

Blue and White Views

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South Melbourne vs Adelaide United @ Lakeside Stadium

The Australia Cup match 20 years in the making



Australian Cup football returns to Lakeside Stadium as South Melbourne prepare to face Adelaide United in a highly anticipated clash.

The last time these two clubs faced each other was way back in March 2004 in an NSL Minor Semi Final. Over 16,000 were in attendance that day to watch Adelaide knock out South from the competition, in what turned out to be South's final ever NSL game.

Tonight, South will be hoping to avenge that loss and continue its recent strong run of form. Following a slump in results after the OPL Final, South appears to have turned a corner with three wins in its past four games, including a surprise 2-1 victory over NPL ladder leaders Oakleigh Cannons.

Adelaide United on the other hand come to Lakeside potentially lacking match fitness, with only two friendly games under their belt as the team begins their preseason.

This year's Australia Cup has already seen a number of A-League sides upset by NPL opposition, and South will be hoping to continue this trend.

Let's go South!

About Blue and White Views

Blue and White Views is an unofficial source of news and opinion about the South Melbourne Football Club.

The platform was established in 2025 as a way to support the club ahead of its inaugural Australian Championship campaign. It has since provided fanzines, podcasts, blogs and even an annual magazine, free of charge, for fans of South Melbourne.

Blue and White Views has generated over 10,000 website hits and distributed nearly 1,000 physical fanzines at matches.

You can support Blue and White Views by following the platform on social media.

Help Blue and White Views on its mission to enhance South Melbourne's fan culture!

For more South content check out:
blueandwhiteviews.com



A bumper issue of content



Blue and White Views is back with a bumper issue for this huge Australia Cup clash! This issue includes four extra pages of content to cover all the recent highlights (and lowlights) around Lakeside these past few months.

Enjoy our analysis of the club's recent [Personnel Changes](#) that all members should be aware of. This includes a surprising transfer window, new board members and yes, a lookback at this year's head coaching controversy.

We track the [Road to NPL Finals](#) which is seemingly wide open for many teams, and we list out some [OPL Lessons](#) from our first season in the competition.

As always, we've included our regular [Matchday Preview Content](#), and for our less serious readers we've included some fluffy stuff, including a piece on the humble [South Melbourne Beanie](#).

We hope you enjoy this issue! Finally, as always, let's go South!

The Road to the NPL Finals



South Melbourne have faced new challenges in 2026 after simultaneously competing in the NPL and OPL for much of the year. However, despite being forced to rely on U23 players for some NPL games, South have remained in the finals mix.

Surprisingly it was immediately after the OPL where South struggled the most. Despite having a full senior squad at their disposal, shock losses saw South drop out of the top six. Thankfully recent weeks have seen an improvement in form, underlined by a convincing 2-1 win against ladder leaders Oakleigh Cannons.

Despite strong recent form. South's final four regular season games include matches against other top-6 contenders including Heidelberg, Melbourne City and George Cross. This means Hellas cannot rest on their laurels as the regular season comes to a close.

Across the competition finals spots are being hotly contested by all teams in the top eight. However, Preston and Avondale appear to be likely finals qualifiers, with Preston in particular showing strong form in recent weeks.

Further down the table though Heidelberg is seeing its season hang-on by a thread. The all-conquering Alexandros appears to have lost their magic touch this year and have managed just four draws in their last five games. This leaves Heidelberg in serious danger of missing the finals.

George Cross also find themselves in the finals mix however the recently promoted side has lacked consistency in their performances this year. They face a challenging run home with games against Avondale and Hume meaning they will need to upset a ladder leader or two just to give themselves a chance.

It is rather the other recently promoted side the league is keeping an eye on. Melbourne City have a game-in-hand and also have a favourable draw before them, which includes matches against Bentleigh and Green Gully.

Pos.	Team	Pts.
3	Preston Lions	36
4	Avondale FC	35
5	South Melbourne	35
6	Heidelberg Utd.	34
7	C.S. George Cross	31
8	Melbourne City	30

Contract Chaos!



South Melbourne have never been a club to shy away from the headlines. Last year the club battled relegation, sacked a coach, signed an outsider and still ended up with two trophies. Remarkably, this year the club has produced just as much drama.

Earlier this year the club was simultaneously competing in the NPL and OPL. This put enormous pressure on the senior squad. This pressure peaked in the final stages of the OPL as the senior squad was forced to stay abroad in New Zealand for a prolonged period, only to suffer a heart-breaking defeat in the Grand Final to Auckland.

In the following months, the senior program encountered instability on and off the field. Although a short adjustment period could be forgiven post-OPL, the prolonged period of poor form, the controversial manner of staff turnover and a high number of squad changes proved to be points of concern.

Coaching (Un)changes

It all kicked off just a week after the OPL Grand Final loss. On the 30th of May it was announced that the club had parted ways with Sinisa Cohadzic. The reaction from fans and the broader football community was instantly, overwhelmingly negative. No publicly justifiable reason was apparent for the decision, especially as Cohadzic is well loved by the fans for his extraordinary efforts since taking the role of head coach last year.

However, just three days later the club announced that Sinisa Cohadzic would return as head coach. It was a surprising U-turn that no-one foresaw. The closest thing to an explanation for the move was provided in the club's official statement. The statement suggested that the episode allowed coach and club to "openly address and resolve a number of important matters." It is not apparent what these matters were, but it is fair to say that the public nature of the fallout & resolution is not what fans expect of the club.

The Form Slump

Following this controversy the club suffered a slump in form, managing just one point from four games including losses to cellar dwellers Altona and Green Gully. The form slump threatened South's chances at making the finals series and signalled disharmony in the senior men's squad.

Squad Turnover

The form dipped coincided with the midseason transfer window, and the senior squad saw significant turnover. Many younger players left the club in search of more senior game time. This included the exits of Dovison and O'Sullivan which disappointed fans. Senior experience was brought in to strengthen the starting line-up including A-League veteran Paulo Retre and exciting forward Bul Juach, formally of Heidelberg United.

However, the most eyebrow raising change was the exit of Nahuel Bonada on loan to Preston Lions. Bonada had become a fan favourite at Lakeside over the past couple of years so his move to an archrival was surprising to say the least.

In the weeks since the changes Bonada has gone onto become a Preston Lions cult hero following his two goals in the Australia Cup, and South's form has stabilised in the league with three wins in the past four games.

Board Appointment

Turnover in personnel can point to structural or cultural issues in an organisation. This was the primary concern of fans following the movements of Cohadzic and Bonada. However, another surprising move from the club may allay these fears. In July the club announced the appointment of three new board directors, of seemingly extremely high calibre.



The Hon Philip Dalidakis (former Victorian Cabinet Minister), John Karantzis (Lawyer) and Associate Professor Marinis Pirpiris (orthopaedic surgeon) have joined the board. With these appointments it is hoped the the culture, and administrative practices of the club improve.

Looking forward

The significant changes in personnel have been difficult to follow over these past couple of months. Now that the dust has settled we hope we can return our focus to the performances on the pitch.

Summary of squad changes

IN: Bul Juach, Paulo Retre, David Yoo, Hassan Ramazani, Richard Nkomo, Sam Fawcett.

OUT ON LOAN: Nahuel Bonada, Ilia Shalamanov-Trenkova.

OUT: Ethan O'Sullivan, Thierry Papadimitriou, Lucas Inglese, Jack Pope, Luka Coveny, Charlie Leech, Campbell Dovison, Che Gorr-Burchmore, Luca Durso, Thomas Killick, Gerry Angelatos, Angus Angelatos.

SMFC Squad

See below the 2026 SMFC Senior Squad per the club's official website.

Goalkeepers	
1	Javier Lopez
20	Jake Charlston
Defenders	
2	Richard Nkomo
3	Jordan Lampard
4	Marco Jankovic ©
5	Hassam Razmani
23	Jacob Eliopoulos
27	Jack Painter-Andrews
?	Sam Fawcett
Midfielders	
7	David Yoo
8	Paolo Retre
11	Yuki Uchida
14	Alex Menelaou
17	Thomas Giannakopoulos
18	Andre Skapoulas
21	Sebastian Pasquali
22	Max Mikkola
Forwards	
7	Ishveer Singh
9	Jordan Swibel
10	Bul Juach
13	James Lackay
16	Arran Cocks
19	Andrew Mesourouni

Player Spotlight



Bul Juach

Forward, Age: 25

Bul Juach joined South Melbourne in the 2026 mid-season transfer window from Canadian Premier League club Pacific FC. Juach comes to the club after struggling to make an impact in Canada, registering only a single goal from limited appearances.

However, the mercurial striker is of course best known for his incredible stint at Heidelberg United in 2025. In that season Juach make 40 appearances for Alexandros, scoring 29 goals including four goals in the Australian Championship.

It is hoped Juach can return to his goal scoring best in the Blue and White!

South Watch



Date	Opponent	Result
24/7	Oakleigh Cannons	2-1 W
18/7	Preston Lions	0-0 D
10/7	Dandenong City	2-0 W
5/7	Dandenong Thunder	1-0 W
28/6	Green Gully	1-2 L

South appeared to struggle on-field following the conclusion of the OPL, posting shock losses against both Green Gully and Altona. However, over the past month results have greatly improved.

New players are finding their feet in the squad with Paulo Retre in particular finding praise for his initial performances. This has contributed to strong team results against both Oakleigh and Preston, indicating that South may be rediscovering its best form in the lead up to finals football.

Rival Watch



Date	Opponent	Result
20/7	Playford City	2-0 W
14/7	The Cove	5-0 W
15/5	Auckland FC	3-0 L
9/5	Auckland FC	1-1 D
26/4	Melbourne City	2-1 W

Adelaide United finished 2nd in the most recent A-League season with strong end of season form. United only lost a single match in its last 12 A-League games, however, that loss saw them eliminated from the finals series by eventual Champions, Auckland FC.

Unfortunately, Adelaide United's more recent form offers little indication of their strength. The team has only recently commenced its preseason, and has won both of its friendlies against South Australian State League opposition.

OFC Pro League

Wrap up



South Melbourne have completed their first season in the Oceania Pro League, finishing in second place after losing to Auckland FC in the final.

Whilst the final result was a heartbreaker for fans the club can hold its head up high for a monster effort which saw it make a good impression on the field and off it.

The good

The on-field performances were fantastic. The 55 goals scored by the club was by far the most in the competition and Hellas showed they were the team to beat. Although Auckland ultimately came out on top, South's on field performances were commendable considering the club was competing simultaneously in two competitions.

Also, the relationship and community work South conducted during the competition was first class!

The bad

The inability to play home games at Lakeside was disappointing. The fan experience as a whole was really challenging. The OPL even impacted fan engagement in the NPL as South were forced to contest some games with its U23 team.

In the future, the OPL must move towards a regular home and away format. Of the 19 OPL games South played this year, only four of them were played in Melbourne. Worse still, due to the Grand Prix, those four Melbourne games were not even played at Lakeside.

The ugly

Simultaneously competing in the OPL and NPL required intensive squad management. The club managed this almost perfectly, until the final phase of the OPL which appeared to result in a negative tipping point.

After the OPL final loss South experienced significant player turnover and even coaching instability which disappointed fans.

This cannot be repeated next season and South will likely require a different squad management approach. This should involve at a minimum a more liberal use of loan players, and dedicated pools of players to focus on each of the competitions, rather than stretched across the NPL and OPL.

South in the Community



In the past month, South has announced an expansion of its community presence through a couple of cool new initiatives.

In the lead up to the Adelaide United game, Hellas announced a partnership with the South Melbourne Market. This partnership saw a pop-up stall offer market patrons merchandise, tickets and even a photo opportunity with the Australian Championship Trophy!



Also this month, South announced the launch of its Community Social Housing Football Program. The program has already seen dozens of local kids gain access to training and social programs led by the club.

These initiatives not only build the club's profile but strengthen its commitment to the local community.

Women's Team Update



Women's Team Update

As the NPLW reaches the end of the regular season the Premiership race appears to have narrowed. Box Hill and Essendon Royals have seemingly pulled away from the pack as they battle out for top spot.

South Melbourne however finds themselves in the middle of a competitive finals race with five teams battling out for the remaining four finals spots. The upcoming match against Avondale may prove to be difference in South's battle for finals qualification.

In player news congratulations are due to South Melbourne's Sophie Wenk. This season the 15-year-old prospect broke into the Senior Squad and has also been recognised with selection to the Junior Matildas. This season also saw squad veteran, Francesca Iermano, play her 200th NPLW match!

I miss my beanie



Last year I bought a beanie from the SMFC shop. It was a navy beanie, with a South logo embroidered on the front. It was simple and no nonsense – and yet, it had so much wrong with it.

The logo wasn't centred and the beanie's shape was warped. When I wore it, the material jutted out and made my head look boxy. The inside label irritated my hair so much that I eventually had to cut it out with scissors.

Many of these issues though were obvious when I decided on this purchase. In fact, the problems were so obvious that I actually remember feeling guilty when I spent my \$25 to buy the beanie. So why did I buy it?

