



# SD RAIDERS CROWNED 2019 NPL 3 NSW MEN'S CHAMPIONS

## STANMORE HAWKS FC - SD RAIDERS FC 1-3

SD Raiders have been crowned Champions for the 2019 National Premier Leagues 3 NSW Men's competition after they triumphed against Premiers Stanmore Hawks 3-1 in the showcase event on Saturday night at the Ilinden Sports Centre on Saturday.



SD Raiders win over Stanmore Hawks completed an unlikely set of results across the NPL and NSW State League competitions this year.

Like APIA Leichhardt Tigers (NPL), Hills United (NPL 2) and Fraser Park FC (NSW State League), Raiders were able to claim the Championship despite not securing the Premiership in the regular season.

However, not everything went the Raiders' way, they almost fell behind three minutes in after goalkeeper Michael Rutherford slammed his clearance into Hawks' Jovan Blagojevic.

The ball deflected off Blagojevic before falling just wide of the goal.

Only a minute later and Stanmore manufactured another opportunity, on this occasion it was via left winger Jonah Caragher whose shot ended up on the wrong side of the post. The inner west outfit continued to take the game to Raiders and tested Rutherford again in the 20th minute when left back Angus Chance collected Blagojevic's chip pass before firing his effort at the body of the Raiders' number one.

However, all of Stanmore's hard work soon punished by Nicky Carle's men, they popped up with a goal on 25 minutes thanks to Daniel Bittar's volley on the edge of the six-yard area.

Hawks had their chance to equalise six minutes later, however Conor Quilligan lacked conviction as he blazed his shot over the crossbar.

Things went from bad to worse for the Premiers after the restart as Raiders' danger man Anthony Proia popped up with his side's second of the night in the 49th minute.

Proia latched on to an unfortunate deflection from Stanmore's Sam Awad and had his first effort saved by Hawks' Nick Carosi before making sure of his second attempt as he slid the ball into the open goal.

Nicky Carle's men stepped up a gear after scoring and added a third to the scoresheet ten minutes later, this time it was Mathew Barkho who got his name in lights.

Barkho finished off a slick attacking move which began with Proia on the right wing before the ball made its way to Barkho on the top left-hand corner of the six-yard box. The young striker buried his effort to make it two goals in two weeks in

the finals series for him.

Toshiwa Sakawa was a standout performer for Nicky Carle's men, the crafty number 11 proved a headache for the Hawks defence with his skilful passing and interplay.

He teed up Barkho on 65 minutes after expertly picking out the winger whose shot ended up falling just wide of the post. Sakawa manufactured another golden opportunity eight minutes later after his piercing through ball found its way to Proia, the Raiders striker rounded Carosi but he could not find the finish as his strike nestled into the side netting.

Stanmore refused to roll over in this crucial contest and they pulled one back in the 75th minute thanks to a thundering strike from Blagojevic, the Hawks' captain made space for himself on the edge of the 18 yard area before cannoning the ball into the right hand corner of the Raiders' goal.

Nicky Carle's men managed to hold off any late challenges from Stanmore in the final 15 minutes that remained and were met with a raucous call of celebration from their supporters when the full time whistle sounded.

Congratulations to SD Raiders for a spectacular season, this Championship trophy completes a stellar season for the club which has also seen them promoted to the NPL 2 for the 2020 season.

Stanmore also had an amazing campaign, they have the Premiership to show for their stand out efforts and have a bright future as they look to mount a challenge for the Championship trophy next year.

### Match Stats

National Premier Leagues 3 NSW Men's Grand Final

Saturday, September 21, 2019

Ilinden Sports Centre, Rockdale

STANMORE HAWKS FC 1 (Blagojevic 75')

SD RAIDERS FC 3 (Bittar 25', Proia 49', Barkho 59')

STANMORE HAWKS FC; I.N.Carosi, 2.T.Wohlfiel, 3.O.Stickland, 7.P.Yannopoulos(21.F.Worrall 32'), 8.N.Niski, 9.J.Blagojevic, 10.J.Caragher, 11.C.Quilligan, 12.S.Awad, 16.A.Chance(29.R.Lo Russo 70'), 18.B.Serafin(23.A.Kumburlu 60').

Substitutions Not Used - 4.C.Bottalico, 5.H.Brown.

Yellow Cards - 23.A.Kumburlu 79', 11.C.Quilligan 89'.

Red Cards - Nil.

SD RAIDERS FC; 1.M.Rutherford, 2.S.Irwin, 3.D.Marjanovic, 5.J.Letta, 7.D.Bittar(17.M.Barkho 47'), 8.J.Raiti, 11.T.Sakawa, 16.D.Smith(10.J.Fahmi 71'), 20.C.Abou Serhal(6.D.Stivala 80'), 22.A.Proia, 23.M.Toro Suazo.

Substitutions Not Used - 21.D.Molina, 28.N.Bratc.

Yellow Cards - 20.C.Abou Serhal 79'.

Red Cards - Nil.