

# MEN'S



round against Sydney FC despite struggling to hit their straps until the final 20 minutes of the match.

**While Golden** Boot leader Thomas James, currently on 18 goals, has been the goalscoring hero for Wollongong, it has been their no fuss defence which has been the major difference.

**Nikola Djordjevic** and Nick Littler have marshalled a tight defence which has conceded only 13 goals.

**It will** make it a tough trip down to the South Coast for reigning premiers Sydney Olympic who have had very different fortunes to their opponents this week.

**While everything** seemed to go right for Olympic 12 months ago, it couldn't be more different this time around with the Abbas Saad coached team struggling for results and good form.

**Currently sitting** in seventh position, Olympic has won only one game in their past five.

**Saad has** been forced to shuffle his squad around to find a winning formula with last season's star defender Tom Whiteside a shock omission from the starting line-up in their 1-0 win against Hakoah last Sunday.

**It will** be interesting to see if Whiteside is returned to the team against a potent Wollongong attack.

**One player** that caught the attention of many at Lambert Park last Sunday was young gun Peter Kekeris. The former Central Coast Mariners attacker was everywhere and showed his class with a well taken goal that gave the Blues all three points.

**The Wolves** will be heavy favourites for this game at home but it has been at WIN Stadium where Wollongong had the only two losses of their season so far.

## Rockdale City Suns v APiA Leichhardt Tigers, 4.30pm Sunday at Ilinden Sports Centre

**Rockdale City** Suns will be desperate to end their recent form slump and get a win against rivals APiA Leichhardt Tigers when the tow teams go head to head at Ilinden Sports Centre on Sunday.

**Rockdale has** had one win and three losses from their past five games to fall outside the top five.

**They will** be out to end that slide against a team they have struggled against in recent times including a 4-0 loss to APiA in round 4 which ultimately proved to be former coach Paul Reid's final match in charge before he was sacked.

**A loss** to Mt Druitt last week was another bitter blow for the Suns who were riding high at the top end of the table at the midpoint of the season.

**Star signing** Panny Nikas' injury woes has proven costly for the club with the mercurial midfielder featuring in only six of 15 games so far with his last appearance in team colours coming over a month ago.

**Nikas' absence** has left the club with a big hole in attack and heaping more pressure on star winger Alec Urosevki along with Jordan

Figon to carry the load. While the club has moved swiftly to recruit former player Nikola Taneski for the rest of the NPL NSW Men's season after making the switch from Manly United where the striker had limited minutes at Cromer Park.

**Veteran defender** Trent McClellan's injury layoff has also been felt with the side struggling to stop opposition attacks.

**Interim coach** Nick Porecca will have a big job to do this week if he is to keep out a fired up APiA team driven to close the gap between them and Wollongong at the top of the table.

**The Tigers** showed off what they're made of in last week's incredible backs to the wall 1-0 win against Sydney United 58 despite playing more the two thirds of the match with only 10-men.

**It is** a result which is sure to steel the APiA squad moving forward.

**Injuries and** suspension could be the undoing of the John Calleja coached side with the first year team manager forced into another reshuffle this week to cover Themba Muata-Marlow's suspension.

**Nick Stavroulakis** could be in line for extra minutes in midfield after coming on as a late substitute in his first two matches for his new club.

**Dom Nasrbadl** could also see more time on the pitch after his impressive showing against United 58 while Chris Payne will be fired up in hitting the back of the net at Rockdale.

**Club stalwart** Franco Parisi had a man of the match performance against United 58 last Sunday and it will be his experience that could unlock the Suns defence.

**APiA have** seemingly had Rockdale's measure in recent times and it is a fact which will surely rankle with those at the Ilinden Sports Centre club.

**The Suns** have a point to prove this week so expect a thrilling match-up.

## Hakoah Sydney City East v Marconi Stallions, 5pm Sunday at Hensley Athletic Field

**Hakoah Sydney** City East will be hoping to stop a horror run of nine straight defeats when they host Marconi Stallions on Sunday night.

