



By George Stavroulakis

ROUND 8 PREVIEW NPL NSW MEN'S

The half-way point of the National Premier Leagues NSW Men's competition is looming and there is no more early season excuses as Round 8 kicks off on Thursday.

Wollongong Wolves have sat at the competition summit since the start of the season and will look to extend their hold on first spot for a ninth week.

APIA Leichhardt Tigers have missed chances to leapfrog into the top position on the ladder over the past two weeks and will need to return to winning ways if they are to keep pace with Marconi Stallions who are in-form and hot on their tail.

Reigning Premiers and Champions Sydney Olympic have struggled for results so far but a logjam in the middle of the table means they are only a game or two away from being back in finals contention.

Round eight gets underway with an Anzac Day Grand Final rematch blockbuster between Olympic and APIA before bumper Saturday and Sunday match days close out the weekend's action.

Sydney Olympic FC vs APIA Leichhardt Tigers, 4.45pm Thursday at Belmore Sports Ground

APIA Leichhardt Tigers will be out to seek some revenge from the 2018 Grand Final defeat to Sydney Olympic when the two sides face off at Belmore Sports Ground on Thursday.

While it was Olympic who were all smiles after taking the win on Grand Final day last season, their start to the 2019 season has been less enjoyable with good results proving hard to come by.

APIA on the other hand are in second spot after seven rounds but have slipped up in their chase for first with back to back draws.

One positive for Olympic has been the discovery of dynamic forward Dimi Petratos who has been in inspired form scoring in consecutive matches.

Cousin to Dimi Petratos at the Newcastle Jets, Olympic's Petratos has been in fine form coming off the bench.

The Abbas Saad coached side could be without striker Alex Sanchez and midfielder Haji Gligor who both missed last week's clash due to injury.

Despite taking only two points from their past two matches, APIA are unlikely to make any big changes to their side for this clash.

Josh Symons made a return to the starting lineup last week moving the in-form Paul Galimi out from his preferred central defensive position to right back.

Tynan Diaz was dropped to the bench against Blacktown but the veteran's speed and crossing ability could be preferred by APIA coach John Calleja against Olympic.

Andre de Jong has had a solid start to his time in Leichhardt but is being eased into the team with three appearances off the bench. Calleja could very well feel the time is now to unleash the Kiwi international from the opening whistle while getting fan favourite Franco Parisi to come off the bench to run havoc.

Matches between these two sides are always packed with excitement and drama with this match likely going to be no different.

It will be a big day for the Blues who have labelled this the "Anzac Day Double Header" as following the Men's

match the NPL NSW Women's clash will showcase Sydney Olympic taking on Manly United at 6:45pm.

There will also be a special Anzac Day service set to take place at 4:35pm.

Sydney FC v Sydney United 58, 1pm Saturday at Lambert Park

Sydney FC will be gunning for a shock upset when they host Sydney United 58 at Lambert Park this Saturday.

The Young Sky Blues were let down by a lapse midway through the second half of their 2-1 loss to Rockdale City Suns last week and will be determined to make up for what was a frustrating result.

Jimmy van Weeren's players showed plenty of resilience to hold out a surging Suns attack for most of the match with shot stopper Thomas Heward-Belle seemingly unbeatable for large portions of the clash.

Marco Tillo was another Sydney player who stood up with his silky dribbling skills and explosive first step creating plenty of headaches.

Van Weeren could be tempted to give Ryan Teague more minutes with the talented midfielder delivering an impressive cameo off the bench at Ilinden Sports Centre.

Sydney FC will have its hands full against United 58 who are flying high after a 3-1 win against Mt Druitt Town Rangers.

Peter Simonoski marked his first full match after injury for United with a hat-trick and will be in the mood for goals on Saturday.

Coach Miro Vlastelica will also be pleased with the improvement of Uruguayan playmaker Sebastian Gallegos who on Monday delivered his best performance in a Sydney United shirt.



Club captain Nick Stavroulakis also provided that experience the team was missing when the Reds were humiliated by the Marconi Stallions 5-0.

The short five day turnaround could be a factor for Vlastelica's players and the coach may want to reshuffle his line-up and reinstate Patrick Antelmi, Mat Sim and Glen Trifiro to the starting team.

Sydney FC are no easy beats and an upset could very well be on the cards if United 58 don't bring their 'A' game.

Sutherland Sharks FC v Wollongong Wolves, 6.30pm Saturday at Seymour Shaw

Ending a painful six game winless streak will be the top priority for Sutherland Sharks on Saturday when they host league leaders Wollongong Wolves at Seymour Shaw.

It has been a horror start to the season for Terry Palapanis and the Sharks who have gone from bad to worse since their round one win.

The early promise has well and truly departed the Shire based squad and they will need to find an all new level if they are to stun Wollongong.

Sutherland have been hit by injury in recent week's with their young squad struggling for depth.

Jeremy Cox is hoping to get amongst the scorer's charts once more while the club will be missing their number one keeper Anthony Bouzanis who has been ruled out with injury.

To make matters worse the Wolves are playing their best

NPL NSW 2019 Men's 1

Round 7 Table

	Team	GP	Pts	W	D	L	GF	GA	+/-
1	Wollongong Wolves	7	17	5	2	0	16	7	9
2	APIA Tigers	7	14	4	2	1	11	6	5
3	Marconi Stallions	7	12	4	0	3	15	7	8
4	Blacktown City	7	11	3	2	2	7	6	1
5	Sydney United	7	11	3	2	2	10	13	-3
6	Manly United	7	10	2	4	1	9	8	1
7	Rockdale City Suns	7	10	3	1	3	6	12	-6
8	Sydney Olympic	7	8	2	2	3	13	12	1
9	Sydney FC Youth	7	7	2	1	4	11	13	-2
10	Hakoah Sydney	7	7	2	1	4	6	8	-2
11	Mt Druitt Rangers	7	5	1	2	4	10	17	-7
12	Sutherland Sharks	7	4	1	1	5	5	10	-5

Round 7 Results

Hakoah Sydney- Wollongong Wolves 0-2
Rockdale City Suns- Sydney FC Youth 2-1
Marconi Stallions- Sutherland Sharks 3-1
Sydney Olympic- Manly United 2-2
APIA Tigers- Blacktown City 1-1
Sydney United - Mt Druitt Rangers 3-1

Next Games Round 8

25.04.2019
 Sydney Olympic - APIA Tigers
27.04.2019
 Sydney FC Youth- Sydney United
 Sutherland Sharks- Wollongong Wolves
 Mt Druitt Rangers- Marconi Stallions
28.04.2019
 Blacktown City - Rockdale City Suns
 Manly United - Hakoah Sydney