



By George Stavroulakis

## Antonis: "It's an unbelievable feeling"

**It was scrappy, sloppy, surprising and soaking wet. But ultimately, a fitting end to a sensational A-League finals series.**

**It's Melbourne** Victory vs Newcastle Jets in the 2018 A-League Grand Final, after the Big V upset their Premiership-winning rivals with a 3-2 extra-time victory over Sydney FC.

**Besart Berisha** was at his beastly best, hunting for a record-breaking 11th finals goal, while the Sky Blues were seeking their eighth consecutive undefeated Big Blue. In the end, neither eventuated, but there was no shortage of thrills and spills along the way.

**Victory lost** Rhys Williams pre-match to a calf injury, which appeared to motivate Melbourne as Kevin Muscat's side dominated early proceedings, but to little avail.

**Sydney struck** first through an unlikely source; Williams' last-minute replacement, Stefan Nigro, who deflected an Adrian Mierzejewski free kick into his own net.

**But an** inspired Victory weren't to be outdone, notching an equaliser moments later - through another wicked deflection - via a calm finish from Kosta Barbarouses.

**Following half-time**, Victory took the lead through exploiting Sydney's bewildered defending, James Troisi strolling through the Sky Blues' backline for a tap-in.

**Jordy Buijs** departed soon after through a back injury in what could be his last appearance for Sydney, but Graham Arnold's side refused to lie down and with 15 seconds remaining, Mierzejewski scrambled a cross that Terry Antonis smacked in for another own goal - Victory's second of the match sending it to extra time.

**Redemption is** sweet and on the 116th minute the 24-year-old redeemed himself in startling fashion, busting through two players out wide, bursting into the box and slotting a powerful finish - again deflected - past Andrew Redmayne.

**"I can't** describe it, emotionally it was crazy to score an own goal, then the winner, it's an unbelievable feeling," Antonis said.

**"For the** fans, all the Sydney fans giving me crap just gave me more energy. We had a gameplan, we stuck together. We gave it our all tonight."

**A shellshocked** Alex Brosque said it was "crazy".

**"It was** just a crazy game. One of those games - that's finals football. A bit of luck sometimes decides the game. It was a very even match, but they got it tonight," he said.

**"It's very** disappointing, we wanted to be there next week to defend our title. At the end, when it looks like we're going to win, another deflected own goal. "That's the game."

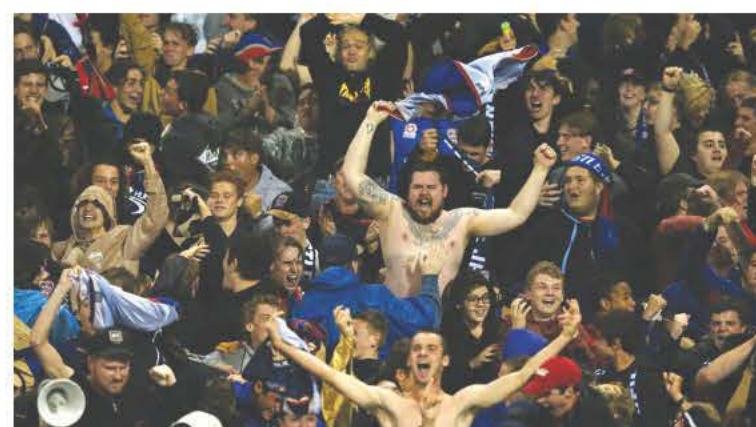


## Newcastle Jets to meet Melbourne Victory in Hyundai A-League 2018 Grand Final

Newcastle Jets will meet Melbourne Victory in the Hyundai A-League 2018 Grand Final next Saturday (5 May 2018) after Kevin Muscat's side defeated the reigning Hyundai A-League Champions Sydney FC 3-2 after extra time at Allianz Stadium in Sydney this evening.

**V**ictory led the Sky Blues 2-1 deep into added time at the end of the second half of the pulsating Finals Series fixture, before Melbourne midfielder Terry Antonis scored an own goal which sent the Semi Final into extra time. Neither team could break the deadlock in the first period of added play, however Antonis went from villain to hero for Melbourne against his former club Sydney FC in the 117th minute of the match by scoring what would ultimately prove to be the winner.

After jinking his way past several defenders near half way, Antonis dribbled towards goal then sent his strike beyond Andrew Redmayne to help lift Victory into their sixth Hyundai A-League Championship decider. Newcastle Jets booked their berth in the Hyundai A-League 2018 Grand Final following a thrilling 2-1 victory over Melbourne City FC at McDonald Jones Stadium in



front of a vocal hometown crowd of 19,131 on Friday. Uruguayan marksman Bruno Fornaroli put City ahead in the first 45 in the Hunter, before Newcastle responded in the second stanza. Riley McGree levelled proceedings with one of the best goals in Hyundai A-League history, before Jason Hoffman etched his name into Newcastle football folklore by scoring what would prove to be the winner 15 minutes before full time.

Tickets for the Hyundai A-League 2018 Grand Final will go on sale to Members of Newcastle Jets and Melbourne Victory Tickets will then go on sale to the

Football Family from 9am on Tuesday (1 May), and to the General Public from 1pm on Tuesday (1 May). Hyundai A-League 2018 Grand Final tickets will be available via [www.a-league.com.au/tickets](http://www.a-league.com.au/tickets). The Hyundai A-League 2018 Grand Final will be broadcast LIVE on FOX SPORTS (Channel 501) and ONE.

### Match Details:

**Hyundai A-League 2018 Grand Final**  
**Newcastle Jets v Melbourne Victory - McDonald Jones Stadium, Newcastle**  
**Saturday, 5 May 2018 - Kick-Off: 7.50pm (AEST) - Gates Open: 6.00pm (AEST)**

## "We're never going to see a goal like that again"

**We hope** you were paying attention, because you may never see anything like it again.

**The Newcastle** Jets are in the 2018 A-League Grand Final after a 2-1 win over Melbourne City, courtesy of a world-beater equaliser and a fairytale finish. The rapturous Hunter crowd wouldn't have it any other way.

**City took** the lead in tumultuous circumstances, Dario Vidosic driving a low-ball across the face that Bruno Fornaroli somehow bundled home.

**Daniel Arzani** presented his usual mix

of flair and frustration, arguably earning a penalty half-way through the first 45, but VAR rejected and the Jets began to work their magic.

**The Melburnians** bossed a slight advantage in a tense midfield battle but created little, while Dimitri Petratos looked a class above the rest; his set-pieces were the real highlight of a back-and-forth first half.

**Both sides** lacked final product, but Newcastle had the motivation. Then Riley McGree scored the greatest goal in A-League history. There, we said it.

**"Definitely a** bit of fluke," said a serene McGree after the match. It'll sink in when he's watching it on the news.

**At this** level, at this time, to pull-off a scorpion kick from the edge of the box is the stuff that dreams are made of. From then on, a fairytale finish always looked on the cards, and who else to finish off this chapter than Jason Hoffman.

**"It's hard** to put into words. The atmosphere tonight was fantastic. I'm so glad we could award the fans here," Hoffman said.

**"When you** play up front you need to

try to contribute, to bag a goal and put us through to the final in front of my home crowd is a dream come true.

**"I said** all week that 07/08 (Hoffman's last Grand Final) was surreal. This week I'm going to enjoy the build up."

**An emotional** Scott Jamieson couldn't quite comprehend McGree's effort.

**"First and** foremost congrats to Newcastle," he muttered.

**"It's tough** to take, the lad will never do it again in a hundred years. We were brave enough, strong enough, in the end they've got the goal with a backheel and that's it.

