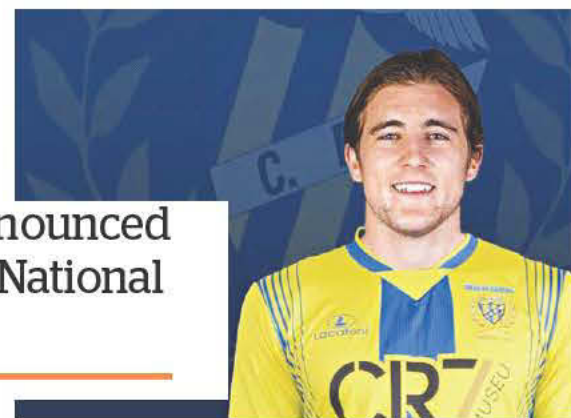
"To win in this league you need to compete on every level and APIA will be treating each match like it is a grand final," he said.

"We won a title last season but we also lost in two finals so there is still plenty of room to grow for us.

"This season we want to make amends and go better once again."

Max Burgess returns to Sydney Olympic

Sydney Olympic Football Club have announced the signing of Max Burgess for the 2018 National Premier Leagues NSW Competition.



An exceptional talent, Max made a great impact both on and off the field in the first half of last season and returns to Olympic after a stint overseas with Portuguese LigaPro side União.

Burgess expressed his excitement at re-joining Olympic.

"I'm excited to be back

at Sydney Olympic FC.

"It's a talented squad and a great group of boys lead by an experienced coach in Gorka, there is a special feel around the club.

"I'm looking forward to being part of a team which will make the many Sydney Olympic fans proud in 2018" he explained.

Sydney Olympic Football Club 1st grade

Coach Gorka Etxeberria was impressed with what Burgess would bring to the squad.

"I'm very happy with having Max back in the team.

"He is exactly the player profile that we were looking for to finalise the squad. In all the chats that we had I could notice that he is really focused on playing for the team and

after his European experience is going to be an important player for the team to play the way that we want to play".

"With Max, we complete our squad and everything is ready to start building a team who can make Sydney Olympic FC supporters proud in the 2018 season" said Etxeberria.