

Peter Tsekenis ready for more challenges at Stallions after Cup victory

TAFE NSW Waratah Cup-winning coach Peter Tsekenis is well aware of the challenges that lie ahead for the Marconi Stallions in their pursuit of more silverware this campaign.

A Marko Jescic brace fired the Stallions to a 2-1 triumph over fierce rivals Sydney United 58 on Sunday afternoon at Lily Holmes Stadium.

After going behind to a Peter Simonoski strike 28 minutes in, Tsekenis was pleased by the resilience his side displayed to turn the game around and take home the title.

"It was toe to toe at the beginning, we hit the post and had a Marko Jescic one-on-one denied," the 1996 Olympian reflected.

"Not long after, after a little lapse in defence, they latched onto a loose ball with a pretty good finish.

"That was the first goal Sydney United scored against us in over three games.

"In the past, we've lost our way a little after going behind but in recent times the boys have been much more determined and mentally stronger, showing a bit more self-belief.

"We always knew that we could come back.

"We had created enough, the belief was there, and it was just a matter of getting the first one.

"It was one of those games where Sydney United provided a threat, but if you look at total shots on goal it was very clear who had more action in front of goal in the end.

"I thought we were deserved winners, but at the same time football's a funny game and in key moments things can change.

"Luckily enough it went our way."

Sunday was not the first time Tsekenis tasted victory in the TAFE NSW Waratah Cup.

The former St George, Sydney Olympic and Newcastle United man lifted the cup as a player-manager with the Bankstown City Lions back in 2008.

His 2019 success, which was also Marconi's second in the competition, represented the



Cup Round of 32.

However, the Stallions boss remains confident that his side's blend of youth and experience can drive them towards future success.

"I think the teams in the running for it (finals football) are all in the same position; they have to win every week," he said.

"It's going to come down to which team can put a consistent run together.

"In our next two games we play Mt Druitt and Sydney Olympic who are two teams in the mix at the moment, so if we win those we are definitely in the five.

"It's in our hands, but we've left ourselves in a position where we can't falter.

"It's a Grand Final every week; one slip could be costly, so we'll just take it one

game at a time.

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"Our numbers are low, but our young boys are doing really well and we are confident we can win every game.

"The other thing that makes things even more tricky when we are short on numbers will be travelling to Hobart to play a big game and then coming back up two or three days later.

"That will be the challenge, but we'll go one game at a time and assess each one as it comes."

It may be back to business immediately, but Tsekenis assured there are plenty of positives to extract from Sunday afternoon's triumph.

"It's always good to win Grand Finals when they come up," he reflected.

"It creates that interest and spark for the game.

"It showed me that when the big occasions do turn up the boys are more than capable of handling themselves.

"We're focusing on this week now, making sure everyone's bodies are alright and ready to give it a good crack on the weekend."

Tsekenis' men currently sit in sixth place, three points astray of a finals position.

They host Mt Druitt Town Rangers on Saturday before making the trip to Sydney Olympic a week later in what is sure to be a blockbuster clash.

The Stallions can then turn their aspirations to a place in the FFA Cup Round of 16, as they take on South Hobart FC at Blundstone Arena on the 31st July.



first piece of silverware won by the resurgent club since they regained promotion to the National Premier Leagues NSW Men's top flight in 2017.

Tsekenis revealed that it has not been a straightforward journey for the historic club on their return to the winner's circle.

"The season I joined, we were in the NPL 2 NSW Men's competition and then got promoted," the coach recalled.

"From that point, it has been pretty much a case of restarting the bus.

"We scrambled together a squad and have built on it this year; on paper we have some decent players.

"We dealt with some issues during the season that were out of our hands, and the boys have responded well.

"We're starting to get a regular eleven who are playing now, as well as lot of young boys who are coming through.

"A lot of those issues we have had in the past provided the pathway for these youngsters.

"The older boys are showing them the way so there is a really good mix at the moment.

"We're a happy camp, confident and taking things one game at a time at the moment."

While the tantalising prospect of competing for two more trophies this campaign remains, Tsekenis is not expecting plain sailing from here on in.

The Stallions face the logistical challenge of balancing a push for in the all-important top five league positions with a midweek inter-state trip to face South Hobart in the FFA