



By George Stavroulakis

FINALS SERIES ROUND 1 P

The finals of the National Premier Leagues NSW Men's competition have arrived and the stakes couldn't be higher with Championship glory only three games away.

The first week of the playoffs features two thrilling match-ups on Saturday including a fierce derby match between Sydney United 58 and Marconi Stallions, as well as a clash of the titans with APIA Leichhardt Tigers going head to head with Blacktown City. All four teams have given everything to make it this far in the competition and won't be happy to bow out early. Now is the time for teams to make their mark so strap in for a huge weekend of finals football action.

Sydney United 58 v Marconi Stallions, Saturday 4pm at Sydney United Sports Centre

Expect plenty of fireworks on Saturday afternoon as fierce rivals Sydney United 58 and Marconi Stallions face off for finals football survival at Sydney United Sports Centre.

There has been a lot of feeling between these two teams this season and the extra pressure of finals elimination will only turn the heat up even more on these two historic opponents teams

Saturday's match will be the fourth time they have clashed in 2019 with their most recent being Marconi's 2-1 Waratah Cup final win last month.

The Stallions have had the upper hand winning two of three matches against United this season including a 5-0 thrashing at Marconi Stadium back in April

Sydney United 58 come into this game full of confidence after snatching fourth spot from Marconi to secure a home final with a 3-1 win in their final regular season game against Manly United last weekend.

The victory was a real message of intent from a Reds outfit which has struggled for consistency over the back end of the campaign.

Coach Miro Valstelica could have a few tough selection decisions to make with the possible loss of star midfielder Glen Trifiro to injury who will be touch and go.

The former Central Coast Mariners player struggled to limp off the field after suffering what appeared to be a serious knee injury during the second half.

Tariq Mala could be the man brought in to replace him with Patrick Antelmi returned to the starting line-up to fill Maia's spot.

Defeat last week proved costly for Marconi Stallions as they lost the chance to host this match but they have still been one of the form teams during the back half of the campaign.

Coach Peter Tsekenis has his star studded Stallions side firing when it matters most and if they can continue that form are a dark horse to go all the way.

A few of Marconi's big names didn't play last week including Mitch Mallia while former Hakoah attacking dynamo Anthony Frangie is slowly working his way back from injury giving the Stallions another weapon going forward.

With the loser eliminated from the finals expect both teams to give everything to avoid a premature end to the season and their Championship hopes.

If their previous match-ups are anything to go by this game is must see football.

