



By George Stavroulakis

Wollongong Wolves to host Lions FC in the National Premier Leagues (NPL) 2019

The Wollongong Wolves will host Lions FC in the National Premier Leagues (NPL) 2019 Grand Final next weekend.

Lions FC earned their second consecutive NPL Grand Final berth after defeating Maitland FC 2-0 at Cooks Square Park on Saturday afternoon.

The Wollongong Wolves booked their berth after also accounting for Perth SC 2-0 at Albert Butler Park this afternoon.

Throughout the NPL 2019 Finals Series the Wollongong Wolves accrued 24 points to the Lions FC 16 (see points system below for calculation details) which gave them the hosting rights for the NPL 2019 Grand Final.

Full match details for the NPL 2019 Grand Final will be announced in the coming days.

The NPL 2019 Finals Series brings together the eight teams who finished top of their respective NPL standings at the end of their regular seasons to determine Australia's best NPL side.

Once again, Mitre is the Official Match Ball Supplier of the NPL 2019 Final Series.

2019 marks the seventh edition of the NPL Finals Series, which was won last year by South Australian club Campbelltown City SC. Sydney United 58 FC won the inaugural competition in 2013 and in 2016, while MetroStars SC from South Australia (2014), Blacktown City FC from New South Wales (2015) and Heidelberg United FC from Victoria (2017) have also been crowned Champions of the series in the past.

The winner of the NPL 2019 Finals Series will receive automatic entry into the FFA Cup 2020 Final Rounds, providing an added incentive for the eight clubs taking part.

Every match in the NPL 2019 Finals Series will be streamed LIVE on www.nationalpremierleagues.com.au as well as via the official Hyundai A-League Facebook page (www.facebook.com/aleague).

MATCH	National Premier Leagues 2019 Elimination Finals			
1	Sunday 22 September 2019	Lions FC (QLD)	2:1	Campbelltown City SC (SA)
2	Saturday 21 September 2019	Maitland FC (NSW)	3:2	Devonport Strikers (TAS)
3	Saturday 21 September 2019	Wollongong Wolves (NSW)	5:1	Canberra Olympic (ACT)
4	Sunday 22 September 2019	Heidelberg United FC (VIC)	2:3 (aet)	Perth SC (WA)
National Premier Leagues 2019 Semi Finals				
5	Saturday 28 September 2019	Maitland FC (NSW)	0:2	Lions FC (QLD)
6	Sunday 29 September 2019	Wollongong Wolves (NSW)	2:0	Perth SC (WA)
Grand Final	5 or 6 or 7 October 2019	Winner of Match 5	vs	Winner of Match 6

POINTS SYSTEM TO DETERMINE HOSTS OF SEMI FINALS AND GRAND FINAL

To determine the host Member Federation clubs for the Semi Finals and Grand Final, the following points system will apply.

- **Win** within normal time (i.e. 90 minutes) = 3 points
- **Win** during extra time = 2 points
- **Win** on penalties = 1 point
- **Goals** scored by home team (excluding penalty shootouts) = 3 points
- **Goals** scored by away team (excluding penalty shootouts) = 4 points
- **Goals** conceded (excluding penalty shootouts) = -1 point
- **Yellow** cards = -1 point; and
- **Red** cards = -3 points

The host of the NPL 2019 Grand Final will be determined by the club with the highest accumulation of points across the Elimination Finals and Semi Finals.

Australia to feature in Group A at AFC U-23 Championship Thailand 2020



Australia's U-23 Men's National Football Team will take on hosts Thailand, Iraq, and Bahrain in Group A at the AFC U-23 Championship Thailand 2020.

The draw for one of Asia's most prestigious national team competitions was held in the Thai capital of Bangkok on Thursday afternoon (local time), where Australia were selected in Group A of the 16-nation tournament.

The AFC U-23 Championship Thailand 2020, which will be contested between January 8-26 next year, doubles as the qualification tournament for the men's football competition at the Tokyo 2020 Summer Olympics.

To reach Tokyo, Australia must finish in the top three nations at next year's tournament in Thailand. A finish in the final four of the competition would be sufficient for Australia to seal a ticket to Tokyo should Japan make the Semi Finals.

The AFC U-23 Championship Thailand 2020 will be held in four Thai cities - Bangkok, Buriram, Pathum Thani, and Songkhla - with the full match schedule to be confirmed by the Asian Football Confederation soon.

Uzbekistan won the last version of the AFC U-23 Championship, which was hosted by China in 2018.

AFC U-23 Championship Thailand 2020 - Groups

Group A
Thailand
Iraq
Australia
Bahrain

Group C
Uzbekistan
Korea Republic
China PR
IR Iran

Group B
Qatar
Japan
Saudi Arabia
Syria

Group D
Vietnam
DPR Korea
Jordan

FFA thanks Queensland government for backing FIFA Women's World Cup Bid

Football Federation Australia (FFA) today acknowledged the support of the Queensland government after it announced it is backing the bid to host the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup.

FFA Chief Executive David Gallop AM thanked the government for its commitment, which would see several matches played at Suncorp Stadium, Brisbane.

He said, "We are thrilled to have the support of the Queensland Government. The confirmation of this support and the inclusion of Brisbane as a proposed Host City significantly strengthens Australia's bid."

"This will secure an outstanding legacy for female sport in Queensland and Australia, powering FFA's drive towards Gender Equality in Football."

"Suncorp Stadium is a magnificent venue of football, and the prospect of hosting World Cup matches there is an extremely exciting one for the Westfield Matildas and everyone at FFA," Gallop added.

Queensland Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk said "We want Queensland to be known as a world-class destination for major events. Hosting World Cup teams could make Queensland the centre of attention for a massively growing global audience."

"It's a big prestigious event, televised round the world and FIFA reports it attracted an audience of more than a billion during the tournament in France earlier this year."

The success of the 2019 tournament in France has led to a decision by FIFA to expand the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup to a 32-team tournament up from 24.

Queensland Minister for Tourism Industry Development Kate Jones said, "Hosting this event would be a game changer for women's sport in our state."

"The Matildas captured the attention of

the world at this year's World Cup in France. But there is nothing like playing on home soil."

"To give the Matildas the chance to play in Queensland would do great things to promote gender equality and encourage more women and girls into sport in our state," Ms Jones said.

FFA has received \$5 million in funding from the Australian Government to prepare a bid, and the NSW Government has also publicly confirmed its support for the bid. FIFA will announce the host of the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup in May next year.