



By George Stavroulakis

Etxeberria determined to take Sydney Olympic to the top

- 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.



Sydney Olympic's Spanish born coach Gorka Etxeberria

FC player Nikola Kuleski. Our intentions are to bring young players with energy and quality amongst some of the players we have re-signed from the 2017 season. Those players are Paul Henderson, Will Angel, Niko Tsatallios, Hagi Gligor, Jason Madonis, Tom Whiteside, Darcy Burgess, George Timotheou, Jinya An, Jake De Marigny and Stephen Athanasieris.

OK: What are your expectations for the 2018 NPL NSW season?

GE: We want to win as many matches as possible as well as being a competitive team. We want to play a good brand of football so that our fans can be proud of. We want to show that winning attitude and commitment will be there from the first till the last whistle.

OK: Final message to the passionate Sydney Olympic fans for the new year ahead

GE: I want to tell the fans of Sydney Olympic that I will do my best in giving them a team that they can be very proud of.

We are going to work hard and will do all that we can in winning as many matches as possible. We need the fans support both in the good and bad times but I feel with the right commitment, we will gain their trust!

OK: Thank you Gorka, all the best with the new season ahead

GE: Thank you for taking the time in interviewing me

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.

OK: How is the team shaping for the 2018 season?

GE: I am really happy with the fresh energy we have in the squad. The boys are raring to go and I have a good feeling that the team is continuing to build for what will be an exciting 2018 season for all involved.

I have heard that rival teams have been busy in the off-season signing new players but we will be ready to give it our all.

OK: Any new faces that you can talk about?

GE: We have signed a couple of new players one in particular a former Australian U19 representative in Rafael Jimenez and former Sydney

interview