

Flashback: 2014 NPL Victoria Season

Team	Pts
South Melbourne (Champions)	66
Oakleigh Cannons	59
Heidelberg United	45
Bentleigh Greens	43
Melbourne Knights	38
Hume City	38
Northcote City	36
Pascoe Vale	34
Green Gully	30
Dandenong Thunder	30
Port Melbourne	28
Werribee City	28
Ballarat Red Devels (relegated)	27
Goulburn Valley Suns (relegated)	10

It was almost the season that didn't happen. 2014 was the first year of NPL football in Victoria but the process to get there was so contentious that some clubs considered a court injunction to stop the season going ahead. After a late mediation process clubs and Football Victoria agreed to allow the first season of NPL football go ahead.

14 teams comprised the new league including Ballarat and Goulburn Valley, who were added to increase regional representation. The season was also notable for not having a Grand Final, with the Champion being decided in the traditional first past the post method.

South and Oakleigh spent much of the season neck and neck, but Hellas finished strongly and secured the Championship. Milos Lujic starred that season with over 20 league goals, taking the Golden Boot and the Gold Medal, the first player to do so since Sash Becvinovski in 2006.

But what happened to the freshly introduced Ballarat and Goulburn at the end of the year? Well... they were relegated.

Blue and White Views

Issue 1

Monday the 3rd of March 2025

NPL Victoria, Round 4

South Melbourne vs
St Albans

Lakeside Stadium



This season has flown by. Believe it or not, but we're already up to Round 4 of the NPL Victoria and South have already claimed three minor trophies.

Yes the pre-season was a successful one in terms of silverware with South defeating Sydney Olympic to claim the Greek Herald Cup, South defeating Oakleigh to secure the Community Shield and the Under 23s even managing to win the Hellenic Cup.

Of course, a week is a long time in football, let alone a month, and since the start of the season reality has hit at Lakeside. The good news is that South remain undefeated. The bad news is that the performances have been less than convincing. In Round 3 South only narrowly avoided an embarrassing defeat to Melbourne Victory Youth, but we're all hoping this is just part of the early season tune up.

South fans may want to see a convincing performance, but St Albans on the other hand find themselves with only one draw from four games so they will be desperate for a result at any cost. It could be a scrappy game.

Let's go South!

New signings

South's transfer window saw two big signings, Midfielder George Mells and Forward Gustav Moller.

George Mells

George Mells is a lifelong South fan and is well known in Australian football circles. He played youth football in England for Chelsea and Southampton. He then played senior football for Adelaide United where he won the A-League Championship in 2016.

More recently Mells has played football in Victoria for Port Melbourne and Avondale – before eventually signing for South.



Mells

Gustav Moller

Moller comes to South from the Danish lower leagues. He is a large striker and expected to be a replacement for Harrison Sawyer, who left South for the A-League late last season.

Moller has already found himself on the score sheet twice this year and if he is to emulate Sawyer we hope to see him add many more to this tally. Although not much was known about Moller before the season scoring has been a great introduction!

More fresh faces

Joining Mells and Moller this year are Andrew Mesourouni, Charlie Leech, Luca Durso, Andre Skapoulas, Campbell Dovison, and Jonathan Pithoulas.



Moller

For and against: Long throws

It is well known the South have utilised Max Mikkola's long throwing ability as an unorthodox attacking method in recent years. Fans have mixed views... what do you think?

Against

Anti-football and anti-South the long throw is an embarrassment for a team that should be dominating with their feet, not bullying kids in the box like what happened against Victory.

For a club counting Ange Postecoglou as one of its sons it's a shame how little care the long throw shows to beautiful football. It also feels somewhat one dimensional and could be found out quickly especially against clubs with bigger defenders. All it leaves is a crowded box with no room to take a clean shot.

For

Say what you want but long throws have resulted in goals, including two this year. It may not be pretty but it works and the longer it works the nicer it is to see. To be honest it's strange that no one else in the NPL is using the strategy.



There's nothing wrong with playing to your strengths, but this is also not South's only method to goal. It would be one thing if we were cellar dwellers and this was our only way of scoring but we've already had five different scorers this year and the long throw just adds another string to the bow.

In addition to the goals though we must remember that we are on the receiving end of this gift for now. After the long throw goal against Victory the opposition lost the plot and their Assistant Manager got red carded. For that alone the long throw should stay!

South Media Stuff

South fans are very active supporters, not just in the stands, but off-field too.

Following the club between match days is a huge part of the fan experience and at South thankfully we're spoilt for choice.

Must read content for all fans should definitely be the South of the Border blog. For over a decade, the blog has provided weekly club insights, match reviews and historical analysis, all presented with balanced views and humour.

Other projects of note include The Behind the Lens Project which shares behind-the-scenes photography chronicling the club.