I bought it for the same reason you buy anything at games. I was charmed by the match day experience, and I surrendered to the temptation. It was a moment of weakness that would go on to have lasting impacts – in part because I ended up wearing the beanie so much.

I wore the beanie at soccer training, at South games, for late night runs, and for weekend coffees on frosty mornings. It was often the last thing I'd grab when I left the house, and eventually the beanie became a part of my day-to-day life.

The nylon fibres sealed in warmth which made winter more manageable, and the off-centre logo helped me spread South propaganda at the local café as well as at my local soccer club.

However, after months of this routine, just as I grew to love my South beanie, one day I woke up and discovered that the beanie... had disappeared!

I went through all the stages of grief. I searched my car (denial) and I accused my friends of having it (anger). I told myself it would pop up eventually (bargaining) but eventually I sunk into a depression (depression).

It's now been many months without my beanie and I have finally accepted that it is gone. This whole episode though has made me realise how impactful merchandise can be. Merchandise keeps you connected to the club and finds ways to integrate itself into your everyday life.

Although I know that I can find other ways to keep warm and connect to the club, I still miss my old South beanie. Overall though I have accepted my beanie is gone for good. I have grown and learnt from this experience.

Also, I got a new South hat.

SM Travel



Have you missed out on travelling with South this year? Fear not! The new South Melbourne Travel Agency is here to help you combine your next holiday with your football passion!

Do you like crystal-clear Fiji waters? Or perhaps you'd rather see South score 11 goals in 3 games? Well, this year we got to experience both at the same time!

Maybe you prefer the tropical Solomon Islands? It was here that South played in front of 9,000 fans. With our help, you could make that 9,001 next year!

Is an urban holiday more your style? What about Auckland? Here, South beat a team from Tahiti with a goal from a Japanese forward—very cosmopolitan!

Perhaps you can't wait until the next Oceania Professional League? Fear not, we also offer interstate travel during the Australian Championship, and even exciting bus holidays to St Albans and Casey Fields during the NPL.

With South Melbourne Travel Agency, the world really is your oyster!

The SMFC Quiz

1 point per correct answer

OPL Questions:

1. What was South's biggest OPL win this season?
2. Who scored for South in the 2026 OPL Grand Final?
3. Who was South's top scorer in the 2026 OPL?

NPL Questions:

4. Who were the three scorers in South's 3-0 win against Preston in the 2026 NPL?
5. Who scored the first goal of the 2026 NPL season for South?

History Question:

6. Who was South's top scorer in the 2005 season?

Who am I?

- (5 pts) I was born in country Victoria.
- (4 pts) I have played for 2 A-League clubs.
- (3 pts) I joined South in 2025
- (2 pts) I play in the midfield
- (1 pt) I had a stint at Jong Ajax

Answers: (1) 8-1 vs Tahiti United
(2) Yuki Uchida (3) Jordan Swibel, 10 goals (4) Dovison, Mikkola, Ali (own goal) (5) Mikkola 32 vs Avondale (6) Vaughan Coveny, 8 goals
Who am I? Sebastian Pasquale

The final NSL game



The 2003-04 season was the final season of the NSL. 13 teams from Australia and New Zealand contested that season with the top six contesting a finals series.

It was South's 28th season of NSL football, having played in every season of the competition. It was also Adelaide United's first season of NSL football. United was quickly established to replace Adelaide City who withdrew from the NSL following the 2002-2003 season.

Although Adelaide United was established in a rush the club shocked the footballing world with an impressive season both on and off the park. United would end up finishing 3rd on the table to qualify for finals and attracted huge crowds throughout the season often exceeding 10,000 people.

South similarly performed on and off the field managing some of the largest crowds in the NSL and finishing the season in 5th place to also qualify for finals.

After defeating Marconi across the two legs of the elimination final, South secured a Minor semi-final match up against Adelaide United at Hindmarsh Stadium.

Over 16,000 people were in attendance to watch the game including a large contingent of travelling South Melbourne fans. However, the Hellas fans would ultimately return to Victoria disappointed despite a promising start from their team.

South initially took the lead with a 12th minute goal from Michael Curcija, however a 71st minute equaliser from homegrown hero Ross Aloisi pushed the game into extra time.

After a tense extra time period at the 105th minute Richie Alagich converted a penalty to secure the Adelaide United the win and knock out South from the finals series.

Adelaide would go onto lose to Perth Glory in the Preliminary Final but ultimately continued their national competition journey with admittance to the 2005-06 A-League competition. South on the other hand were dubiously dumped from national football and forced to effectively rebuild the club from the ground up.