



By George Stavroulakis

NPL 1 NSW Men's 2018 ROUND 11 Preview

The National Premier Leagues NSW season is at the halfway mark and Round 11 is sure to be another big week of action around the grounds.

Sydney Olympic furthered their claim to top spot last week and will be out to continue their dominance when they travel to take on Sydney United 58 on Saturday night.

Former Soccerroos and A-League Premiership winner Luke Wilkshire will make his Wollongong Wolves home debut this week against Marconi. The game will be a chance for Wilkshire and his Wollongong team mates to make up for their 5-1 defeat last round.

APIA Leichhardt Tigers travel to Hakoah Sydney City East on Sunday, while Blacktown City will be out to make up ground on the league leaders when they travel to Sutherland Sharks.

The round will get underway on Saturday afternoon with Rockdale City Suns travelling to Lambert Park to take on Sydney FC.

Sydney FC v Rockdale City Suns, 3pm Saturday at Lambert Park

A return to their Lambert Park home ground could be just the perfect antidote for Sydney FC as they look to bounce back from last week's defeat when they host Rockdale City Suns on Saturday.

Sydney FC, still on the bottom of the competition ladder, are desperate to fight their way back and stand a good chance of claiming an upset.

A 1-0 loss last week to Blacktown City may have meant the Young Sky Blues went home empty handed, but their impressive display was a small victory for coach Rob Stanton.

FC have been a tough team to beat in 2018, even though their position on the ladder suggests otherwise, Stanton's young chargers have played some delightful football.

Liam McGing found form against Blacktown with the defender extinguishing almost everything thrown at him.

A big defensive performance will be required to stop Rockdale.

The Suns, who have had their own struggles this season put three past Hakoah for a 3-0 win at home last round.

One area Rockdale has not struggled is attack with Alec Urosevski and Jordan Figon a handful for opposition defences.

It is stopping goals which has been the Suns biggest weakness.

Paul Reid's Rockdale side needs to find consistency if they are to make the finals.

Both teams have plenty to play so it's sure to be an entertaining clash

Sutherland Sharks v Blacktown City, 6.30pm Saturday at Seymour Shaw

Sitting inside the top five after a strong start to the season, Sutherland Sharks will be out to consolidate their position on the ladder when they host Blacktown City on Saturday night.

The Sharks come into this contest buoyed by last weeks 2-0 win against Marconi.

Josh Da Silva was at his attacking best scoring a double last round with his tricky dribbling and eye for goal proving a valuable asset for Grant Lee's side.

Another strong performance from Da Silva could prove a headache for Blacktown City's inconsistent defence.

A clean sheet last week was a major confidence booster for City who had leaked goals in their Round 7, 8 and 9 matches.

Yianni Spyrikis has found a home in defence at Blacktown and he will combine with veteran stopper Zach Cairncross and Grant Lynch to limit Sutherland's attack.

This game has the potential for plenty of goals and is one not to miss.

Bonnyrigg White Eagles v Manly United, 7pm Saturday at Bonnyrigg Sports Ground

Bonnyrigg White Eagles suffered a major fall from grace last round as they went down 5-1 to a relentless APIA Leichhardt attack.

The Brian Brown coached White Eagles had begun to show solid signs of improvement in recent weeks but suffered a regression of sorts against APIA.

Bonnyrigg conceded three goals in the second stanza which would have been a major concern to Brown,

They will attempt to bounce back against Manly United this week with key man Je-Wook Woo the centre piece of the White Eagles attack.

The home faithful will want a much improved performance but will need to be at their very best against Manly United.

For Manly the game is a must win after they were held to another draw last round.

United sit one point outside the top five and will be desperate to break into finals contention with a win.

Captain Brendan Cholakian will lead the attack for Manly with his passing and skilful dribbling vital to unlock the Bonnyrigg defence.

After conceding late equalisers twice in as many weeks, the boys from the Northern Beaches will be focused on closing out the win with a 90 minute performance.

At home Bonnyrigg stand a chance of claiming an upset, but with a finals spot on the line Manly won't be east to beat.

