

MEN'S



back of the net on debut but did play well constantly threatening the Manly defence. **Expect Pavlovic** to lead the line again this week with Desmond not expected to make too many changes to his line-up. **What more** can be said for Fabricio Fernandez? The attacking midfielder is an absolute weapon and will again be looked at this weekend. **Rockdale come** into this match after a big win against Hakoah Sydney City East to end their run of two straight defeats. **The Suns** recent results has seen them fall away from the main chasing pack at the top of the table and they will need another win if they are to be back in the Premiership picture. **Jordan Figon** rediscovered his scoring touch against Hakoah with a brace, while Alec Urosevski also found the back of the net. **Both players** will be vital contributors for Rockdale on Saturday. **Mt Druitt** will be very tough to beat at home but the fire power Rockdale possesses up front will make this a game which could go either way.

Manly United FC v Marconi Stallions FC, 3pm Sunday at Cromer Park

Manly United will be determined to claim a big bounce back win to keep their finals hopes

alive when Marconi Stallions come to Cromer Park on Sunday. **Manly are** only three points outside the top five in sixth place, but hold only a one point advantage over seventh placed Marconi Stallions. **Sunday's match** could prove to be vital match in the finals race with pressure on both sides to take home the three points. **Manly suffered** a shock 2-1 loss to Mt Druitt Town Rangers last round despite taking an early 1-0 lead. **It was** a frustrating result for Paul Dee's side who have struggled to string back to back wins this season. **Against Mt Druitt**, Manly took too long to hit their straps and were forced into a late scramble which proved unsuccessful. **Dee has** made few changes to his starting squad this season and expect that to continue this week. **Marconi come** into this game in devastating form scoring ten goals in their past two matches. **The Stallions** have threatened this sort of dominant attacking football without delivering consistently so it could be bad timing for Manly if Marconi have finally hit their straps. **Mitch Malla** played his best game for Marconi since joining the club this season after he scored a hat-trick in the 5-2 win against Sydney FC. **The former** Malta international will be a key

cog to the Stallions Success moving forward. **Expect plenty** of goals in this match with both teams playing to keep their finals hopes alive.

Wollongong Wolves v Sydney FC, 3pm Sunday at WIN Stadium

A reality check against Sydney United 58 last week could prove to be a turning point for Wollongong Wolves as they prepare to take on Sydney FC at WIN Stadium on Sunday. **The Wolves** fell to only their second league defeat of the season against United 58 in a week where they were also knocked out of the FFA Cup. **However, it's** not all bad news for the league leaders who are on track to spend a 15th straight week in first spot with their defeats a chance for coach Luke Wilkshire to ground his players as the business end of the season approaches. **Against Sydney FC**, Wilkshire will need his squad doesn't take their opposition for granted. While the Young Sky Blues may be languishing second from bottom, they have proven their ability to shock the competition's big guns. **Sydney FC** boss Jimmy van Weeren will be spreading that message to his players in the lead up to this game as he hopes to catch Wollongong off guard. **Sydney has** lost a number of players in recent weeks including defender Liam McGing and midfielder Jerry Skotadis. The pressure will be on the young replacements called in by van Weeren. **They have** conceded eight goals in their past two games so defence is sure to be a priority. Against league top scorer Thomas James, Sydney could be in for a tough day at the office.

APIA Leichhardt Tigers v Sydney United 58 FC, 3.30pm Sunday at Lambert Park

Second place on the ladder goes on the line this Sunday at Lambert Park as APIA Leichhardt Tigers play host to rivals Sydney United 58. **APIA haven't** won in three weeks and the pressure is mounting on John Calleja's side as the trailing pack close in. **A shock** 2-2 draw last week against Sutherland Sharks, despite leading 2-0 early in the match, is sure to cut deep with the Tigers and it wouldn't be too much to assume they'd want to give it everything to return to the winners circle this week. **The game** is also set to have another interesting storyline with new APIA acquisition Nick Stavroulakis to face his former side only two weeks after the club stated he was not in their plans. **Stavroulakis made** his debut for APIA last week and will no doubt play as a key player in the big match on Sunday along with club stalwart Franco Parisi. **The back-line** of Themba Muata Marlow and Josh Symons as well as Paul Galimi, who have formed a formidable defence line, will know

they will be up for a huge match come Sunday. **The last** time these two sides met it was an incredible performance from Chris Payne, who also made the move from United 58 to APIA this season, with the veteran striker scoring a brilliant hat-trick. **He will** likely carry much of the attacking burden again this time around. **United 58** come into this game riding high on confidence after claiming a 2-1 upset away from home against league leaders Wollongong Wolves. **The win** will have visiting team brimming with confidence and determined to take down another high profile opponent. **Matt Slim** was the main destroyer last week and his ability to create and finish chances will again be a major weapon for the Reds. **This match** has plenty riding on it and these teams have history so expect nothing less than a blockbuster on Sunday.

Sydney Olympic v Hakoah Sydney City East, 4pm Sunday at Belmore Sports Ground

With only eight games left in the season the time is now for Sydney Olympic to turn their campaign around, starting on Sunday when they host bottom team Hakoah Sydney City East at Belmore Sports Ground. **Olympic snatched** a 1-1 draw against Blacktown City and were unlucky to get the win during an thrilling end to end encounter. **However, that** has been the story of the reigning premier's season with flashes of excellence undone by moments of madness. **Coach Abbas** Saad is surely desperate for answers as he searches for a way to return his team to the heights of last season. **Saad has** made a number of small changes to his team in recent weeks including moving Will Angel to a central defensive position while moving incumbent centre back Tom Whiteside out to right back. **These changes** have failed to help Olympic find major improvement but don't expect the squad tinkering to end until results start going the Blues way. **One constant** has been striker Alex Sanchez who remains a constant threat at the point of the attack. **Their opponent** this week is Hakoah Sydney City East who remain anchored to 12th position on the table and are facing relegation. **It has** been a horror season for the Gavin Rae coached side who have hit rock bottom in 2019. **Nothing the** Eastern Suburbs side do seems to work compounded by the fact their attack has failed to fire scoring a league worst tally of only nine goals from 14 matches this season. **Hakoah historically** has frustrated opposition sides with dogged defence and pragmatic football but it's been a gameplay which hasn't quite hit the mark this year. **Olympic will** be heavy favourites for this game but with the threat of Relegation looming maybe Hakoah will find a new lease of life to save themselves from the drop.