

# Flashback: Australia Cup 2024

Round of 32	
South Melbourne	1
Wellington Phoenix	0
Round of 16	
South Melbourne	3
Olympic FC	2
Quarter Finals	
Hume City	2
South Melbourne	3
Semi-Finals	
South Melbourne	0
Macarthur FC	1

South Melbourne's 2024 Australia Cup campaign was memorable right from the start. South needed wins against Melbourne Knights and Preston Lions just to qualify for the Australia Cup national rounds!

Once qualified, South faced Wellington Phoenix in the Round of 32. Over 4,000 people came to Lakeside to watch the match unfold. South started the game in a flurry, and just four minutes in, a dangerous through ball into the box found Harrison Sawyer unmarked. Sawyer made no mistake of the chance, and gave South a 1-0 lead.

However, Wellington wrestled back control of the game and South were forced to defend. Despite Wellington's superior possession and fitness, South managed to hold onto the lead and secured the famous win. It was the club's first win against A-League opposition.

In the next rounds South defeated Olympic FC (where wild weather paused the game for over an hour), and also Hume City (with Lampard scoring an extra-time winner).



South then faced another A-League team, Macarthur FC in the Semi-Final. Once again, over 4,000 fans packed Lakeside to watch the game. South however were without star striker, Harrison Sawyer, who was purchased by Macarthur before the game. South still put in a good performance but a goal by Valère Germain in the second half was ultimately enough for Macarthur to secure the win.

Overall, it was a great campaign for South that will be long remembered at Lakeside.

# Blue and White Views

Issue 7

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Australia Cup, Round of 16

South Melbourne vs  
Auckland FC

Lakeside Stadium

[blueandwhiteviews.com](https://blueandwhiteviews.com)



Since the arrival of Sinisa Cohadzic as head coach, South's season has gone from strength to strength. The boys in blue are now boasting an attractive playing style, a full roster of confident players, and as of this past weekend, a shiny new piece of silverware.

South enter this game with high spirits and tired legs, having only enjoyed a few days to recover from their win against Heidelberg in the Dockerty Cup final. South may be forced to play conservative football against Auckland, just to remain competitive for the full 90 minutes.

Auckland on the other hand are formidable opposition. They are known for their effective defensive structure and for scoring goals on transition. Auckland played this way to great effect in the A-League, managing to win the Premiership in their first season.

Although the odds are stacked against South, the team has a recent track record of getting results against the odds. Cohadzic seems to know how to get the best out of the team, even when their backs are up against the wall, maybe the team can get the result tonight too!

Let's go South!

# 10 time Dockerty Cup Champions!

South have now won the most Dockerty Cups in Victorian football history after defeating rivals Heidelberg United at the Home of the Matildas over the weekend. The match had a bit of everything. A large crowd, end to end football, controversial referee decisions and a last-minute winner for the agers.



Unlike other cagey cup finals, both teams came into this game looking to attack. Heidelberg struck first when Asahi Yokokawa slotted home a goal just four minutes in. In the second half though South came out firing. South youth academy product Campbell Dovison was substituted on and made an instant impact, scoring a header to equalise. Although Heidelberg players claimed the ball didn't cross the line the referee ultimately allowed the South equaliser.

Both teams would continue to create chances and with 20 minutes to go, Heidelberg thought they had reclaimed the lead. But Mohamed Aidara's header was deemed offside by the linesman, and score remained locked at 1-1.

With time ticking away it was looking increasingly likely that the game would go to extra time, however Nahuel Bonada had other ideas.

In the last minute of the game Bonada received the ball in the middle and made a gut busting run into the box. Bonada's eventual shot was saved by the Heidelberg keeper but spilled out to Charlie Leech. Leech then set up Campbell Dovison who scored a goal from the edge of the box. The goal sealed the win for South and sent fans into a frenzy!

For Heidelberg, the loss is a heartbreaking result that follows their recent loss of top spot on the NPL Victoria table. For South, the Dockerty Cup win is a remarkable achievement especially considering the team was in the relegation zone just a few months ago. Well done to all, but especially Sinisa Cohadzic, who has transformed the side since taking on the head coach role midseason.

## Return to Oceania?

13 teams have been shortlisted to join the new FIFA funded Oceania Professional League (OPL). South are supposedly a chance to enter the 8-team league, so with that in mind, let's see how the new competition could change the club.

The first thing we would see would be an increased reliance on non-commercial revenue. The OPL will require international travel to places like New Zealand so South will need either FIFA or Australian Government funds to make the OPL viable for the club.



Secondly, with the OPL running from January to May, it's likely that we will see South shift its focus to summer football. The Seniors could play in summer competitions (Australian Championship Oct-Dec and then OPL Jan-May), while its reserves play in winter competitions (NPL Mar-Sep).

The composition of the Senior squad will also have to change. Current senior players often have full time jobs but OPL travel requirements makes this situation impossible. South will need to recruit full time footballers but with lower wages than those of the A-League. South's OPL squad will likely comprise young developing players, or players between professional contracts who want to avoid a drop to the NPL.

Wellington and Auckland have also applied to join the OPL but will likely field reserve sides. This indicates the likely standard of the competition, and also interestingly makes the Australia Cup game against Auckland feel like a trial for the OPL.

Off-field, the increased travel requirements and international regulation mean that South will need to invest in more non-football staff. More administrators and office people will be needed to manage increased logistics.

Overall, whether the OPL is a long term move for the club is unknown. However, what is clear is that the club will need to improve standards on and off the field to make participation in the new competition work.

# Sharp Shooters

Earlier this season South couldn't score. Poor team performances and poor striker recruitment meant South, uncharacteristically, weren't scoring many goals. Thankfully though this has changed in recent months. So, in light of Bonada, Mikkola and Nagamatsu's goal scoring form, we thought we'd look back at the club's great goal scorers.

## 1960s to 2000s

The earliest recorded club golden boot was Antonis Karagiannis who scored 15 goals in the 1961 season. In 1962 Antonis Hatzieleftheriou did one better and won the golden boot for the whole league!

In the 1970s South joined the NSL and we saw Jimmy Armstrong claim at least two club golden boots. However, it was Doug Brown in 1983 who won South's first golden boot at NSL level.

In the 1990s only Awaritefe managed to win an NSL golden boot for South, but the club had many great goal scorers during this time including Taliadoros, Boutsianis and Trimboli.

## 2000s to today

Once South was forced back into the Victorian competition, Fernando De Moraes quickly made a name for himself and managed to win three club golden boots between 2006 and 2010.



But 'Nando's' success was bettered in the 2010s when Milos Lujic joined the club. Lujic won five club golden boots and three league golden boots during his time at South. Overall he played 150 times for Hellas and scored 123 goals.

In the 2020s Harrison Sawyer was very much a spiritual successor to Lujic, and managing to score 46 goals over 77 games before being snapped up by an A-League club.

South has had many great strikers in the past. Hopefully our recent goal scoring form will continue and we will see some of our current players make a name for themselves as goal scoring legends of the club.

# 5th time's the charm!

This past weekend South Melbourne's Senior Women's squad pulled off a remarkable upset to claim their first Nike FC Cup, after defeating Heidelberg on penalties.

South were the clear underdogs ahead of the match having experiencing a poor run of form. Heidelberg on the other hand lead the NPL Women's competition by nine points and were clear favourites ahead of this game. South however seemed to tap into their early season form though, and produced an great performance, worthy of a Cup Final.

In the first half neither team was able to score however South managed to hit the post twice. It was Heidelberg though who managed to score first when Sarah O'Donoghue opened the scoring in the second half. Undeterred though, South equalised quickly through Nikki Furukawa at the 69<sup>th</sup> minute. At the end of regulation time the scores remained 1-1, meaning the final would go on to extra time.

Furukawa had a chance to win the game for South in extra time, but her long-range effort was saved and the game went to penalties.

Grace Taranto and Nikki Furukawa converted their penalties for South. Heidelberg however were having no such luck and had two shots saved by Ayana Aoyagi. This allowed South's Akeisha Sandhu to step up for a chance to win the game. Sandhu confidently scored her penalty to win the game for South and deliver an unlikely Cup!



It is South's first Nike FC Cup after being runners up four times in the competition, and also completes a remarkable double for the club after the men also defeated Heidelberg in the Dockerty Cup.

The win is a much-needed boost for the women's team who have struggled recently in the league, after leading the competition early in the year. Hopefully the win is a sign of things to come. Well done South!

# SMFC Squad

Goal Keepers	
1	Javier Lopez
30	Jack Charlston
Defenders	
2	Brayden Spink
3	Jordan Lampard
4	Marco Jankovic (C)
5	Jake Marshall
6	Lucas Inglese
17	Ethan O'Sullivan
21	Ross Archibald
23	Morgan Evans
27	Jack Painter-Andrews
Midfielders	
8	Cooper Halfpenny
13	Luca Durso
14	Alex Menelaou
15	Yuzo Iwakami
18	Sam Francou
22	Max Mikkola
88	Charlie Leech
99	Jack Pope
Forwards	
7	Andy Brennan
10	Ren Nagamatsu
16	Andre Skapoulas
19	Andrew Mesourouni
24	Nahuel Bonada
26	Campbell Dovison

# Player Spotlight



24. Nahuel Bonada  
Forward, Age: 29

Nahuel Bonada is an Argentine forward who started his career in the Argentine lower leagues. In 2019 he made the move to South Australia where he played for West Adelaide and the North Eastern Metro Stars. In 2021 Bonada moved to Victoria where he played for Dandenong Thunder and Green Gully before eventually signing for South Melbourne in 2024.

Bonada frequently finds himself on the scoresheet. He has excellent strikers' instincts, especially in tight spaces.

# The Cup Run so far

After a relatively simple game against Eastern Lions (VPL1), South made it tough for themselves and had to come from behind twice against Bentleigh (VPL1) and Pascoe Vale (VPL2) to progress in the Cup competition. Finally, an impressive win away to Dandenong City (NPL) qualified South for the national rounds. South Melbourne then faced South Hobart in Tasmania. Despite going down after an incredible bicycle kick goal, South came back to win 2-1 and qualified for the Round of 16.

South Melbourne			
Preliminary Qualification Rounds			
R4	W 3-0	Away	Eastern Lions
R5	W 2-1 (a.e.t.)	Away	Bentleigh Greens
R6	W 2-1	Home	Pascoe Vale
R7	W 1-1 (pens.)	Away	Dandenong City
Australia Cup National Rounds			
R32	W 2-1	Away	South Hobart

# Rival Watch



Auckland FC topped the A-League table in their first season to claim the Premiership and New Zealand's first piece of Australian domestic silverware. Although they were knocked out of the A-League finals, Auckland easily progressed in the Australia Cup by defeating Gold Coast Knights (NPL Qld) 4-0 to qualify for this stage of the cup.

Auckland is managed by A-League winning coach, Steve Corica. The team is known for its defensive discipline and counter attacks. They will be a tough team to break down. Key players are Japanese defender Hiroki Sakai, and Uruguayan forward Guillermo May.