



# NPL NSW Men's- Round 7 Preview

The Premiership battle is in full flight in the National Premier Leagues NSW 2018 season and Round 7 is set to be another huge weekend of fixtures.

APIA Leichhardt Tigers remain at the top of the competition ladder but will have a tough battle to stay ahead of the chasing pack lead by Sydney Olympic and Sydney United 58 FC.

Two off weeks has meant Blacktown City has dropped down the standings to fourth but they should never be written off. This week they host Marconi Stallions.

Reigning Champions Manly United is slowly getting its season back on track after a slow start and go on the road once again as they take on Sydney FC.

## Sutherland Sharks FC v APIA Leichhardt Tigers, 6.30pm

**Saturday at Seymour Shaw**

Sutherland Sharks will be looking for back to back wins when they host league leaders APIA Leichhardt Tigers at Seymour Shaw on Saturday Night.

The clash is set to be the biggest test of the season so far for the Grant Lee coached Sharks who have come on in leaps and bounds since their struggles of the 2017 season.

A comprehensive 3-0 victory against Bonnyrigg White Eagles last week was the perfect platform for Sutherland as they demonstrated their talents with a strong performance at both ends of the park.

Adrian Vranic will be hoping to continue his incredible run of form which included a hat trick in last week's win.

Vranic is a talented young striker who has arrived in the Shire this season. His pace and eye for goal gives the Sharks a true attacking threat in the front third.

They will need to be at their best if they are going to take three points from APIA Leichhardt who have lost only once this season.

The re-emergence of Japanese attacking dynamo Tasuku Sekiya has provided an added outlet for Billy McColl's side to push forward.

Sekiya has had an eye for goal in recent weeks and is a good bet to continue his scoring run.

APIA has lacked a clinical edge at times this season but have not struggled creating chances on goal. If Sutherland can remain disciplined in defence and take advantage of their opportunities on the counter, they could very well cause an upset.

## Hakoah Sydney City East v Sydney United 58, 7pm

**Saturday at Hensley Athletic Field**  
It has been a difficult few weeks for Hakoah Sydney City East but nothing eases the pressures of the season better than a win.

This week the Gavin Rae coached Hakoah will hope to boost squad morale by collecting three competition points when they host an in form Sydney Olympic 58.

A winning edge has been missing from the Hensley Athletic Field side and they have paid the price for

brief, but ultimately costly, lapses in concentration.

A 1-1 draw in Round 5 against Marconi was an improved showing but Rae will feel his team can offer more.

Micheal Kouta has been one of Hakoah's best in their past two games with the left back providing plenty of crosses into the box from the flanks.

Defence through will be the primary concern against United 58.

After a few teething problems in the opening weeks as they came to grips with new coach Jason Culina's style, the Reds are back playing some of the competitions best attacking football.

Week in and week out, Panny Nikas and Chris Payne have terrorised opposition defences and are arguably the most dangerous one-two punch in the league.

If Hakoah can limit Nikas' time on the ball they may stand a chance of cutting the supply to the prolific Payne.

Another name that has been in fine form has been attacker Patrick Antelmi who will no doubt be a busy boy on Saturday night.

It will be a hard slog for the Eastern Suburbs squad, but there is plenty of belief and Rae is sure to have the fired up for a massive performance

## Blacktown City FC v Marconi Stallions FC, 7pm Saturday at Lily Homes Stadium

The chance to bounce back from two tough weeks will be at the forefront of the Blacktown City players minds when the host Marconi Stallions at Lily Homes Stadium on Saturday night.

A 1-0 loss to Sydney Olympic last week and a 1-1 draw with Manly United in Round 5 has taken the wind out of their sails.

But if any team is to fire back better than ever it is Blacktown City.

One challenge facing City will be the absence of captain Matt Lewis for the clash with Marconi after he was given a red card against Olympic. Lewis has anchored the midfield for the past season and a half but that responsibility is likely to be handed to central midfield partner Connor Evans.

Despite not receiving the plaudits of some of his high profile teammates,

Evans' hardworking displays has helped transition defence into attack.

The Blacktown City defence of the Speranza brothers and Grant Lynch will need to be at their best when they take on a pretty formidable attacking line-up in the Stallions.

Marconi have slowed in recent weeks after a strong start to the season.

A 1-1 draw with Hakoah last week continued their struggles finding a cutting edge in matches but there are still positive signs for the historic club.

