



By George Stavroulakis

ROUND 4 PREVIEW — NPL NSW MEN'S

Week four of the National Premier Leagues NSW Men's competition is upon us and if last week's action was anything to go by the season is really starting to heat up.

Wollongong Wolves clung onto top spot despite being held to a draw in round three, but Hakoah Sydney City East is on their tail only one point behind in second spot.

The Wolves will return to action on Saturday in the opening match of round 4 when they take on Sydney FC.

Saturday will also feature Marconi Stallions hosting Manly United at Marconi Stadium.

On Sunday four games will take place with Blacktown City taking on Sutherland Sharks, Rockdale playing Mount Druitt Town Rangers, a clash between Hakoah Sydney City East and Sydney Olympic while Sydney United 58 will wrap up the round's action against APIA Leichhardt Tigers. Next Wednesday will also feature midweek football as Mount Druitt hosts Sydney Olympic in a catchup match from their rained out round 2 clash.

Sydney FC v Wollongong Wolves, 7pm Saturday at Lambert Park

Sydney FC will be out to upset the competition leaders on Saturday when they host Wollongong Wolves at Lambert Park.

The Young Sky Blues were given a reality check last round as they suffered a 2-0 loss to Marconi Stallions.

It was a tough day at the office for Sydney FC who struggled to find their way in attack.

They will need to work on their effort in the final third if they are to get the win this weekend.

Once again Marco Tilio was the main outlet in attack but he will need some assistance.

Their opponents this week is a Wollongong side flying high at the top of the table.

New coach Luke Wilkshire has the team excelling and unbeaten in three games.

One of the star players has been striker Thomas James who just can't stop scoring and added to his tally once again last week against Sydney United 58.

He really has been the talk of the NPL NSW Men's competition.

Japanese Midfielder Takeru Okada also had a breakthrough performance last round against Sydney United 58 and will be full of confidence for another big showing.

Wollongong have set the pace this season so far and they will be tough to beat.

However, Sydney's young players shouldn't be written off and if they can put in a strong performance they will be in with a shot of pulling off an upset.

Marconi Stallions v Manly United, 7pm Saturday at Marconi Stadium

Marconi Stallions found their groove

last week and will be out to make it two wins on the trot when they host Manly United on Saturday.

Their round three win against Sydney FC was the first victory of the campaign and a return to form for the Stallions.

New recruit Anthony Frangie had his best game in Marconi colours so far which is sure to excite club coach Peter Tsekis and their fans.

Frangie isn't the only new recruit at Marconi Stadium making a mark with Girogio Speranza proving to be an inspired acquisition.

With so many talented players on their roster, Marconi will be sure to test any opposition and their opponents this week Manly know they will need to be at their best.

The Northern Beaches based side were held to a 2-2 draw by Mount Druitt last week despite taking an early lead.

It was the second straight draw for Manly who have yet to taste victory this season.

Against Marconi they will look to creative midfielder Brendan Cholakian, who claimed a brace against Mount Druitt, one an absolute pearl of a shot, as well as defensive contributor Kieran Paull.

Desperate for a win, Manly will throw everything at Marconi's star studded squad.

It is sure to be an exciting match with plenty of goals on the menu.

Blacktown City FC v Sutherland Sharks FC, 3pm Sunday at Lily Homes Stadium

A thrilling draw to Sydney Olympic last week is sure to be a motivator for Blacktown City this week as they host Sutherland Sharks.

Blacktown were forced to settle for a point at Belmore Oval despite taking a 2-0 lead and it is sure to be seen as an opportunity lost for the Mark Crittenden

coached side.

Leroy Jennings has been one of the standouts for City this campaign since joining the side in the offseason from Sutherland Sharks.

His contribution in attack, alongside the performances of Blacktown club veterans Matt Lewis, Joey Gibbs and Grant Lynch will be key to their success on Sunday.

Their opponents this week is a young Sutherland Sharks team who have shown plenty of promise.

A round one win against reigning Premiers Sydney Olympic hinted that the Sharks could be a surprise packed this campaign but back to back defeats has seen the buzz settle a bit.

A win against Blacktown would be the perfect tonic for the boys from the Shire as they set out to bounce back to winning ways.

Former A-League defender Marc Warren has taken on the captaincy duty with aplomb for his new club and has been week in and week out Sutherland's best performer.

If the side's other high profile additions such as Matteo Poljak as well as Spanish duo Juan Carlos and Raul Beneit Romero are able to hit their top form then the Sharks could be ones to watch out for.

Blacktown will go into the game as favourites but Sutherland has the cattle to spring an upset.

Rockdale City Suns FC v Mount Druitt Town Rangers, 4.30pm Sunday at Linden Sports Centre

Rockdale City Suns will be desperate to forget last week's horror defeat and will be determined to bounce back with a big win against Mount Druitt Town Rangers on Sunday.

Despite dominating almost all facets of the game, Rockdale went down 3-0 against Hakoah Sydney City East in what

was best described as a smash and grab. **Coach Paul** Reid was quick to reassure his players and without a doubt they will be motivated to make up for the shock loss last week.

Alec Urosevski was a standout performer against Hakoah and was very unlucky not to find himself on the scoresheet.

Finishing in front of goal and making the most of chances will be a key topic at training this week for Rockdale.

Their opponent this week is a Mount Druitt side who is making the most of their new found top tier status after winning promotion from NPL 2 at the end of last season.

The Aidan Desmond coached side has held their own so far and none more so than an impressive fightback against Manly to snatch a 2-2 draw last week.

This week's game will have extra meaning for winger Toufic Alameddine who faces off against his former Rockdale teammates for the first time. **Rockdale will** not want a repeat of last round's loss so expect them to be firing from the outset.

Mount Druitt showed they aren't lacking any fighting spirit so they will be out to push their highly favoured opponents all the way.

Hakoah Sydney City East FC v Sydney Olympic, 5pm Sunday at Hensley Athletic Field

A third consecutive win will be the objective for Hakoah Sydney City East when they host Sydney Olympic at Hensley Athletic Field this Sunday.

The Eastern Suburbs side is flying high in second spot on the ladder and still flying under the radar after three rounds thanks to back to back wins against Sutherland Sharks and Rockdale Sydney City East.

Last week's 3-0 win against Rockdale was a brilliant display of Hakoah's patience and resilience as they weathered a storm of attack and limited possession to claw out a brilliant victory. **It will** take a similar performance this week against the league's reigning champions and coach Gavin Rae will surely have his troops fired up for another big showing.

Ryan Norval has been in amazing form in recent weeks and he is set to be a vital piece of the puzzle in this week's matchup with the goalkeeper set for another busy outing between the sticks. **Amaury Gauthier** up front and Adison Sayan in the middle of the park have also been impressive while Nathan Roberts has also provided a solid contribution.

Their opponents Sydney Olympic will