Sydney United 58 v Sydney Olympic, 7.30pm Saturday at Sydney United Sports Centre

The absence of a manager has not spoiled Sydney United 58's form and the Reds will be out to upset league leaders Sydney Olympic at Sydney United Sports Centre on Saturday night.

Fourth placed United 58 are nine points behind first placed Olympic but the pressure to win is no different with the battle for positions at fever pitch coming into the halfway point of the season.

Glen Trifiro rescued United 58 from defeat against Manly United last week with a late goal, however it will take much more if they are to taste success against this week's opponents.

Thomas Manos has been great between the sticks and he is sure to get plenty of action on Saturday while the return of Yianni



Fragogiannis has steadied the ship slightly in defence.

The key to victory for Sydney United will be closing down Olympic's lightning fast transitions from defence to attack.

Olympic comes into the game on the back a 5-1 domination of Bonnyrigg White Eagles and their confidence will be sky high.

It's a daunting proposition especially looking back on the world class strikes Olympic netted in the win.

Thomas Whiteside may have scored the goal of the season with his audacious scorpion kick last week, but it is the young defender's consistency and hard work which has been the real standout.

Olympic will come into the game as short priced favourites, but United 58 has the fire power and the big game experience to get a result.

Hakoah Sydney City East v APIA Leichhardt Tigers, 3pm Sunday at Hensley Athletic Field

A huge bounce back performance is what Hakoah Sydney City East will be out to achieve when they take on APIA Leichhardt Tigers on Sunday.

The Gavin Rae coached Hakoah side went down 3-0 to a fired up Rockdale City Suns outfit last week and the threat of APIA's high scoring attack could mean another one sided result if the boys from the Eastern Suburbs aren't at their best.

Hakoah has been solid at home this campaign and it should provide them with that little bit extra against the reigning National Premier Leagues NSW Premiers.

Andre De Jong has been the main man in attack for Hakoah and that should remain the case this weekend.

Combined with the composure and experience of Mitchell Stamatellis as well as talented shot stopper Anthony Bouzanis, Hakoah have the players to go toe to toe with APIA.

For APIA they will be out to avoid a repeat of last season's shock Waratah Cup defeat to Hakoah.

The memory would be fresh in the minds of many of the Tiger's players and should fuel them with inspiration for a big performance.

Jordan Murray scored a hat trick last round and will be full of confidence. Corey Bizco

also struck twice and the skilful winger will prove a handful for his marker.

Hakoah have a strong reputation of putting up a good fight when they're up against it and so they shouldn't be underestimated despite APIA's impressive form.

Wollongong Wolves v Marconi Stallions, 3pm Sunday at WIN Stadium

With plenty of Marquee talent on board and the best ground in the competition, Wollongong Wolves are a team worthy of much more than their current position on the league ladder.

This week the Wolves host Marconi Stallions in a must win clash for both sides.

It was a homecoming to forget for former Soccerroos and Sydney FC defender Luke Wilkshire as the Wolves went down 5-1 to league leaders Sydney Olympic in Round 10.

He has a chance to put that all behind him when he plays his first home game for the Wolves.

Last week Wollongong fielded a midfield boasting more than 1200 first class professional matches experience as Nick Montgomery lined-up alongside Takuya Nozawa and Wilkshire.

The Challenge for coach Jacob Timpano is getting the most out of high profile stars who once dominated the Premier League, Eredivise, A-League and J-League.

It is a challenge they will need to find a solution for quick with only 12 games left in the season.

Their opponent this week has a few experienced veterans of their own with defender Michael Beauchamp and midfielder Mateo Poljak just two of Marconi's former A-League regulars.

They will need their guidance to eradicate the errors which cost them against Sutherland last round.

The Wolves in Wollongong are always a tough challenge but it could be even tougher for Marconi with the home side so desperate for victory.

One things for sure, a Peter Tsekenis and Peter Papoythis led team will not die wondering what was as the coaching duo will no doubt be pumping their chargers for a massive encounter.

A must see match based on the big names set to play alone, this clash has the potential to be the best of the round.