Marko Jesic was the standout performer for Marconi in Round 6 and the former A-League striker is a player which can open up a defence when he is on song.

If Jesic can rediscover his eye for goal then he would be a good bet to find the back of the net against Blacktown.

Blacktown will be favourites for this match, but Marconi has enough experience and star power of their own to mount an upset.

## Sydney FC v Manly United FC, 7.45pm Saturday at Lambert Park – Live streamed on Facebook

Sydney FC will be hoping to claim all three points when they host reigning National Premier Leagues NSW Champions Manly United FC at Lambert Park on Saturday night.

Rob Stanton's side has only shown glimpses of their best football so far this campaign but hope to prove their doubters wrong with a positive showing against Manly.

One positive from the Young Sky Blues this season has been the emergence of young attackers Hassan Jalloh and Jeremy Cox.

Both have lead the line with aplomb creating dangerous mismatches for opposition defences.

Captain Sam McIlhatton has been the glue in midfield for Sydney FC and if his recent form is anything to go by he will be one of the team's best performers.

Manly come into the game on the back of an incredible 3-3 draw with Rockdale City Suns.

Down 3-0 after only 30 minutes, Manly turned the game on it's head to score three unanswered goals.

Nikola Taneski was the driving force in the Manly attack with his



slick dribbling and great pace too much for Rockdale to handle.

With Scott Balderson out injured, the responsibility falls on Taneski to help fellow attacking threat Brendan Cholakian carry the load. Manly appears to have finally rediscovered their groove but the fact they conceded three goals in thirty minutes will be a major concern for coach Paul Dee.

Sydney FC will need to make a similar fast start if they are to win, but more importantly they will need to be ready for a ferocious fight back from a talented Manly attack late in the game.

## Sydney Olympic FC v Rockdale City Suns FC, 3pm Sunday at Belmore Sports Ground – Live streamed on Facebook

Sydney Olympic proved they are serious National Premier Leagues NSW contenders last round with a hard fought 1-0 win against Blacktown City FC.

This week they will be out to take top spot on the ladder when they host Rockdale City Suns on Sunday at 3pm.

Many thought the departure of Gorka Etxeberria in preseason was enough to derail the Belmore based club, but new gaffer Abbas Saad has the team playing the best it has in recent seasons.

Boasting a strong midfield, composed defence and clinical strikers, Sydney Olympic have the squad to make a serious mark on the competition in 2018.

Look for Max Burgess to go to new heights again this week on the back of his match winning performance against Blacktown.

Will Angel will be missed by Olympic as he serves his one match ban after seeing red last round. Saad has plenty of players on his bench able to fill the void for this match.

This week they will be out to add further woe to a spluttering Rockdale outfit who will still be hurting after coming away with only a draw with Manly United last week despite leading 3-0 after 30 minutes.

Paul Reid's side has the fire power and quality on the park to beat anyone, but poor discipline and lapses in concentration have cost them this season.

Alec Uroevski remains the Suns biggest threat in attack with the pacy midfielder a challenging prospect for any opposition defence.

If Rockdale plays to its ability and can keep it together for 90 minutes than they have the stock to cause an upset, in saying that Olympic will start as favourites and will be expected to carry on their winning run.

## Wollongong Wolves FC v Bonnyrigg White Eagles FC, 3pm Sunday at WIN Stadium

Disappointed after a tough loss last round, Wollongong Wolves are out to rediscover their form when they host cellar dwellers Bonnyrigg White Eagles at WIN Stadium on Sunday afternoon.

The 2-0 defeat to Sydney United 58 was a reality check for Jacob Timpano's side.

The Wolves have been impressive for most of the season but failed to match it with the Reds last week.

It will be a different story against a struggling White Eagles outfit.

This match proves a brilliant opportunity for striker Yuzo Tashiro and Peter Simonoksi to build their partnership up top.

The Experience and clinical finishing of Tashiro, combined with Simonoksi's skill on the ball and ability to run at defenders will make it quite a mission for Bonnyrigg's defence to contain.

The White Eagles will be desperate for a win after suffering yet another morale sapping loss.

It has not been the season veteran coach Brian Brown would have envisaged at the start of the campaign.

Jewook Woo has been a standout player despite the team's struggles, while David Bradasevic in goals has had a strong campaign also.

With so much on the line a big showing from Bonnyrigg could create a shock upset, but it will need to be their very best as it's never easy to defeat the Wolves at WIN Stadium.