



FOOTBALL NSW MEDIA RELEASE

BIG MATCHES DOMINATE OPENING NPL NSW MEN'S ROUND

The 2019 National Premier Leagues NSW Men's season will be kicking off with an absolute bang thanks to some mouth-watering opening fixtures to wet the appetite of players and fans across the competition.

All round 1 matches will take place on Sunday 10th of March with 2018 Premiers and Champions Sydney Olympic taking on the Sutherland Sharks with the Blues hoping to keep their momentum on winning back to back silverware at Belmore Sports Ground.

Manly United will be making the massive trek down South as they clash with the Wollongong Wolves while it will be an all-out traditional affair at Lambert Park as APIA Leichhardt Tigers entertain Marconi Stallions.

Lily Homes Stadium will play host to a local derby as Blacktown City host newly promoted Mt Druitt Town Rangers while at Hensley Athletic Field, Hakoah Sydney City East tackle the young guns of Sydney FC.

The pick of the round however will be the

high octane clash at Sydney United Sports Centre when the Rockdale City Suns face Sydney United 58.

There is set to be a fair bit of feeling in this huge clash but the major talking point will be the return of Panny Nikas. The star midfielder left Edensor Park for Rockdale and will no doubt be wanting to impress his new supporters and teammates against his former club.

Round 1 NPL NSW Men's Fixtures

Sunday March 10th 2018

Wollongong Wolves v Manly United
Sydney Olympic v Sutherland Sharks
Blacktown City v Mt Druitt Town Rangers
Hakoah Sydney City East v Sydney FC
Sydney United 58 v Rockdale City Suns

A-League Results ROUND 8

Adelaide United- Melbourne City 0-2
Newcastle Jets-Perth Glory 0-2
WS Wanderers-Sydney FC 1-3
Wellington Phoenix-Central Coast Mariners 2-0
Brisbane Roar- Melbourne Victory 2-4

A - League table ROUND 8

	Team	GP	Pts	W	D	L	GF	GA	+/-
1	Perth Glory	8	20	6	2	0	15	7	8
2	Melbourne Victory	8	18	6	0	2	20	9	11
3	Sydney FC	8	14	4	2	2	14	9	5
4	Melbourne City	8	13	4	1	3	10	8	2
5	Adelaide United	8	11	3	2	3	10	10	0
6	Wellington Phoenix	8	11	3	2	3	9	11	-2
7	Newcastle Jets	8	8	2	2	4	7	10	-3
8	WS Wanderers	8	8	2	2	4	9	14	-5
9	Brisbane Roar	8	6	1	3	4	9	13	-4
10	Central Coast Mariners	8	2	0	2	6	6	18	-12

Round 9 Fixtures

DATE	HOME	AWAY	VENUE	Kick-Off (AEDT)
Friday, 21 December 2018	Perth Glory	Sydney FC	nib Stadium	9:00PM
Saturday, 22 December 2018	Wellington Phoenix	Brisbane Roar FC	Westpac Stadium	5:35PM
Saturday, 22 December 2018	Melbourne City FC	Melbourne Victory	AAMI Park	7:50PM
Sunday, 23 December 2018	Central Coast Mariners	Newcastle Jets	Central Coast Stadium	5:00PM
Wednesday, 26 December 2018	Adelaide United	Western Sydney Wanderers FC	Coopers Stadium	7:50PM



ANGE: J-LEAGUE DOES IT BETTER THAN THE A-LEAGUE



While Melbourne Victory's Japanese import Keisuke Honda and former Western Wanderers star Shinji Ono have been great successes, A-League clubs have mostly ignored Asian talent preferring imports from Europe and South America.

In 2017, FFA introduced the 4-plus-1 structure with the hope that the four foreign imports plus one from Asia would strengthen the A-League and further integrate Australian football into the region.

However, the influx of imports from Asia didn't eventuate. In fact Honda is only the Asian player to have signed to play in the A-League for the 2018-19 season.

Former Socceroos boss Ange Postecoglou first season coaching in the J-League with Yokohama F. Marinos has allowed to gain an insight into Asia's most prestigious club competition.

When it came to facilities Postecoglou revealed that while his club is partly owned by the City Football Group, the A-League wasn't that far apart.

"There is not that much difference to be honest," he told FTBL. "The CFG only own 20% of the club and to be fair the club has some challenges with their facilities."

"It's not a big club in Japan, but that's okay. That is part of the evolution of taking that challenge on. I knew what to expect when I walked into it."

"But it was good, it was great. I enjoyed it immensely."

While the facilities might not be that dissimilar, Postecoglou believes it's a different story when

it came to how the J-League engages with the neighbouring countries in the region.

"Japan at the beginning were getting beaten by the Philippines and they quickly learnt that to stay relevant and grow the game they needed to engage with those around them and those abroad," he said speaking at the launch of Trevor Thompson's book *Playing for Australia*.

"They saw themselves as a nation that wanted to get better and having lived there now for the last 12 months, they have understood and grasped that."

"They've got arrangements with Thailand and Vietnam where their players aren't considered foreigners because they want to encourage people from those countries to follow the J-League."

Postecoglou pointed to Thai fullback Teerathon Bunmathan, striker Teerasil Dangda and playmaker Chanathip Songkrasin as examples of what the J-League is doing right.

"Teerasil had a fantastic year, he's made an impact," he said. "The two other Thai players have made a bigger impact than the Australian players have in the J-League which goes to show you the level of their players."

"Yet when we (the Socceroos) played Thailand, we drew with them over there."

"We were poor because they made us poor and yet we couldn't accept that because we see ourselves as some sort of other level."

"When we do that, we miss opportunities because they love the game as much as we do. Maybe they are more passionate about it – but we can work from that."