



By George Stavroulakis

2019 TAFE NSW WARATAH CUP PREVIEW...

MARCONI STALLIONS

A historic rivalry will go head to head once again on Sunday as Marconi Stallions and Sydney United 58 face off at Lily Homes Stadium this Sunday (2:30pm) in the final of the 2019 TAFE NSW Waratah Cup.

It will be more than just bragging rights on the line when the two former giants of Australian football face off as they both look to add more silverware to their collection.

The match also has the potential to be a major launching pad for each side coming into the final weeks of the National Premier Leagues NSW Men's season.

The confidence gained from securing the Waratah Cup title could possibly be the boost they need to elevate their side to further honours.

It has been three seasons since Sydney United 58 last featured in a Waratah Cup final after they won it for the second straight year in 2016. It was their sixth ever Waratah Cup victory taking them to second on the all-time list.

Marconi has not had the same level of success in the competition with their one and only Waratah Cup title coming in 2010.

While it is fair to say United 58 and Marconi's league form this season has been mixed at best, they have both shown the ability to get the win when the pressure is on in cup competition.

The Stallions cruised their way into the Waratah Cup final winning all six of their matches with relative ease, scoring 19 goals in the process.

It was a bit of a different story for The Reds who battled their way to the cup decider after some nail-biting and dramatic late wins, including an extra-time thriller against NPL 2 outfit Northern Tigers.

Their form against each other also makes for interesting reading with Marconi holding a bit of an edge over their local rivals.

In April the Stallions embarrassed Sydney United 58 5-0 at Marconi Stadium.

however, it could be their 0-0 draw in the reverse fixture two weeks ago which gives the Bossley Park based outfit a mental edge after they were able to hold out United for most of the match with only ten men on the park.

Attacking football is very much the modus operandi for the Marconi Stallions.

Boasting a squad featuring some of the league's most dangerous attacking players, Marconi has shown flashes of what they can do when they're in the mood.

One player that will not be taking to the pitch and has been deemed as a massive blow is that of former A-League winger Mitch Mallia.

Mallia was sent off in the club's recent fixture against Sydney United 58 and this

will be his second of four matches he will be serving on the sidelines.

There to carry the burden will be Marko Jesic.

Jesic's clinical finishing skills can leave even the most disciplined defensive units searching for answers.

Along with Jesic, the fast paced James Andrew who has hit top form of late will be there to assist Jesic up-front.

The return to full fitness of Connor Evans is a massive plus for the Stallions while both Speranza brothers Roberto and Giorgio will also provide a key in keeping the defence tight along with Nathan Millgate.

It must be said that the Stallions in recent weeks have thrown in a number of rising young stars in gaining NPL NSW Men's experience so expect cameo roles from Matthew Fernandez, Yianni Nicolaou and Damian Tsekenis.

Goals have been hard to find recently for United 58 but they will be banking on their experienced and talented midfield unit to control the contest and starve their opponent of opportunities on the ball.

Lead by former Central Coast Mariners player Glen Trifiro, United 58's midfield would be the side's biggest strength.

The combination of Trifiro, wily veteran Matt Sim, holding midfielder Anthony Tomelic and Uruguayan playmaker Sebastian Gallegos is a perfect mix of experience and game changing skill.

Gallegos and Trifiro especially will play an important role in turning defence into attack before feeding the ball into Sim and United 58's strikers featuring Peter

