

MT DRUITT RANGERS V SYDNEY FC, 2PM
SUNDAY AT POPONDETTA PARK

There was plenty of positive signs from Mt Druitt Town Rangers in 2019 and they will be looking to build on that with a strong start to this campaign, beginning with a win againsts Sydney FC at Popondetta Park on Sunday. **Not much** was expected of Mt Druitt during their maiden season in the NPL NSW but the Aiden Desmond coached outfit proved they can match it with anyone. **Mt Druitt** will be a little smarter and a little wiser in their second season while a huge off-season recruitment drive has them stronger than ever. **Former A-League** star midfielder Mateo Poljak makes the move west to join the Rangers and could be the perfect foil for striker Mirjan Pavlovic. **The big** loss however is that of midfield maestro Fabricio Fernandez who has since moved back home to his native country in Uruguay. **Looking to** stop them will be Jim van Weeren and his Sydney FC side. **The Young** Sky Blues have shown a knack for surprising any team who underestimates them and that is likely to continue this season. **Star youngsters** such as Marco Tilio have broken into Sydney FC's A-League squad and will be out to earn a permanent move into the senior squad with a big showing in the NPL. **Van Weeren** will be hoping his latest crop of academy players can make the step up to the NPL after losing Ryan Teague, Joel King and Harry van der Saag in the offseason. **Expect plenty** of goals in what is set to be an exciting contest.

BLACKTOWN CITY FC V SYDNEY UNITED 58
FC, 3PM SUNDAY AT LILY HOMES STADIUM

A traditional rivalry is renewed in round one as Blacktown City play host to Sydney United 58 on Sunday at Lily Homes Stadium **The two** teams played an absolutely epic semi-final clash last season with Sydney United taking out 7-3 in what was a match for the ages. **Six months** later the two teams meet again and be sure that Blacktown will be looking to get one back on the side which eliminated them from the finals series. **Blacktown come** into this match with a very similar team from last season with coach Mark Crittenden once again relying on youth to get the job done. **Club captain** Matt Lewis and Grant Lynch will be

leading the charge for Blacktown once again alongside some of the club's production line of up and coming talent. **The sore** point coming out of the club was the loss of star attacker Joey Gibbs who signed a professional contract in Iceland days before the transfer deadline ceased. Taking his spot and the pressure up front will be the likes of live-wire Leroy Jennings and new recruit Hassan Jalloh. **Their opponents** Sydney United won't have the same familiar look with a new coach in former Socceroos and AC Milan keeper Zeljko Kalac taking the reigns of a revamped side. **New Reds** signing Devante Clut will be starting the year with a return to his former club and will be hoping to collect all three points. **Kalac has** pledged to play a high octane brand of football this year so expect plenty of fireworks. **He does** boost a quality side all across the pitch with Liam Rose set to have a huge year at the club while more goals are expected to flow from Patrick Antlemi via the creative services from midfield star Glenn Trifiro. **Matches between** these two teams never disappoint and this one is sure to continue that trend.

SYDNEY OLYMPIC FC V WOLLONGONG
WOLVES FC, 4PM SUNDAY AT BELMORE
SPORTS GROUND

With a new coach and an overhauled squad, Sydney Olympic is equipped for a massive season, however first they must start their season against reigning premiers Wollongong Wolves **Terry Palapanis** takes the reigns at Olympic in 2020 and the goal will be getting the side back to the top of the pile after a challenging season last year. **A bumper** recruitment drive has brought in a wealth of stars including Seb Ryall, Raul Beneit Romero, Adam Parkhouse, Fabio Ferreira and Charles Lokolingoy. **It has** given the Belmore side a ferocious attack on paper and the question will be how long it takes before it is firing on all cylinders. **Looking to** stop them will be a Wollongong Wolves side out to prove their incredible 2019 season wasn't just a flash in the pan **The Luke** Wilkshire coached Wolves were a dominant force in 2019 leading the competition from the opening round before taking out the Premiership title in a canter. **The disappointing** end to their finals campaign is sure to be a sore spot for the Wolves and a big win in week one will go some way to easing any lingering frustrations. **Golden boot** winner Thomas James returns for another year at WIN Stadium and will again be the focal point of

the attack. **Japanese midfielder** Takeru Okada is also back and will be hoping his second season in the NPL NSW is just as good as his breakthrough first. **Promising youngster** James Stojcevski will have the honour of wearing the captain's armband for 2020, a huge responsibility but one that the player will relish. **Olympic will** be out to make a statement in the opening game of the season and a win against Wollongong would definitely send a message.

