



By George Stavroulakis

# ROUND 9 PREVIEW – NP

It's Round 9 in the National Premier Leagues NSW Men's competition and another weekend of thrilling on field action awaits with six more blockbuster fixtures on the schedule.

**Wollongong Wolves** remain the league leaders going into the ninth week of the season and with a four point lead ahead of second placed APIA Leichhardt Tigers they will be feeling pretty confident heading into the midway point of the campaign. **Marconi Stallions** and Sydney United 58 have been the big movers in recent weeks and they will be determined to maintain their impressive form. **Rockdale** is another side on the ascendency and with three straight league wins behind them they could soon be back challenging the league leaders. **This week** features three games on Saturday and three on Sunday starting with Sydney FC hosting APIA at Lambert Park. **United 58** close out the weekend's games when they take on Hakoah at Sydney United Spot centre in Sunday's late match.

## Sydney FC v APIA Leichhardt Tigers, 7pm Saturday at Lambert Park

**It will** be a battle for Lambert Park bragging rights as Sydney FC take on APIA Leichhardt Tigers at Lambert Park on Saturday. **The Young Sky Blues** will be out to shock their more favoured rivals and break a run of three straight defeats. **While Lambert Park** is intrinsically linked to APIA, Sydney FC have performed well at the ground they have used as their home since earning promotion to the NSW top tier in 2018 and will be out to stake their claim. **Jimmy van Weeren's** team showed early promise last round scoring early against Sydney United 58. However, they were unable to maintain the intensity conceding three goals in a 3-1 loss. **Thomas Heward-Belle** has been in spectacular form for Sydney with the gloveman delivering impressive performance in his last two matches. **Van Weeren** may have to shuffle his attacking options this week with Jordan Swibel suffering



## NPL NSW 2019 Men's 1

### Round 8 Results

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

### Next Games Round 9

- 04.05.2019**
- 19:00 Marconi Stallions - Sydney Olympic
- 19:00 Mt Druitt Rangers - Sutherland Sharks
- 19:00 Sydney FC Youth - APIA Tigers
- 05.05.2019**
- 15:00 Wollongong Wolves - Blacktown City
- 16:30 Rockdale City Suns - Manly United
- 17:00 Sydney United - Hakoah Sydney

### Round 8 Table

	Team	GP	Pts	W	D	L	GF	GA	+/-
1	<b>Wollongong Wolves</b>	8	18	5	3	0	18	9	9
2	<b>APIA Tigers</b>	8	14	4	2	2	12	9	3
3	<b>Sydney United</b>	8	14	4	2	2	13	14	-1
4	<b>Marconi Stallions</b>	8	13	4	1	3	18	10	8
5	<b>Manly United</b>	8	13	3	4	1	11	9	2
6	<b>Rockdale City Suns</b>	8	13	4	1	3	7	12	-5
7	<b>Sydney Olympic</b>	8	11	3	2	3	16	13	3
8	<b>Blacktown City</b>	8	11	3	2	3	7	7	0
9	<b>Hakoah Sydney</b>	8	7	2	1	5	7	10	-3
10	<b>Sydney FC Youth</b>	8	7	2	1	5	12	16	-4
11	<b>Mt Druitt Rangers</b>	8	6	1	3	4	13	20	-7
12	<b>Sutherland Sharks</b>	8	5	1	2	5	7	12	-5

an injury against United 58. Hamish Lamberton has shown he is up to the task of leading the line and may be called upon once again.

**Ryan Teague** will need to be on his game in midfield as he takes on a pretty solid Tigers outfit.

**While it** might be a bit bizarre for APIA to use the away locker rooms, it shouldn't deter them from getting back to winning ways after a three game slump of their own.

**The Tigers** suffered a painful 2018 grand final flashback last week as they were stunned by Sydney Olympic 3-1 while John Calleja's had only managed draws against Hakoah and Blacktown City in the previous two matches.

**Calleja will** have some selection issues of his own with club stalwart Franco Parisi likely earning a return to the starting line-up. The APIA boss will need to find the best way to get Parisi and Kiwi international Andre de Jong on the park at the same time with the pair so fair being used as interchange for each other.

**There are** whispers that former Golden Boot award winner and APIA fan favourite Blake Powell may be on his way to the Tigers which will only boost the club's scoring stocks albeit forming a deadly partnership with Chris Payne.

**Despite being** the away side, expect APIA to be the favourites for this clash but Sydney FC could easily catch them by surprise.

## Marconi Stallions v Sydney Olympic FC, 7pm Saturday at Marconi Stadium

**A return** to the winners circle and the top three will be on the agenda for Marconi Stallions when they host Sydney Olympic FC at Marconi Stadium on Saturday.

**Marconi made** a lucky escape in round 8 with a last gasp equaliser deep into added time to stretch their undefeated streak to four games.

**The Stallions** have taken their game to a new level in that time and quickly become one of the teams to beat in the NPL NSW.

**The strike** force of Marko Jasic and Mirjan Pavlovic was already a fearsome challenge for opposition defences and the return to form of Mitch Mallia only bolsters Marconi's threat in front of goal.

**Coach Peter** Tsekenis has not needed to make many changes to his starting lineup in recent weeks but still has talented veterans Nathan Millgate and James Baldacchino on the bench as well as rising star Martin Fernandez who has done very well coming on.

**Their opponents** Sydney Olympic come into the clash riding high on confidence after a 3-1 win against APIA Leichhardt Tigers.

**The return** of Spanish sensation Alex Sanchez was a game changer for Olympic with the striker scoring twice in the victory. **Olympic have** had a stuttering start to the