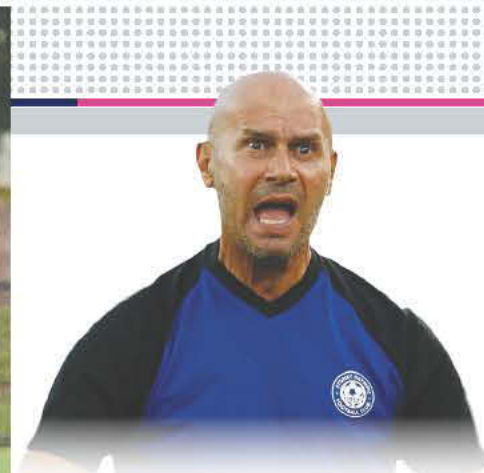


MEN'S



them on a number of occasions.

Benjamin Koop earned himself a call-up last round after striker Jordan Swibel suffered an injury against Sydney United 58 in Round 8.

Koop managed to snatch a late goal for Sydney after coming off the bench and may have done enough to earn my time on the paddock this week.

It's an evenly matched clash with both sides in with a shot of taking home a vital three points.

APIA Leichhardt Tigers v Manly United, 7pm Saturday at Lambert Park

Back to back wins will be the goal for APIA Leichhardt Tigers when they host Manly United at Lambert Park on Saturday.

A Chris Payne double helped APIA return to winning ways with a comprehensive victory against Sydney FC last week and they'll be out to repeat the formula when they go up against Manly in round 9.

The second placed Tigers took only two points from a possible nine during a difficult three game stretch including a morale sapping 3-1 loss in the grand final rematch against Sydney Olympic.

Payne remains APIA's primary threat in front of goal with the veteran striker in fine fettle since making the move from Sydney United 58 in the off-season.

Coach John Calleja blooded some of his younger players last round giving game time to Nicholas Azzone, Camil Abouchaaya, Dom Nasrabadi, Sam Gulisano and Lachlan Hughes with regular starters Corey Biczo, Themba Muata-Marlow, Paul Galimi and Andre de Jong absent from the match day squad.

Expect Calleja to recall his regulars back to the starting line-up against Manly.

Manly come into this match on the back of a 2-1 defeat at Rockdale and will be hoping to fight their way back into the top five after dropping down the ladder following their loss.

Paul Dee's team have been solid this campaign but have failed to truly hit their straps over the opening nine weeks.

Brendan Cholakian remains an absolute game changer for Manly as was the case against the Suns when he scored a sublime long range strike.

Expect few changes to the Manly side from last round for this clash with the only likely addition being pacy striker Charles Mendy who missed the trip to Ilinden Sports Centre in Round 9.

Manly have the firepower and talent to push APIA all the way but the Tigers remain favourites at home.

It is sure to be a captivating match-up.

Blacktown City v Marconi Stallions, 3pm Sunday at Lily Homes Stadium

There is sure to be no love lost on Sunday when Blacktown City take on Marconi Stallions at Lily Homes Stadium.

Blacktown City has plenty of ill-feeling towards the stallions after a mass player exodus from the Seven Hills based side following a brazen off-season signing swoop from Marconi saw City's biggest names all make the move.

It has created plenty of bad blood between the two teams and it will be interesting to see how that manifest on the park in round 10.

As a result of the major off-season turnover of players at Blacktown, the Mark Crittenden coached side has looked very different from the team which dominated the NPL NSW competition for the past five seasons.

That was none more evident than their 4-0 thrashing at the hands of Wollongong Wolves last round.

Before last week's capitulation, Blacktown have actually been quite solid defensively conceding only eight goals in as many matches.

That record has made up for their significant struggles in front of goal with Blacktown possessing the leagues worst attack in terms

of goals scored.

Crittenden's side has failed to score in their last two matches and have only found the back of the net seven times all season.

