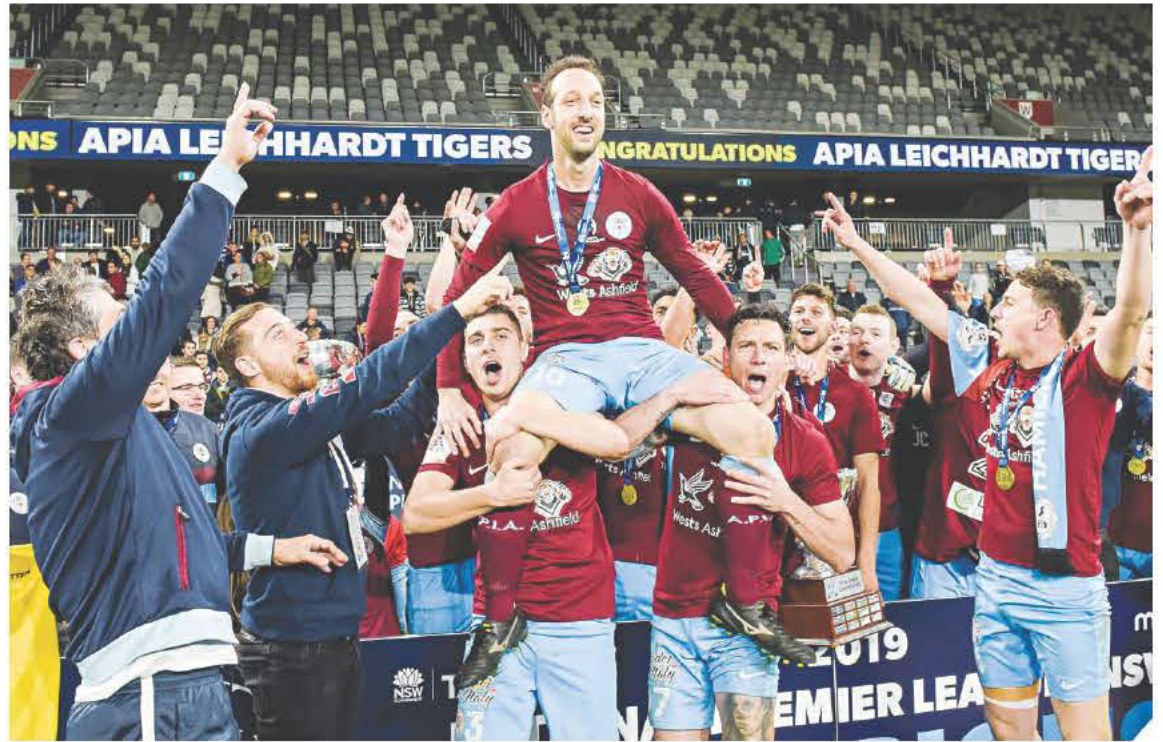


NSW CHAMPIONS 2019



much to the dismay of the thousands watching in attendance.

APIA was defending relentlessly and their opponents rarely looked like they were going to threaten.

United 58 Josh Macdonald found space in the 112th minute and was about to pull the trigger before experienced campaigner and sub Nick Stavroulakis used all his experience and thwarted danger by poking a toe and smashing it out of the pitch.

It was heart and mouth stuff.

A final push from United 58 never truly came as the Tigers clung on for the historic victory.

A jubilant APIA coach John Calleja was lost for words after the triumph such was the enormity of the win for his club. **"This is** the greatest feeling and it means so much to these players and to this club," he said.

"I saw during the week just how driven the boys were to win this game and it showed out there today.

"It wasn't the prettiest game of football but it came down to determination and

resilience which I felt our players demonstrated in spades.

"This team has been through a lot and to finally achieve what we have set out to do for so long is a truly incredible feeling.

A sombre Sydney United 58 coach Miro Vlastelica rued what could've been with his side suffering going down after gallant effort to take the game into extra-time.

"That's football, sometimes it's cruel and we learnt that today," Vlastelica said.

"I felt we dominated large sections of the match tonight but in the end we paid the price for conceding two soft goals.

"It hurts but we can be proud of this season and the incredible effort it took to make it to the grand final."

Match Stats

APIA Leichhardt Tigers: 2 (Galimi 28', Symons 95')

Sydney United 58: 1 (Bilic 57')

Saturday, 31 August 2019

Bankwest Stadium, Parramatta

Referee: Ben Abraham

Assistant Referees: A Giev & B Wright

Fourth official: K Ams

APIA Leichhardt Tigers: 1. Ivan Necevski, 3. Paul Galimi (21. Michael Kouta 73'), 4. Josh Symons, 6. Chris Payne (14 Lachlan Hughes 119'), 7. Tynan Diaz, 8. Corey Biczo (19. Dominon Nasrabadi 119'), 10. Franco Parisi (23. Nick Stavroulakis 102'), 12. Sam McIlhatton, 15. Themba Muata-Marlow, 16. Sean Symons, 18. Adrian Uchino

Substitutes not used: 22. Luke Turnbull, **Yellow cards:** McIlhatton 35'

Red cards:

Sydney United 58: 21. Thomas Manos, 4. Adrian Vlastelica, 7. Peter Simonoski (19. Joshua McDonald 76'), 8. Matthew Sim, 9. Patrick Antelmi, 12. Liam Rose, 14. Tomislav Uskok, 15. Tariq Maia, 17. Matthew Bilic 5. Anthony Tomelic 90, 20. Cristian Gonzalez (3. Jordan Roberts 82'), 22. Yianni Fragogiannis.

Substitutes not used: 1. Daniel Sadaka, 6. Petar Markovic,

Yellow cards: Maia 44', McDonald 105'

Red cards: