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Sport

STOP PRESS

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STERN

**Official
denies
Apia
club
broke**

By JOHN TAYLOR

APIA president Ron Orsatti last night blasted claims that the National Soccer League club had failed to fulfil contract obligations to four players.

Rumors swept soccer circles yesterday that two of the players, who are based in Newcastle, were embarrassed when they presented their cheques to a bank.

But an angry Apia chief Orsatti said: "Someone out there is trying to undermine our club.

"You only have to check with the National League to see if we owe any money."

Orsatti believes rumors the Sydney club is broke are aimed at convincing Australian Soccer Federation commissioners they should reject Apia's application to be part of the reconstructed NSL.

National League general manager Peter Bussell confirmed last night that Apia had no debts. "They are clean," he said.

Orsatti said it was no secret the Apia social club was not flourishing.

"But that doesn't mean soccer is dead," he said.

"There was a cash-flow problem, but that mainly stemmed from our game against Sydney Croatia being deferred. It would have been one of our biggest gates and we lost at least \$30,000 in revenue."

Former Soccerroo full-back Graham Jennings, one of the Apia players who live in Newcastle, said he had received no complaints from his bank.

"It's the first I've heard of it. The club is up to date with their payments, except for the last instalment," Jennings said.

Apart from the 14 current NSL teams, Newcastle RHP Austral, Brisbane United, Canberra Metros, Morwell Falcons, Brunswick Juventus, Adelaide Hellas, Croatia Adelaide and Adelaide Azzurri have applied to join the league in 1991-92.

**Met TAB hours:
11.30am - 6.30pm**