



By George Stavroulakis

The National Premier Leagues NSW season has kicked off in emphatic style with a blockbuster opening round.



ROUND 1 NPL NSW MEN'S REVIEW

With new teams, new players and new coaches there was plenty for fans to get excited about and the first week of action certainly delivered.

Reigning Premiers Wollongong Wolves kicked off from where they finished the 2019 regular season with a win, while Rockdale Ilinden FC, Blacktown City, Marconi and Sydney FC also tasted victory.

Grand Final winner APIA Leichhardt had a tougher time in Round 1 as they were held by competition new boys North Shore Mariners on Saturday.

The weekend's fixtures also marked Bushfire Relief Round with all clubs doing their bit to raise vital funds for those affected by this summer's deadly bushfires.

NORTH SHORE MARINERS 1 – 1 APIA LEICHHARDT AT LAMBERT PARK

North Shore Mariners have made a strong start to their maiden National Premier Leagues NSW campaign as they shared the spoils in a 1-1 draw with APIA Leichhardt on Saturday.

The Champions got themselves off to a strong start in the new battle of Lambert Park as a first half header from Chris Payne put them into the lead on half-time.

Emmanuel Perters saved the day for the Mariners finding the back of the net 78 minutes in to set up a thrilling finish.

APIA were disappointed to lose control of the contest and not hold onto the three points.

For newcomers North Shore Mariners, they acquitted themselves well in their National Premier Leagues NSW debut.

MOUNT DRUITT TOWN RANGERS 1 – 2 SYDNEY FC AT POPONETTA PARK

Sydney FC has opened the season in emphatic style stunning Mt Druitt Town Rangers 2-1 at Popondetta Park on Sunday

The young Sky Blues blasted into the lead after a two goal salvo from Jordan Swibel and Cameron Peupion inside the first nine minutes.

Sydney FC were able to hold on despite a late Rangers penalty to kick their campaign off with three points.

It was a frustrated first half from Mount Druitt, the home side rallied in the second half and created chances through Mirjam Pavlovic and Toufic Alameddine.

The latter got on the scoresheet late with a well-taken penalty for some consolation.

BLACKTOWN CITY 1 – 0 SYDNEY UNITED 58 FC AT LILY HOMES STADIUM

A first half goal from Matt Lewis has helped Blacktown City clinch a hard-fought 1-0 win against Sydney United 58 at Lily Homes Stadium on Sunday.

The City captain scored the game's only goal midway through the first half before marshalling a rigid Blacktown defence to secure three points for his side in their opening match of the campaign.

United 58 made plenty of work for Blacktown City shot stopper but they were unable to get past the experienced Tristan Pendergast.

It was certainly a game of two-halves as United then found themselves on the back foot after as it became City's turn to squander opportunities before Thomas Manos came into his own and earned his keep.

SYDNEY OLYMPIC 1 – 2 WOLLONGONG WOLVES AT BELMORE SPORTS GROUND

Wollongong Wolves have opened their NPL NSW Premiership defence with a 2-1 win over Sydney Olympic at Belmore Sportsground on Sunday.

A Bul Jauch goal in the dying stages helped the Luke Wilkshire coached side to victory with the contest seemingly headed for a draw.

Lachlan Scott gave the Wolves the perfect start with a 10th minute strike but Olympic found an equaliser courtesy of Jason Madonis just after the restart.

But with time running down the Wolves youngster delivered for his side when it matters most to secure all three points.

ROCKDALE CITY SUNS 2 – 1 MANLY UNITED FC AT ILINDEN SPORTS CENTRE

Rockdale Ilinden FC have opened their season on a winning note overcoming Manly United 2-1 at Ilinden Sports Centre on Sunday.

Goals to Alec Urosevski and Nikola Taneski were the difference for the home side as they held on despite a fast finishing Manly side putting the pressure on late.

Urosevski opened the scoring after 11 minutes from the penalty spot but Manly evened the ledger in the 38th minute when they too successfully dispatched a spot kick.

Manly were the aggressors in the second half but it was Rockdale who found the winner when Taneski scored against the run of play midway through the second stanza.

A late salvo from the Northern Beaches side nearly snatched a draw but it wasn't enough as new Ilinden boss Steven Zoric tasted victory in his first official game in charge.

MARCONI STALLIONS 4 – 1 SUTHERLAND SHARKS AT MARCONI STADIUM

Marconi Stallions have defeated Sutherland Sharks 4-1 in an entertaining game at Bossley Park.

After securing the early lead thanks to a Mitchell Mallia strike, the home side were caught by the Sharks when Lachlan Everett balanced the ledger.

It was not until the second half that Marconi pulled away with two goals in fairly quick succession and then a late strike to round out the scoring.

The first goal of the second half belonged to Marko Jesic, followed by Connor Evans and then substitute Brandon Vella got in on the action at the death.

It was a dominant display by the Stallions, while the Sharks will be desperate to move on quickly after a tough start to the season.