

**Central Coast Mariners have ended their drought against Melbourne Victory that had stretched more than 2600 days, and this victory could not have been any more dramatic.**

## Central Coast Mariners score two late penalties to beat Melbourne Victory for the first time since 2013

**Two late** penalties from Matt Simon has lifted Central Coast Mariners to their first win over Melbourne Victory since 2013 after a dramatic finish at Gosford.

**Both penalties** were scored in stoppage time as Victory squandered a 2-1 lead before the Mariners secured the 3-2 victory.

**Victory hit** the front for a second time in the 78th minute when Adama Traore's driving pass into the box rebounded off Kye Rowles into the net for an own goal.

**The match** was then headed for an unbelievable conclusion.

**A handball** decision went against Simon in the 90th minute before VAR intervened and showed the ball hitting the arm of Victory defender James Donachie.

**Simon converted** his spot-kick to level the match at 2-2.

**Victory then** conceded another penalty when Leigh Broxham brought down Michael McGlinchey in the box.

**VAR again** reviewed the decision but the penalty stood and Simon was given another chance from the spot to win the game for the Mariners.

**A furious** Victory coach Marco Kurz was shown a red card on the final whistle after remonstrating with the fourth official.

**Kurz was** more measured after the game but was convinced the second penalty should not have been awarded.

**"It's part** of the football game – everybody wants to win," Kurz said.

**"If you** are 2-1 winning and concede two penalties in overtime, it's normal that you have some emotions and that was part of the game today."

**"We have** to respect the decision from the ref.

**"The first** was from Don (Donachie). it's very hard to defend Simon in the box. It was touching from both sides and he touched the ball with his hand but, from Brox (Broxham), it was not a penalty. That's my personal opinion."

**The drama** escalated further after Simon slotted his second goal as players from both sides clashed in an ugly confrontation

**Earlier, VAR** overruled a chance for the home side to go in front early in the second half when it looked as though Rowles had scored.

**The 21-year-old** netted an assist from Jair in front of goal, but it was pulled back when VAR ruled he was off-side.

**VAR was** called on again midway through the second half, upholding a decision by the referee not to award the Mariners a penalty when Simon was knocked over by Donachie in the box.

**It angered** home fans and Mariners star Milan Duric, who was yellow-carded after a showdown with the referee.

**The win** leaves the Mariners just two points out of the top six with genuine finals hopes.

**"Just in** terms of quality of football, I think we've shown we're capable of being in that finals series, but showing it and proving it and getting the results are a different story," coach Alen Stajcic said.

**"We've got** a lot of hard work to do to keep improving week by week.

**"I've been** pleased with the way we've progressed in the past few weeks."

**Victory face** Adelaide on Friday night, while the Mariners take on Western United in round 15.



Matt Simon celebrates on his two late goals.

## David Davutovic ranks the 10 best players in the A-League and five on the rise

**There is the man who has been central to Wellington's rise up the table, the menace around goals and the Swede carrying Victory. But who is the best? David Davutovic ranks the A-League's top 10.**

**1 ULISES DAVILA (WELLINGTON PHOENIX)**

**12 games** (8 goals), Age: 28

**The Mexican** youth international was on Chelsea's books and one can see why. Unplayable at times and central to Wellington's rise.

**2 ADAM LE FONDRE (SYDNEY FC)**

**12 (12)**, Age: 33

**Constant menace** and on track to top his 18-goal debut season return, delivering a stellar array of all-round goals.

**3 ALESSANDRO DIAMANTI (WESTERN UNITED)**

**13 (3)**, Age: 36

**The Italian's** vision and range of passing has been a sight to behold. On a different level to most.

**4 OLA TOIVONEN (MELBOURNE VICTORY)**

**11 (7)**, Age: 33

**The Swede** carried Victory for the first half of the season with goals, assists and all-round class.

**5 JAMIE MACLAREN (MELBOURNE CITY)**

**9 (12)**, Age: 26

**His ability** to score from limited opportunities is phenomenal. Neck and neck with Le Fondre despite injury and Socceros duty.

**6 DIEGO CASTRO (PERTH GLORY)**

**11 (4)**, Age: 37

**The Spanish** whizz shows no signs of slowing. Dominating in the attacking third.

**7 RILEY MCGREE (ADELAIDE UNITED)**

**8 (7)**, Age: 21

**Goalscoring midfielders** are valuable commodities and McGree is starring at his original A-League club impeccably timed runs and a sweet left foot.

**8 DANIEL LOPAR (WANDERERS)**

**11**, Age: 34

**The Spaniard** has been the best keeper this A-League season and he's won points for the Wanderers.

**9 LUKE BRATTAN (SYDNEY FC)**

**12**, Age: 29

**Slotted in** superbly in place of Josh Brillante and his outrageous array of passing has offered the Sky Blues a new dimension.







**10 MILOS NINKOVIC (SYDNEY FC)**

**10 (3)**, Age: 35

**Not his** strongest A-League season but he's still been influential with his smarts, effortlessly drifting around the pitch.

### Match Centres

	NEW	FINAL	SYD	
	1	Stats	2	
	WEL	FINAL	WSW	
	2	Stats	0	

	BRI	FINAL	MCY	
	2	Stats	2	
	PER	FINAL	ADL	
	3	Stats	0	
	CCM	FINAL	MVC	
	3	Stats	2	