NSW

By George Stavroulakis

Perth Glory through to A-League grand final after incredible penalty shoot-out and 3-3 draw with Adelaide United

Perth Glory have become the first team into the A-League grand final, but only after an incredible game that finished level at 3-3 after 120 minutes before the Glory beat Adelaide United 5-4 in an extraordinary penalty shoot-out.

JOEL CHIANESE CELEBRATES
shoot-out win for Glory over Adelaide

ADELAIDE UNITED PLAYERS
distraught after loss to Perth Glory

The match had a lot to live up to after a pair of epic Champions League semi-finals in mid-week, but the drama at Perth Oval had more than enough intensity for watching fans.

An electrifying 3-3 draw after extra time saw the two teams head to the penalty spot, in which even more drama unfolded.

Both goalkeepers were in stunning form, combining for seven saves combined, including a run of five straight denials, with the Glory's Liam Reddy making four of them to seal his side's place in the grand final.

Adelaide United knew that a loss would not only end their season but complete coach Marco Kurz's time at the club.

The Glory thought they had gone ahead in the first half, when Dino Gulbis powered a header across goal only for Adelaide keeper Paul Izzo to tip it onto the bar. When the ball fell to earth it looked like it might have crossed the line, but the referee said no.

He was proven right by VAR minutes later.

Just before the half-hour mark, Perth did take the lead, when a great ball put Diego Castro through on the right, and he found a gap at the near post to score the opening goal.

It was 1-0 at half-time, and the second half proved to be a tight battle.

It looked like Perth had wrapped it up with 16 minutes left when Castro scored his second.

But substitute Papa Diawara gave Adelaide a flicker of hope when he made the most of a goal-mouth scrap to score in the 81st minute.

And with just six seconds left in the fourth and final minute of stoppage time, Ryan Kitto fired home the equaliser after Glory failed to clear a corner.

Scott Neville edged Glory ahead in the first period of extra time.

But Marco Marrone levelled the scores with just five minutes remaining in the contest with a powerful header.

It left it 3-3 after 120 minutes, but that was only the start.

Adelaide had used all four substitutes, and Izzo looked like he would struggle to continue.

He went down the tunnel for urgent treatment to dull the pain, before emerging for penalties.

What followed in the shootout was nothing short of ridiculous.

Craig Goodwin converted the opening penalty with a Panenka kick before signalling the Glory crowd to be quiet.

Juande responded for Perth, then Jordan Elsey made it 2-1 to the Reds.

Next up was dual-goal hero Castro, but Izzo managed to stretch himself enough to tip the shot round the post to quieten the crowd.

Vince Lia made it 3-1 to Adelaide before Brendon Santalab converted to keep the Glory in it.

It was still advantage Adelaide, but Liam Reddy stepped up to save from Isaias, producing a roar from the crowd.

Reddy then showed his nerve to blast his own penalty into the corner for Perth, before Ben Halloran answered.

Jake Brimmer's shot nestled just inside the left-hand corner for the Glory to take things to sudden death. It was then that things got crazy.

Reddy saved from Diawara, then Izzo kept the Reds alive with a stop from Jason Davidson.

Nikola Mileusnic failed to convert for Adelaide as the noise levels soared, but Izzo guessed right to deny Shane Lowry. It could have been a body blow for Perth but Reddy did it again, saving from Nathan Konstandopoulos.

The coaches, players and fans could hardly bear to watch, but Joel Chianese ran forward and shot truly to the left side of the net to end the match, sending the Glory to the grand final and setting off amazing celebrations throughout the ground.

DIEGO CASTRO CELEBRATES
goal for Perth Glory