**It has** been the season from hell for Hakoah with their strong results from the opening four weeks seeming like an eternity ago with the team slumping to one of the worst run of results in the club's history.

**Coach Gavin** Rae will be hoping a return to the familiar surround of their Hensley Athletic Field home ground is the formula to help his side snatch a much needed win.

**Hakoah has** made two big signings in recent weeks with the addition of Pedj Bojic and Adrian Vranic bolstering Rae's options in both attack and defence.

**Goals have** been the Eastern Suburbs based club's biggest weakness and they will be desperately hoping that Vranic is the answer to their goalscoring woes.

**They come** up against a side which hasn't had those problems this season in Marconi

Stallions.

**The Stallions** boast one of the most deadly attacks in the competition but suffer from a bad case of inconsistency which struck last week as they suffered a 1-0 loss on the road against Manly United.

**Marconi will** have a point to prove this week and will have their eyes set on a big win against the league's bottom team.

**Currently in** eighth spot, the Peter Tsekenis coached Marconi team have to finish the season on a high note if they are any chance of snatching a spot in the finals.

**Anthony Frangle** returns to take on his old side in Hakoah and will want to put in a big performance at the ground where his breakthrough performances helped him become one of the leagues rising stars.

**Marconi will** be out to inflict a huge loss on Hakoah so expect the visitors to race out of the blocks.

**Hakoah will** be in for a tough test but if they can snatch a point from this contest it could be the building block for sunnier times over the back end of the campaign at Eastgardens.

## Sydney United 58 v Sutherland Sharks, 5pm Sunday at Sydney United Sports Centre

**A big** bounce back performance should be on the cards for Sydney United 58 as they return home to Sydney United Sports Centre to take on Sutherland Sharks this Sunday night.

**United 58** paid the price for not making the most of their opportunities last round as they suffered a heartbreaking 1-0 loss to a 10-man APiA Leichhardt Tigers side.

**It's been** a tough month for Miro Vlastelica and his Reds team as they've won two and lost three from their past five matches.

**The addition** of former Melbourne Knights defender Tomislav Uskok has helped solidify the United 58 defence and it will be needed against a Sharks team which has gone from easy beats to competition dark horse.

**Goals remain** an issue for Sydney United 58 as Peter Simonoski remains as the leading scorer on 7 for the year.

**Their opponents** Sutherland have made the most of the mid-season transfer window to transform their team.

**Liam McGing**, Jerry Skotadis, Bai Antoniou and Charles Lokolingoy all now call Seymour Shaw Park home with the former Sydney FC youth stars combining in a big way for coach Terry Palapanis.

**Antoniou was** the form player last week as the Sharks stunned Blacktown City to stretch their unbeaten run to an incredible 8 weeks including three wins from their past four matches.

**The Sharks** know that they've turned the screws for the second half of the year and have come into it as a team on a mission in making a late surge for finals football.

**This match** has potential to be the best of the weekend and one you shouldn't miss.

**However, consistency** has been Manly's biggest weakness this season with the Paul Dee coached side struggling to deliver back to back performances.

**That and** a midweek TAFE NSW Waratah Cup Elimination Final fixture to contest with.

**The match** will be a meeting of former teams for United winger Charles Mendy who played at Blacktown last season, While Blacktown's Daniel Bragg will also come up against some old teammates from his time at Cromer Park.

**Blacktown should** have the upper hand in this game but both sides have their weaknesses so it could go either way.

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

**In 2019**, Wollongong Wolves have been the benchmark in the National Premier Leagues NSW Men's competition but this week they will need to prove themselves against the best team from last year when they host Sydney Olympic at WIN Stadium on Sunday.

**The Wolves** have lead the league from the opening day of the campaign and have rarely missed a beat in 15 weeks.

**The Luke** Wilkshire coached side come into this week's game on the back of a 4-0 win last