A South Melbourne Hellas Wiki is a fun spot for South history and to find details on those past obscure players. Last year we also saw a new blog emerge as ehhere.com which presented an alternative view on South news.

Top South Melbourne Content to check out
South of the Border southmelbournefc.blogspot.com Matchday blogs and more Sour Grapes lukepatitsas.wixsite.com/sourgrapes Historical matchday blogs from the men's and women's teams ehhere.com ehhere.com/category/south-melbourne-fc Matchday blogs and club updates SMFC - Behind the Lens smfcbehindthelens.blogspot.com Behind the scenes club photography SMFC Forum smfcfans.com Online chat forum for fans South Melbourne Hellas Wiki smhellas.fandom.com/wiki/South_Melbourne_Hellas_Wiki South Melbourne focused online encyclopaedia

The Australian Championship

On Wednesday the 12th of February, Football Australia officially announced the branding and format of the new National Second Tier.

The competition will be known as the 'Australian Championship' and will run between October and December. The Champions League style competition will see 16 teams compete in a group stage and then finals.

The 16 teams will be the eight NPL winners from each state, and the eight 'foundation' clubs who were chosen in Football Australia's application process.

The eight 'foundation' clubs for those of you who don't know, are South Melbourne, Preston Lions, Avondale, Sydney Olympic, APIA, Marconi, Wollongong and Sydney United.

This year's edition is seen as a trial run while Football Australia seek to confirm additional applicants, with the supposed intent to run a full home and away style competition in the future.

Hume City, Melbourne Knights, Gold Coast United, Adelaide City, George Cross and South Hobart have been listed as potential applicants, so let's hope they get over the line and we can see a full home and away style National Second Tier in the near future.



What can we expect from this year though? Well for starters it means that for some clubs like South, the season will now run from February to December. Secondly, ESPN reports that the broadcast deal has not been finalised and that the Australian Championship is not included in the current broadcast deal with Paramount/Network 10.

Football Australia has committed to paying for production (as well as travel), so we can trust that these games will be broadcast – but we don't know where. This creates an opportunity for Optus Sport or SBS – but in a worst-case scenario the games might end up on YouTube.

2025 SMFC Playing roster

Updated 1st of March 2025

1. Javier Lopez
Goalkeeper
2. Zak Spiteri
Defender
3. Jordan Lampard
Defender
4. Marco Jankovic (C)
Defender
5. Jake Marshall
Defender
6. Lucas Inglese
Defender
7. Andy Brennan
Forward
8. Cooper Halfpenny
Midfielder
9. Gustav Moller
Forward

10. George Mells
Midfielder
11. Rob Harding
Forward
13. Luca Durso
Midfielder
16. Andre Skapoulas
Forward
19. Andrew Mesourouni
Forward
20. Jonathan Pithoulas
Goalkeeper
21. Ross Archibald
Defender
22. Max Mikkola
Midfielder
23. Morgan Evans
Defender
24. Nahuel Bonada
Forward
26. Campbell Dovison
Forward
27. Jack Painter-Andrews
Defender
88. Charlie Leech
Midfielder
99. Jack Pope
Midfielder

Fixtures and form

Updated 1st of March 2025

7-Feb	Away	Port Melbourne
17-Feb	Home	Melbourne Knights
24-Feb	Away	Melbourne Victory
3-Mar	Home	St Albans
7-Mar	Away	Preston Lions
15-Mar	Away	Dandenong Thunder
21-Mar	Away	Hume City FC
31-Mar	Home	Dandenong City
5-Apr	Away	Altona Magic
13-Apr	Home	Heidelberg United
25-Apr	Away	Green Gully
3-May	Away	Avondale
11-May	Home	Oakleigh Cannons
18-May	Home	Port Melbourne
23-May	Away	Melbourne Knights
1-Jun	Home	Melbourne Victory
6-Jun	Away	St Albans
15-Jun	Home	Preston Lions
22-Jun	Home	Dandenong Thunder
27-Jun	Home	Hume City FC
4-Jul	Away	Dandenong City
20-Jul	Home	Altona Magic
25-Jul	Away	Heidelberg United
3-Aug	Home	Green Gully
17-Aug	Home	Avondale
23-Aug	Away	Oakleigh Cannons

Recent games:

South 1 - Port Melbourne 0

South 3 - Melbourne Knights 1

South 3 - Melbourne Victory 3

Rival Watch:

St Albans 3 - Dandenong City 3

St Albans 1 - Altona Magic 2

St Albans 1 - Heidelberg United 2

South's has no problem scoring this season with seven goals already on the board from five different goal scorers. South's excelled at set pieces and tight spaces with Bonada especially finding ways to clear shots in congested areas.

The issue, at least last week against Victory, was defence with South seeming way too open in the second half and conceding goals to (almost) unmarked strikers on the counter.

St Albans will feel hard done by to only have a single point so far this season but their leaky defence has let them down in this early part of the season.