



By George Stavroulakis

# NPL NSW Men's- Round 8 Preview

It's time for Round 8 of the National Premier Leagues NSW season with another six big games on the schedule for this weekend.

With the battle for top five positions in full swing, no side can afford to drop any points.

This week's fixtures are headlined by the big match when Bonnyrigg White Eagles face Sydney United 58 on Sunday. APIA Leichhardt Tigers remain at the top of the pile for another week and host Wollongong Wolves on Sunday, while Manly United's clash with Sutherland Sharks is the best of Saturday night's matches.

## Manly United FC v Sutherland Sharks, 7pm Saturday at Cromer Park

Manly United are one win outside the top five and will be determined to claim all three points when they host Sutherland Sharks on Saturday night.

Paul Dee's Manly squad have slowly hit their straps after a horror start and are on track to return to their very best.

Last week they snatched a late win against Sydney FC and showed plenty of fighting spirit against a resilient Young Sky Blues outfit.

Travis Oughtred was a rock in defence and even stepped up to nod home the winner in a brilliant performance from the defender.

Sasa Macura was another stand out player with his work in midfield helping Manly break down a slick opposition attack.

The club will hope that custodian Dylan Mitchell is raring to go after coming off injured in their match last weekend. Their opponents this week are Sutherland Sharks fresh from a high scoring 3-3 draw with league leaders APIA.

The Sharks have come on in leaps and bounds from last year's struggles and are deservedly in with a shot of finals football sitting in fifth position on 11 points.

Jacob Tratt will be the defensive leader once again for Sutherland as they attempt to hold out Manly's skilful attacking players.

While what else can be said about the competition's in-form striker Adrian Vranic?

The bustling attacker is on fire as he leads the top goalscorer's charts with seven goals to his name.

A game that can go either way with both sides capable of top quality football.

## Blacktown City FC vs Hakoah Sydney City East FC, 7pm Saturday at Lily Homes Stadium

Blacktown City are in desperate need of a win with the side in the midst of a three-game run without victory – a rarity for a club that expects success on a weekly basis.

This week they host Hakoah Sydney City East and will be determined to get their season back on track.

Blacktown have struggled to find the back of the net scoring only once in the past three weeks while also conceding three.

Mark Crittenden's outfit welcome pack captain Matt Lewis for the match while Zach Cairncross is on track for a return to the starting line-up.

The club does poses a fair bit of attacking power on paper with the likes of Joey Gibbs, Mitchell Mallia, Danny Choi as well as Devante Clut who works his magic in the midfield alongside Connor Evans so expect them all to be at their very best come the weekend.

Hakoah will have their work cut out against a fired-up Blacktown, but do come into the much off the back of a upset win against Sydney United 58.

Andre De Jong was the star for Gavin Rae's Hakoah side with the New Zealand International set to lead from the front.

The other player that has impressed many on-lookers has been Mitchell Stamatellis. Reverting now as a defensive midfielder, Stamatellis has been a rock in Rae's squad and his presence will be looked upon once more.

It is important for Blacktown to end their slide with a win



but as Hakoah proved last week, no result is ever assured.

## Marconi Stallions v Rockdale City Suns FC, 7pm Saturday at Marconi Stadium - Live streamed on Facebook

Marconi Stallions will be out to make it back to back wins when they host Rockdale City Suns at Marconi Stadium on Saturday.

A hard-fought 1-0 win against competition heavyweight Blacktown City in Round 7 was a great result after a dogged performance from the Peter Tsekenis coached side.

This week they take on Rockdale and have the chance to build some momentum through the middle stages of the season.

While pacy winger James Andrew scored the match winner last week, it was veteran central defender Michael Beauchamp who was Marconi's best.

He will once again be tasked with marshalling the Stallions against a dangerous Rockdale attack alongside Peter Pelekanos.

Rockdale fought back from 2-0 down to snatch a 2-2 draw with Sydney Olympic last round and showed glimpses of their quality when they are at their best.

Consistency has been the problem for Rockdale this season but one thing which hasn't been lacking is the form of winger Alec Uroevski.

He has been Rockdale's best all campaign and will be a key contributor if they are to win.

Rockdale has the firepower to control the game but if they continue their trend of being able to only bring their best for 45 minutes a match then Marconi have a great opportunity for victory.

## Bonnyrigg White Eagles FC v Sydney United 58 FC, 2.30pm Sunday at Bonnyrigg Sports Club

There are always fireworks when Bonnyrigg White Eagles take on Sydney United 58 and it will be no different when the two sides go head to head on Sunday.

Bonnyrigg come into the match brimming with confidence after their first win of the season following victory against Wollongong Wolves in Round 7.

Against Sydney United 58, they will need to take their game up another level but they will need little inspiration to deliver their best performance with derby bragging rights on the line.

David Bradasevic has been a huge addition to the White Eagles side with the goalkeeper performing well despite the team's struggles.

Aaron Peterson returned to form with a goal last week and will again be one of Bonnyrigg's main threats going forward along with skipper Ray Miller.

For Sydney United 58, the match will be a chance to return to winning ways after a shock loss to Hakoah Sydney City East last round.

Jason Culina's side struggled to get out of second gear in that clash and will struggle once again if they deliver a repeat performance.

Patrick Antelmi is slowly finding his way in the team and he is a player that will surely take some beating once he hits his proper form.

Tom Manos has done his bit in producing a number of goal saving moments so he will need to be on his guard come Sunday.

One player that will not take part in this big match as well as the following two fixtures will be United 58 star Panny Nikas. Nikas will be off to Italy on a coaching tour experience so expect to see Glen Trifiro added to the starting line-up. These games are always tense and this match is sure to go down wire.

## Sydney Olympic FC v Sydney FC, 3pm Sunday at Belmore Sports Ground

Sydney Olympic have their eyes on top spot of the National Premier Leagues NSW competition and will be out to collect all three points when the host Sydney FC on Sunday.

Olympic were forced to settle for a point last week after spurning a 2-0 halftime lead against Rockdale City Suns.

Coach Abbas Saad would have stressed the importance of staying focused for 90 minutes ahead of this match with Sydney FC proving to be a tough challenge for their opponents this campaign.

Max Burgess has been a shining light for Olympic with the number ten excelling in the playmaking role since returning from his stint playing in Portugal.

However one player that has stood out from the rest of the pack has been their Spanish import Alejandro Sanchez.

The former La Liga player has been in scintillating form and does provide that X-Factor in the squad.

Sydney FC come into the game on the back of a tight 2-1 loss to Manly United.

Rob Stanton's young side has shown flashes of brilliance this campaign but have lacked the clinical edge to close out matches.

Patrick Flottman will be hoping to repeat his star showing from the Manly clash while captain Sam McIlhatton's leadership and impressive form is sure to once again be a feature.