Veteran striker Joey Gibbs has struggled without the service of his former teammates Mitch Mallia, Connor Evans and James Andrew who all now call Marconi home.

The Stallions had a tentative first few weeks to the competition before exploding into form over the last month.

Mirijan Pavlovic and Marko Jesic have been in impressive goalscoring form while Mallia and fellow Stallions signing Anthony Frangie are also starting to hit their straps at their new club.

It will be interesting to see if the emotion of the contest gets the better of Blacktown or if it lifts them to their best performance of the campaign.

Nevertheless it is sure to be the can't miss match of the round.

Hakoah Sydney City East v Mt Druitt Town Rangers, 5pm Sunday at Hensley Athletic Field

Hakoah Sydney City East will be out to end their six game winless run when they host Mt Druitt Town Rangers at Hensley Athletic Field on Sunday.

It's been a frustrating slide for Hakoah who at one point this season were as high as second spot on the ladder.

They come into this clash in ninth position with only two wins from their nine matches.

Goals have been the biggest weakness for Hakoah who have found the back of the net only once in the past five weeks and are tied for the league worst attack scoring only seven goals so far this campaign.

Amaury Gauthier's return to the starting line-up has failed to ignite the Gavin Rae coached side in attack while back up striker Hristijan Tanoski has also struggled when called on.

Winger Shohel Okuna has shown flashes of brilliance but not enough to fix his teams scoring troubles.

Defensively Hakoah has remained difficult to breakdown but without goals they could be destined to find themselves in a battle for the wooden spoon.

Their opponents Mt Druitt Town Rangers have slowly picked up the pace but are in need of a victory.

The Rangers spurned a perfect chance to climb away from the bottom of the ladder last

week when they were held 1-1 by the struggling Sutherland Sharks who have not won in eight weeks.

It was a third straight draw for Mt Druitt and coach Aidan Desmond will be pushing his players to claim a much needed win.

The pressure will be on experienced players Toufic Alameddine and club stalwart Matthew Clowes to get the competition new boys over the line.

One player that could prove to be the difference for the Rangers is Uruguayan ace Fabricio Fernandez. The attacker has been in outstanding form for Mount Druitt since his arrival and has added a couple of quality goals to his highlights reel already – Desmond is hoping he can add a few more against at Hensley.

Sydney United 58 v Sydney Olympic, 5pm Sunday at Sydney United Sports Centre

What a way to finish round 10 of the NPL NSW Men's competition with a heavyweight clash seeing Sydney United 58 renewing their traditional rivalry with Sydney Olympic when the two sides face off at Sydney United Sports Centre.

United 58 will have a chance to move into second spot on the ladder with a win after a brilliant return to form in recent weeks after their shock 5-0 loss to Marconi.

Matthew Billc's return to the team over the past few rounds paid dividends for coach Miro Vlastelica with the young full-back scoring the winner against Hakoah last week.

Tricky midfield maestro Glen Trifiro was in a league of his own last Sunday as he danced and weaved through Hakoah defenders with ease – something he is hoping to do against the Blues.

Sebastian Gallegos has also warmed into his role in midfield since his comeback from injury as has Peter Simonoski in attack – the former Wolf always finds himself at the right place and the right time and his darting runs are something to look out for on Sunday.

Their opponents Sydney Olympic are finally hitting their straps and have shot up the table after a run of wins.

The reigning Championship and Premiership winners are now in fifth position and will be determined to further their title challenge.

Just like he did last season, Alejandro Sanchez has been a leading light for Abbas Saad's side and his eye for goal is as good as ever with the Spaniard scoring twice last week as Olympic defeated Marconi 3-1.

Skipper Jason Madonis has added steel to Olympic's midfield while the back-line has been steered well courtesy of experienced keeper Paul Henderson.

Saad has made few changes to his team since they've gone on their winning run and expect it to stay that way ahead of Sunday's match.

There is always plenty of feeling in matches between these two sides and this clash is unlikely to be any different.