

**Sydney United 58 are on the hunt for a new coach as Jason Culina and the club have parted ways. Culina who took over the club this year finished off with four wins and four losses before announcing the news after the club's 2-1 loss to the Bonnyrigg White Eagles on Sunday. His replacement will be announced shortly.**



**Hot off the Press:** Sydney United are reportedly trying to keep Jason Culina

## Sydney Olympic - Sydney FC 1-0

A determined Sydney Olympic have kept themselves level at the top of the National Premier Leagues NSW table courtesy of a slender 1-0 victory over Sydney FC at Belmore Sports Ground on Sunday afternoon.

**A second** half header from Radovan Pavicevic decided the match for the hosts who were made to sweat for their result by their youthful and energetic opponents.

**The Young** Sky Blues played beyond their years as they proved difficult to break down, yet experience prevailed on the afternoon as Olympic claimed a valuable three points to keep their title charge on track.

**The hosts** were keen to stamp their authority on the match early on as they dominated possession during the opening period.

**As per** usual, Max Burgess looked threatening from the outset; the graceful playmaker had a point to prove against his former club as he continuously sought to create opportunities for his side.

**The Young** Sky Blues successfully absorbed the early pressure and soon proceeded to carve out chances at the other end with Jeremy Cox, Sam McIllhatton, and Luke Ivanovic drawing saves from Paul Henderson, albeit fairly comfortable ones.

**While Olympic** soon forced momentum back in their favour their hard work was almost calamitously undone by a moment of sloppy play at the back from George Timotheou midway through the opening half.

**The defender** dwelled on the ball, allowing the visitors to pounce and win possession with Olympic exposed at the back, however Timotheou did quickly make amends for his error as he recovered to pressure Cox into missing what appeared to almost certainly be the opening goal.

**The hosts** shrugged the lapse off and continued to go about their business while Alejandro Sanchez-Lopez saw an awkward and unpredictable volley tipped wide by Duro Dragicevic.

**Thomas Whiteside** impressed in defence with the hosts, using his superior strength and positioning to break up Sydney FC's fast and opportunistic counterattacks.

**The pace** of Hassan Jalloh and Cox did raise

cause for concern for Abbas Saad's side; the latter went close after the half hour mark yet lifted his finish just over the crossbar.

**The final** attack of the half saw Sanchez-Lopez poke the ball in the back of the net for Olympic, however the effort to be ruled out by the linesman's flag as the sides went into the interval scoreless.

**It was** apparent that Saad had given his side greater licence to attack in the second half as his wingers pushed higher up the pitch from the restart.

**The increased** attacking intent was quickly rewarded as they soon broke the deadlock from a corner with Pavicevic's glanced header sneaking through a maze of players and into the back of the net.

**Olympic perhaps** should have doubled their lead moments later after some excellent build up play on the right culminated in a golden opportunity for Riley Woodcock, however the ball glanced skewed harmlessly wide of goal from the fullback's boot.

**As the** player's shadows lengthened in the lowering afternoon sun the chances progressively dried up as Olympic slowed the tempo to keep their enthusiastic young opponents at bay.

**The Young** Sky Blues did manage to go close in the dying minutes as a late Jerry Skotadis free kick found the head of Cox, yet Henderson was well positioned to block the header as his side successfully saw out the final minutes.

**After the** full time whistle Olympic coach Abbas Saad was happy to get the three points, yet would have been much happier had they killed off the game with a second.

**"It was** a great game and they (Sydney FC) were great value," said Saad.

**"They're young** and have nothing to lose and are very fit and we knew we just had to absorb.

**"We knew** we had to try and put them away early because the longer the game goes, if we don't take our chances, they're going to stay



alive and continue to knock on the door, which they did.

**"We put** one away but really needed a second, we had our chances, but our final delivery really let us down today and kept them in the game."

**Despite falling** short of the desired second goal, Saad was content with the way his side managed the game and was confident their ability would get them over the line.

**"It was** a good game but on the power of play you have to say we deserved to win," said Saad.

**"I've got** to credit the boys, it's not easy to play against the young and fearless.

**"They're well** coached by Robbie (Stanton) and they keep going, they play good football with very good intensity.

**"We had** to stay with them, and we did with our class – I told the boys our class with come through if we stay with them.

**"We had** to fight the fight to get the points and we did that very well."

**In the** other dressing room Robbie Stanton felt his boys did themselves justice against their strong opposition.

**"I was** pleased with the boys, but disappointed we switched off and conceded the goal," said Stanton.

**"We were** saying at half time that we defended, scrambled when we needed to, were prepared to put the ball on the deck and play through the lines and then to also sit and press and create opportunity out of winning possession.

**"We had** everything covered well and we're just picking our moments."

**Stanton's developing** young squad has come a long way in recent weeks, showing considerable improvement from their exposure to this level of football.

**"It's a** learning experience at the same time

with an emphasis to try and win with a winning style and a good footballing attitude to develop players," explained Stanton.

**"We've got** a strong mentality and they're only going to become better players by experiencing these moments in an aggressive environment against a strong team who will probably be as a minimum in the top five this year.

**"This is** what is going to help develop the players and we have to develop players, as if we don't then we don't develop as a nation and press forward.

**"So it's** an interesting thing to do and I really enjoy working with these players.

**"I couldn't** be happier with their effort and commitment – you have to remember this is an Under 20s team playing in the highest men's competition outside of the A-League so for us it's great to be here."

### Match Stats

**Sydney Olympic:** 1 (Radovan Pavicevic 53')

**Sydney FC 0**

**Referee:** C. Fisher

**Assistants:** M. McOrist, J. Park

**Fourth Official:** H. Sappey

**Sydney Olympic FC:** 1. Paul Henderson; 2. Thomas Whiteside, 4. George Timotheou, 6. Nicola Kuleski (33. Nikolas Tsattalios 81'), 7. William Angel (27. Taewoo Jung 90+1'), 8. Jason Madonis, 9. Radovan Pavicevic (19. Darcy Burgess 86'), 10. Max Burgess, 11. Jinya An, 14. Alejandro Sanchez-Lopez, 23. Riley Woodcock

**Substitutes Not Used:** 20. Ezequiel Consoni, 26. Billy Patramanis

**Yellow Cards:** Nicola Kuleski 69'

**Red Cards:** nil

**Sydney FC:** 30. Duro Dragicevic; 2. Brendan Curtis (12. Jackson Bandiera 46'), 3. Patrick Flottmann, 4. Liam McGing, 6. Andreas Agamemnonos, 7. Jerry Skotadis, 8. Sam McIllhatton, 9. Hassan Jalloh (18. Hamish Lamberton 76'), 11. Luke Ivanovic (29. Patrick Scibilio 76'), 15. Jeremy Cox, 16. William Mutch

**Substitutes Not Used:** 1. Mitchell Evans, 10. Harry van der Jaag

**Yellow Cards:** Jackson Bandiera 60'

**Red Cards:** nil

### Player Ratings

**3 –** Thomas Whiteside (SO)

**2 –** Sam McIllhatton (SFC)