



2019 SANFL FINALS SERIES

Pies into decider

ANDREW CAPEL

PORT Adelaide is on the verge of winning its first SANFL flag in 20 years after upsetting minor premier Glenelg in a thrilling second semi-final yesterday, to march straight into this year's big dance.

The Magpies, chasing their first premiership since 1999 — the longest drought in club history — will contest a third grand final in the past six years after outlogging the Tigers by four points in wet, windy conditions at Adelaide Oval yesterday.

Port, which led for much of the contest, held off a withering burst from Glenelg in a pulsating final quarter to win by less than a kick.

The Tigers fought back from 16 points behind at three-quarter time to snatch a two-point lead midway through the term following a long Luke Partington goal. But — in an ironic twist — former Glenelg player Tobin Cox kicked the sealing goal for the Magpies from 40m after a strong mark under intense pressure.

With rebounding defenders Jarrod Lienert and Trent McKenzie starring and captain Cam Sutcliffe playing a strong midfield tagging role on Magarey Medal favourite Partington — he laid 14 tackles — Port proved a touch too good under pressure. The Magpies are now the premiership favourites.

They will play either the Tigers or the Crows in the grand final after Adelaide upset the Redlegs in the first semi-final.

Glenelg's loss means it has gone 3997 days since winning a final. Chasing a first flag since 1986, the Bays' last major-round win was against Sturt in the 2008 preliminary final.

This year's minor premier — playing in its first finals series since 2011 — was gallant in defeat but paid a heavy price for making too many errors, particularly in its forward 50.

In a tough, physical contest, the Bays were given great service from former Sydney and Collingwood ruckman Jesse White, while Partington — well held in the second and third terms — had a big final quarter.

Fellow midfielder Matt Snook was solid, Marlon Motlop was handy with two goals and 20 disposals, and defenders Max Proud and Chris Curran were typically strong.



TOUGH BATTLE: Port Adelaide's Willem Drew looks to tackle Glenelg's Matthew Snook, and below, Magpies' Jack Strange celebrates on the final siren. Pictures: SARAH REED

Ken Farmer Medallist Liam McBean kicked three goals.

In the first finals meeting between the teams since the 1993 qualifying final, where the Magpies beat a Mark Williams-coached Glenelg by 34 points, Port was well served by McKenzie (28 disposals) and Lienert (25), while midfielders Willem Drew and Joe Atley were powerful in the midfield and livewire forward Aidyn Johnson kicked three goals.

Port settled the better of the two teams.

With Lienert mopping up everything that came his way in defence, the Magpies kicked the opening two goals in the first five minutes as key forwards Todd Marshall and Billy Frampton flexed their muscles.

First-round AFL draft pick Marshall marked strongly in the goalsquare before Frampton took advantage of a mistake from Matt Uebergang to showcase his elite kicking skills from the pocket.

The Bays were being cut up in the centre square and took nine minutes to register their first score, when midfielder Snook moved forward and goaled from a free kick.

Glenelg grabbed its first

lead when McBean marked and kicked truly from 40m but a bad Motlop missed set shot opened the door for Port to quickly rebound and goal through Kane Farrell.

The Magpies had controlled play with 15 inside 50s to Glenelg's seven, to lead by five points at the first change.

With White getting on top in the ruck and McBean proving dangerous inside 50, the Tigers began to take control and opened up a seven-point lead early in the second term.

But then Johnson cut loose. He twice used his blistering pace and footy-smarts to break away and goal, and Port took an eight-point advantage into the long break.

Highlighting just how effective they had been at blanketing the Tigers' forward forays, Lienert (15) and McKenzie (11) were the Magpies leading disposal winners, while hauling in a handful of intercept marks.

Glenelg again paid the price for missed opportunities early in the third quarter, with a Luke Reynolds miss from the goalsquare punished at the other end by Drew, as the Pies opened a 13-point break.

The Tigers kept coming but couldn't land the decisive blow.

Frampton magic that conjured a victory

ANDREW CAPEL

PORT Adelaide coach Matthew Lokan hailed a moment of magic and his team's resilience, after his side held off a fast-finishing Glenelg by four points to book its place in this year's SANFL grand final.

After leading by 16 points at three-quarter time, the Magpies fell behind 11 minutes into the final term, when Magarey Medal favourite Luke Partington goaled on the run from 40m. It was the Tigers' third unanswered goal and they had all the momentum.

But with a piece of individual brilliance, Billy Frampton miraculously threw the ball onto his boot as it was about to cross the boundary line in the pocket at Adelaide Oval, and it landed in the arms of Todd Marshall in the goalsquare. He put Port back in front three minutes after Glenelg had appeared on course for victory.

"We were under the pump and in big games you need big moments and our guys were able to produce them at the right time," Lokan said. "It was a really good contest and both sides were pretty fatigued in that last quarter, so it was just a matter of trying to hang on."

Tigers coach Mark Stone rued blown chances. Glenelg, which beat Port convincingly in the two minor round clashes between the teams this season, dominated the inside 50 count 42-32 after quarter-time but made uncharacteristic errors close to goal, while many of its entries were poor and cut off by Trent McKenzie, Jarrod Lienert and Joel Garner.

"We made some mistakes that proved costly — there was the collision (between Luke Reynolds and Chris Curran) late in the third quarter that cost us a goal — then in the last quarter when we've got momentum one of their bigs (Frampton) picks it up one-handed on the boundary line and screws it back and they get another one," said Stone, who is sweating on scans of Ken Farmer Medallist Liam McBean's hamstring. "They are the sort of little things that hurt you but overall I thought our effort was super."

SCOREBOARD

	PORT ADEL. 3.2 6.5 9.8 11.10	76
	GLENELG 2.3 5.3 7.4 11.6	72

BEST

Port Adelaide: McKenzie, Lienert, Drew, Sutcliffe, Garner, Atley, Johnson, Ladhams.
Glenelg: White, Snook, Partington, McBean, Proud, Curran, Motlop.

GOALS

Port Adelaide: Johnson 3, Marshall 2, Sutcliffe, Farrell, Mayes, Frampton, Cox, Drew.
Glenelg: McBean 3, Motlop 2, Bailey, Snook, Partington, Reynolds, Close, Scott.

INJURIES

Port Adelaide: Mayes (concussion).
Glenelg: McBean (hamstring)

UMPIRES

Broadbent, Schramm, Hundertmark

CROWD

11,406 at Adelaide Oval.