



By George Stavroulakis

# Wollongong Wolves - Sydney United 58 1-2

SYDNEY UNITED 58 BOOK BANKWEST STADIUM GRAND FINAL TICKET

Two second half goals has helped Sydney United 58 stun Premiers Wollongong Wolves with a 2-1 win at WIN Stadium to secure their place in the 2019 National Premier Leagues NSW Mens grand final.

**Goals to** Tariq Maia and Patrick Antelmi secured the incredible come from behind victory to bundle out the leagues best side and complete a euphoric seven days for the Edensor Park based side.

**The match** appeared to be heading towards an expected win for the Wolves after Stefan Dimoski gave the home side a 1-0 lead on the cusp of half-time.

**However, the** second half didn't follow the script for Luke Wilkshire's side as United 58 did what they've done all finals series by snatching victory from the jaws of defeat with two late goals.

**The result** was pure jubilation for United as they claimed arguably the biggest upset of the finals series while for Wollongong it was absolute heartbreak which they will likely rue for a long time to come.

**The opening** five minutes saw neither side take control of the match with both teams struggling to put a string of passes together.

**Sydney United 58** broke this pattern in the seventh minute when Maia shifted inside from the left-hand side and produced a shot which narrowly went over the bar.

**United's pressure** continued a minute later when the side worked the ball into the box on the left-hand side.

**A series** of deflections saw the ball drop to Maia inside the six-yard box who again failed to find the net with his effort being blocked.

**The next** few minutes saw Wollongong retain the ball more effectively moving into more attacking areas.

**However, a** giveaway from Takeru Okada in the 15th minute inside the Wolves' half saw United's Patrick Antelmi presented with a golden chance.

**The resulting** deflection from the tackle on Okada saw the ball fall into the path of Antelmi who found himself free inside the box.

**Despite this,** it was an easy save for Pasfield with the shot directed straight at the Wolves' skipper.

**A couple** of minutes before the half time break, the Wolves opened the scoring.

**A McDonald** cross from the right-hand side found Stefan Dimoski in the box.

**Dimoski won** the ball aerially allowing him to bring the ball down and power a volley into the net despite a touch from United custodian Thomas Manos on the way in.

**The Wolves** went into the break with a one-goal lead thanks to Dimoski's goal late goal.

**The away** side came out of the sheds with great purpose creating an opening within the first minute of the second period.

**The side** quickly switched the ball from right-to-left with Rose finding Peter Simonoski near the top of the box of the left-hand side.

**From there,** Simonoski cut inside onto his right foot but the shot was tame and no trouble for Pasfield.

**After United's** fast start, the Wolves began to maintain control of the ball and in the 55th



minute, this led to a chance.

**James received** the ball on the right-hand side and delivered an early cross to Lachlan Scott.

**The striker** nearly had an instant impact coming off the bench, but his shot was blocked and eventually cleared.

**Wollongong began** to assert their dominance on proceedings with Thomas James producing several opportunities from that wide position on the right-hand side.

**However, in** the 66th minute, United restored parity.

**Some good** build-up play on the left-hand side found Rose inside the box who confidently side-footed an effort into the near side of Pasfield's goal.

**In the** 74th minute, the Wolves nearly found themselves back in the lead.

**A freekick** on the left-hand side from James Stojcevski found Taylor McDonald in the box whose header narrowly bounced past the far post.

**Just six** minutes later, Sydney United took the lead for the first time in the match.

**Antelmi shifted** the ball inside from the right-hand side and took a shot at goal.

**The ball** deflected off Littler and deceived Pasfield as the keeper could only watch it nestle in the bottom right-hand corner.

**Despite the** Wolves throwing considerable numbers forward in the final ten minutes, they were unable to find an equaliser with Sydney

United 58 running out winners seeing them into the grand final.

**Despite the** Wolves failure to make the grand final, coach Luke Wilkshire was adamant that his side were the best in the competition and emphasised how this defeat didn't define their season.

**"They deserve** to be in the final, they deserve to win it.

**"They've been** the best team throughout the season.

**"That (this result)** doesn't define us... these playoffs you know, that's how it goes sometimes".

**This was** the third time the Wolves had failed to beat Sydney United 58 this season – being held to a 2-2 stalemate at Sydney United Sports Centre in Round Three and going down 2-1 at WIN Stadium in Round 14.

**A delighted** Sydney United 58 coach Miro Vlastelica praised his side's performance against the Wolves and acknowledge the travelling support for his side.

**"The performance** was brilliant.

**"The game** plan was good, could've been better.

**"That's was** it's about, the supporters.

**"We worry** about next week now".

**The Edensor** Park side will need to contend with facing the Western Sydney Wanderers next Wednesday in the FFA Cup Round of 16 at Campbelltown Stadium before thinking of their big finale.

**The big** NPL NSW Men's Grand Final will now take centre stage as the APIA Leichhardt Tigers

face Sydney United 58 on Saturday 31st of August at Bankwest Stadium with kick off set for 6pm.

## Match Stats

**Wollongong Wolves** 1 (Dimoski 43')

**Sydney United 58** 2 (Rose 66', Antelmi 80')

**Saturday 24** August 2019

**WIN Stadium,** Wollongong

**Referee:** S. Lucas

**Assistant Referees:** N. Backo and R. Osborne

**Fourth Official:** T. Danaskos

**Wollongong Wolves:** 1. Justin Pasfield (GK),

2. Taylor McDonald, 4. Nikola Djordjevic, 7.

Christopher Price, 9. Thomas James, 10. Brendan

Griffin (3. Darcy Madden 73'), 11. Takeru

Okada, 13. Stefan Dimoski (24. Lachlan Scott

51') 15. Nick Littler, 16. Guy Knight

**Substitutes Not Used:** 12. Luke Kairies, 20.

Brandon Stojcevski, 6. Benjamin Tosi

**Yellow Cards:** Griffin 64', Littler 82'

**Red Cards:**

**Sydney United 58:** 21. Thomas Manos (GK),

4. Adrian Vlastelica, 7. Peter Simonoski (19.

Josh McDonald 86'), 8. Matthew Sim, 9. Patrick

Antelmi, 11. Yianni Perkatis, 12. Liam Rose (5.

Anthony Tomelic 90+2'), 14. Tomislav Uskok,

15. Tariq Maia (3. Jordan Roberts 77'), 20.

Cristian Gonzalez, 22. Yianni Fragogiannis

**Substitutes Not Used:** 1. Daniel Sadaka, 6.

Petar Markovic

**Yellow Cards:** Gonzalez 70', Uskok 84'

**Red Cards:**