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# TORCH SPORT

88 Wednesday, February 23, 2005

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# Deliverance

## Lions' share of first place may be near



Ready to kick some Arce: Hussein Hussein trains for his world title eliminator against Jorge Arce. Photo by LEE CONSTABLE

AN explosive match-up against league leaders Sydney United this weekend could make or break the minor premiership aspirations for reigning premiers Bankstown Lions.

The Lions are equal second on the NSW Premier League soccer table as they chase successive titles and, like United, have tasted defeat just once this season after 11 rounds.

With only four games remaining in the regular season, a win would put the Lions equal with United and in line to finish on top.

But with the competition so close, a loss could see Bankstown fall to fifth place and fighting for a finals spot.

The Lions defeated Marconi 1-0 last Sunday night courtesy of a late penalty goal.

A questionable tackle by sweeper Luke Casserley on Lions striker Matthew Borg allowed young Bankstown striker Daniel Severino to convert from the spot in the 85th minute.

Borg had swept forward to meet a well-weighted pass from Steve Liavas and outpaced a tired defence before attempting to round goalkeeper Michael Herbert.

At the very last moment Casserley threw out the right leg to upend Borg with referee Simon Przydacz pointing to the spot.

Przydacz certainly earned his appearance fee after battling to keep the two sides at bay. With rain tumbling down throughout, the wet pitch turned the game into a slugfest with tempers boiling over in the 15th minute following a sickening challenge between Brad Maloney and Shane Webb.

The two players slid into a tackle with Webb coming off second best as Przydacz wasted several minutes separating the warring teams.

The wet conditions also limited the number of quality goalmouth opportunities as neither side seemed comfortable in the wet.

While Lions goalkeeper Zlatko Josevski kept a clean sheet there were several trying moments for the Stallions' Michael Herbert who battled to keep Borg and Severino at bay, especially during the second half.

By JAMIE PANDARAM

MISSING the birth of a child is becoming an unwanted Hussein family tradition, so eldest brother of the boxing family Hussein Hussein is hoping his expectant wife holds out for him.

Hussein (27-1, 21KO) received the relieving news last week that Mexico's WBC junior flyweight champion Jorge Arce (38-3-1, 28KO) has agreed to fight against him in a world title eliminator on March 19 in Las Vegas.

It then dawned on "Hussy" that wife Rawaa is expecting to deliver the Bankstown couple's first child around that time.

Hussein's younger brothers Nedal and Billy have missed the births of their first and second child respectively, because they were involved in fights overseas.

"She is due on April 11, but I heard they give you a date that is about a week over-

due anyway," Hussein, 29, said.

"Skinny (Nedal) missed the birth of his first child because he was in America for a fight, and Billy missed the birth of his second because he was in Germany training Danny Green for his world title fight.

"I hope I don't miss the birth of my first child, I will be flying back to Australia the very next day after my fight."

Arce is stepping up a weight class to fight Hussein, in a bid to win world titles in separate divisions. The winner will challenge WBC flyweight champion Pongsaklek Wongjonkam, who was supposed to have fought Arce until negotiations fell through.

Wongjonkam defeated Hussein in the Australian's only world title fight two years ago after a 12-round war.

Hussein is confident of defeating Arce and then avenging his only loss in a 28-fight professional career against Wongjonkam.

While he has watched many title fights in Las Vegas, this will be Hussein's first fight there.

"I'm getting an opportunity, it's a big card with a massive audience," Hussein, sponsored by Mark Sawyer Therapies, said.

He will do battle at the MGM Grand Casino, on the undercard of the much-hyped bout between two of the world's most talented boxers, Erik Morales and Manny Pacquiao - the man who defeated Nedal Hussein in a world title fight four years ago.

The fight card will draw a large contingent of Latino Americans, who love boxing and especially the likes of Morales and Arce for their exciting fighting styles.

"When you fight in America, especially in front of a Mexican crowd, you've got to be a warrior like the Mexican fighters," Hussein said.

"If you show them you are a warrior they will love you."

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