

7.30PM • WEDNESDAY
14TH AUGUST 2024



NETSTRATA
JUBILEE STADIUM

KICK OFF



MATCH PREVIEW

Rockdale Ilinden will take on APIA Leichhardt in a blockbuster Waratah Cup Final at Netstrata Jubilee Stadium this Wednesday night.

RECENT FORM

Rockdale Ilinden, currently top of the NPL Men's NSW competition, need just one victory from their remaining two matches to become the 2024 Premiers.

After their recent draw against Sutherland Sharks, Rockdale are four points ahead of Marconi Stallions on the ladder, and could secure the Premiership on Monday, the 19th of August against Sydney FC.

But in the meantime, all eyes will be on their Waratah Cup final - the first in the club's history - as they look to continue their strong form with their unique style of play that many have enjoyed watching this season, against an APIA Leichhardt team that has suffered from a poor run of form in recent weeks.

APIA recently went on a winless run of five matches in the league, as they struggled to turn strong performances into qualitative results.

After returning to winning ways in the league two weeks ago, their rotated side in Round 28 was heavily defeated by Sydney FC, with APIA's spot for finals already secured.

However, they have shown their quality throughout the season, particularly in big matches, with their Waratah Cup semi-final victory over Blacktown City emblematic of their quality and synergy across the pitch.

The Waratah Cup final will feature two of the best teams in New South Wales go head-to-head, and promises to draw any fan in with excitement, tension and high-intensity, free-flowing football.

PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Rockdale Ilinden and APIA Leichhardt have played each other twice in the regular season, with both sides experiencing one win and one defeat.

Both games experienced the perfect mixture of intensity and attractive football from both individuals and teams, and this Waratah Cup final promises to be no different, with the energy and excitement on and off the field set to encapsulate the true beauty of football in New South Wales.

The first match, in Round 11, saw APIA take home the win, with goals from Ben Gibson, Jack Stewart and Rory Jordan guiding them to victory.

Gibson opened the scoring with a clinical counter-attack, before APIA doubled their lead nine minutes later, with a beautiful team move finished off by Jack Stewart.

Lochlan Constable halved Rockdale's deficit with a stunning strike from outside the box, but they failed to capitalise on momentum as Rory Jordan netted early in the first half to reinstate APIA's two-goal advantage.

A 72nd-minute Alec Urosevski goal gave Rockdale hope, but APIA's strong defence prevailed, and they gained the first win in this hotly contested rivalry.

However, in the second fixture, Rockdale responded, gaining a vital Round 26 victory thanks to a late flurry.

After an intense first half, Stewart gave APIA the first goal in the 57th minute, calmly converting a penalty.

APIA looked to push on for a second, but Rockdale equalised in the 76th minute, with Urosevski netting a clinical goal on an

attacking transition.

Rockdale pushed on, and an 87th-minute strike from Daniel Collins gave them a memorable, dramatic victory against their Waratah Cup Final opponents.

KEY PLAYERS

Both sides will be chock-full of quality for this match, with individual battles set to excite all over the field.

For Rockdale, it's hard to look past their captain and talisman Alec Urosevski, who has netted an astonishing 29 goals in 27 games in the league this campaign.

With his powerful running in behind, movement in the box, ability to dribble and hold up the ball and clinical finishing, Urosevski is a threat no matter where the ball is on the field.

Isaac Danzo may also play a key role for Rockdale on Wednesday night, with the midfielder able to create chances, destroy

opposition attacks and crucially help control the match with his technique and match intelligence.

Meanwhile, APIA will possess a stacked front line, with Jack Stewart serving as a consistent standout this campaign.

Stewart is the only APIA player to have scored twice against Rockdale this season and is a creative machine on the right flank with his close-control dribbling, passing and powerful shots.

The attacking prowess of Ben Gibson will also be a highlight APIA hope to unlock as they fight for that first piece of silverware this year.

One cannot forget the battle that will be fought on the dugouts as two former teammates in Rockdale Ilinden's assistant coach Nick Stavroulakis, filling in as Paul Dee is currently away and APIA's Franco Parisi go head to head in the tactics department.





TEAM LISTS



- 1 Nick Sorras (GK)
- 2 Daniel Collins
- 3 Lachie Griffiths
- 4 Roberto Sperenza
- 5 Giorgio Sperenza
- 6 Isaac Danzo
- 7 Alec Urosevski (C)
- 8 Dean Pelekanos
- 9 Bai Antoniou
- 10 Brendan Cholakian
- 11 Lachie Constable
- 14 Brayden Sorge
- 15 Yinka Sunmola
- 16 So Kataoka
- 17 Brae Ovens
- 18 Ben Wass
- 19 Jason Cakovski
- 20 Ricardo Rizzo (Gk)
- 21 Filip Dimoski
- 22 Blake Ricciuto
- 23 Hunter Elliott
- 66 Mathieu Cordier

Head Coach: Paul Dee

Assistant Coach: Nick Stavroulakis

Assistant Coach: Vedran Janjetic

Head of Football: Matthew Ribarovski

Gear Steward: Daniel Dominguez

Physio: Matt Hoenig

- 1 Anthony Bouzanis (GK)
- 2 Seiya Kambayashi
- 4 Josh Symons
- 6 Anthony Sparacino
- 7 Jack Stewart
- 9 Ben Gibson
- 11 Rory Jordan
- 12 Sebastian Boffa
- 13 Jared Macerola
- 14 Jack Armson
- 15 Themba Muata-Marlow
- 16 Sean Symons
- 17 Jordan Segreto
- 18 Adrian Uchino (C)
- 19 Luigi Ditroia
- 20 Alexander Parkes (GK)
- 21 Michael Kouta
- 22 Eddie Caspers
- 23 Dakota Askew
- 27 Evan Davis
- 29 Maksim Kasalovic
- 30 Alex Denmead
- 41 Nick Azzone

1st Grade Coach: Franco Parisi

Assistant Coach: David D'Apuzzo

Assistant Coach: Dean Zammit

Physios: Michael Sawan, Isaiah Martins

S & C: Stelios Pikoulas

Team Official: Sergio Bucciarelli

Team Manager: Andrew Mandaglio

Equip. Manager: Joe Calabro

Team Official: Sam Barletta

Referee:

Jake Rose

Assistant Referees:

Alessandro Llana and Aaron Bloch

Fourth Official:

Kelly Jones

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