ROCKDALE ILINDEN FC V MANLY UNITED FC,
4.30PM SUNDAY AT ILINDEN SPORTS
CENTRE

It was a tough year for Rockdale Ilinden FC fans last season and the club will hope to get things back on track when they kick-off the 2020 campaign at home against Manly United FC. **New coach** Steve Zoric will be pushing his Suns team to not make the mistakes of season past and starting the season on the right foot. **Japanese playmaker** Tomoki Wakada is the biggest addition to the Suns roster and will be tasked with being the spark plug between midfield and attack. **Alec Urosevski** returns for Rockdale and will again be the main man at Ilinden Sports Centre but look for new recruits Mitch Stamatellis and Dimi Petratos as well as James Baldacchino to make headlines at the club. **Manly United** had an equally disappointing year and a good start will be just as important. **Paul Dee** returns to coach the boys from the Northern Beaches and hopes to unlock the potential of his young side. **Brendan Cholakian** will be the primary weapon in attack, while the return of Sam Gallagher to the line up after spending the majority of last season on the sideline will boost their defence. **Journeyman Richie** Cardozo will look to lead the team's attack alongside the likes of young guns Marley Peterson and Harry McCarthy while the inclusion of Dean Bereveskos from NPL Victoria could prove to be the X-Factor at the club. **Both teams** are a bit of an unknown quantity so this match could go either way.

MARCONI STALLIONS FC V SUTHERLAND
SHARKS FC, 7PM SUNDAY AT MARCONI
STADIUM

Marconi Stallions will be out to make their mark with a big win against Sutherland Sharks at Marconi Stadium on Sunday. **The Stallions** narrowly missed the finals last season despite boasting one of the strongest squads in the competition. **Coach Peter** Tsekenis has kept the majority of the team from last season and will be eyeing nothing short of Premiership or Championship honours. **One player** Tsekenis will be hoping to see more of this campaign is Anthony Frangie with the young attacker back after a 2019 season which was interrupted by injury. **A lot** of hype has surrounded former Adelaide City star Anthony Costa, with the striker hoping to do some damage in the most prestigious NPL competition in Australia. **They will** go up against a new look Sutherland Sharks side who could prove to be a dark horse this season. **Incoming coach** Nick Dimovski has built an impressive roster including former NPL Golden Boot winner Blake Powell and ex-Eredivisie defender Joey Groenbast. **Throw in** Peter Simonoski, Oliver Green and Mason Versi and you have a pretty decent line-up. **Dimovski has** set out on ending the Sharks poor results over the last few seasons and nothing can send a message more than a big win in round one. **A thrilling** clash to wrap up what will be a massive opening round of the National Premier Leagues NSW Men's competition.

PREMIER LEAGUE 1 NSW 2020

29.02.2020			
18:00	NSW Regular Season	North Shore Mariners	APIA Tigers
01.03.2020			
14:00	NSW Regular Season	Mt Druitt Rangers	Sydney FC Youth
15:00	NSW Regular Season	Blacktown City	Sydney United
16:00	NSW Regular Season	Sydney Olympic	Wollongong Wolves
16:30	NSW Regular Season	Rockdale City Suns	Manly United
19:00	NSW Regular Season	Marconi Stallions	Sutherland Sharks
07.03.2020			
16:30	NSW Regular Season	Sutherland Sharks	Rockdale City Suns
19:00	NSW Regular Season	Manly United	Blacktown City
08.03.2020			
14:30	NSW Regular Season	Wollongong Wolves	North Shore Mariners
18:00	NSW Regular Season	Sydney United	Mt Druitt Rangers
18:30	NSW Regular Season	Sydney FC Youth	Marconi Stallions
19:30	NSW Regular Season	APIA Tigers	Sydney Olympic