

COBRAS END COLTS DREAM TO FACE THUNDER  
Thursday 12th January 2012

The Open Men's Final at the FFA National Futsal Championships will be between the hosts, the ACT Cobras and NSW Thunder after another sensational day's play at the championships held at the AIS Arena in Canberra.

SEMI-FINALS

ACT Colts 2 (Goran Josifovski, Elia Salloum (pen)) ACT Cobras 3 (George Cattanach, Trent Flanigan, Jason O'Dwyer) The ACT Colts dream run was finally brought to a shuddering halt in the semi-finals and it was the ACT Cobras who did it proving too strong for their counterparts in winning 3-2. For a while though the Hollywood ending was very much a possibility especially when Goran Josifovski gave the Colts an unexpected lead after seven minutes. Lukas Cole was the creator, brilliantly lifting the ball over the static Cobras defence for Josifovski who controlled and volleyed in one swift movement for a glorious goal. The Cobras response was, as expected, measured. It took them five minutes to make the breakthrough with an equalising goal built around craft and ingenuity of their own, George Cattanach sliding home from close range after a slick build-up. The Cobras took the lead in the second half when skipper Trent Flanigan smashed in from close range. Jason O'Dwyer bundled home a third shortly afterwards and not even an injury time penalty, converted by Elia Salloum, could get the Colts the result they so richly wanted.

Victoria 1 (Joao Da Silva) NSW Thunder 2 (Jarrod Basger, Chris Zeballos) A stunning strike from Chris Zeballos proved the difference between NSW Thunder and Victoria in the second semi-final. The only goal of the opening half arrived barely two minutes before the break and it was well worth the wait. A precise and penetrative through ball from Chris Hanly was controlled instantly by Jarrod Basger and his first-time snap-shot flashed into the near post to the delight of the Thunder players and officials. Greg Giovenali almost added a second close to half-time but his deflected shot was pushed over the bar as the Thunder upped the ante. After a stern team talk from Paul Vidic the Victorians emerged very much on the front foot and drew level when Joao Da Silva got on the end of a swift breakaway to net from just outside the area. Da Silva went close again when his free kick struck the bar and Gain O'Brien in the Thunder goal made some heroic saves. Just when it seemed as Victoria were in the ascendancy the Thunder struck. Zeballos played a one-two with Tobias Seeto and controlled the return to unerringly fire under the 'keeper for the decisive goal.

GROUP STAGES

Just when it mattered most the ACT Cobras put in their best display of the competition when they accounted for NSW Lightning 5-0 in their do-or-die Round 7 match-up. Both sides entered the match knowing that a win would send them into the semi-finals and a loss would consign the defeated to Futsal oblivion. As it was the match was completely one-sided with the Cobras belying their earlier form by putting in an effervescent display that would have pleased Head Coach Scott Conlon. From the moment that Jason O'Dwyer arrived unmarked at the far post to volley in Robbie Cattanach's cross the result seemed pre-destined. The Cobras built on that advantage in the second stanza with O'Dwyer scoring his fourth goal of the competition. Travis Dries made it 3-0 before an unfortunate own goal from Gavin Schipp made it four. A fifth goal close to full time from the industrious

Robbie Cattanach was just reward for his efforts and blew out the score board to the Cobras delight.

It's been a long week for Tasmania who had only a couple of substitutes on which to draw for their group matches and had lost their goalkeeper Liam Ferrall to a nasty thumb injury as they faced Southern NSW. It was therefore quite incredible that they managed to turn a 5-0 deficit into only a 5-4 defeat showing guts and courage to claw their way back into a game in which they trailed 4-0 at the interval. Darryl Fernandes opened the scoring for Southern from the penalty spot after the referees spotted a handball in the area and Robert Foti quickly made it 2-0 minutes later. Bradley Ferraro scored the goal of the game with an lob over the Tasmanian keeper from inside his own half before Sam Davies made it four. Fernandes completed his double early in the second half before the Tasmanians began their unlikely comeback. Mark Page netted a quick-fire brace and Alex Gordon and Jacob Clamp scored within three minutes of each other to make the score 5-4. Tasmania ended the match in all-out attack but couldn't quite pull off a miraculous recovery.

The ACT Colts capped a dream round-robin by finishing first in the group after defeating the previously unbeaten Victoria 1-0 in the top-of-the-table showdown in early afternoon. A fifth goal of the competition from Lukas Cole, a stunning long-range free-kick that flew past the Victorian shot-stopper was sufficient for the Colts to do what few deemed possible on Monday morning and finish top of the pile. It was Cole's fifth of the week and gave him a share of the Golden Boot. There heroics all round from the Colts players with Kieran Stroh, once more, receiving the official man of the match award, for shutting out the usually prolific Victorian attack, the first time this has occurred in the 2012 championships. Goran Josifovski was his usual bustling self and caused the Victorian defence all sorts of problems alongside Nathan Walker. Defensively the whole team stood up with Ryan Kyprianou, David Dexter and Kristian Collins a brick wall in front of Stroh as the Colts claimed their deserved number one status.

The last group match of the week saw NSW Thunder playing for third place and they duly achieved that feat with a convincing 5-0 win over Southern NSW Flame. The result was little n doubt from the first minute when Daine Merrin scored the opening Thunder goal on the end of a sweet one-touch move. Jarrod Basger netted the first of his brace in the fifth minute and it was apparent that it was merely a question of how many the Sky Blues would score. The answer was ultimately five as Raymond Miller struck in the 13th minute, a goal which gave the Thunder a 3-0 half-time cushion. Understandably given their semi-final date with Victoria later on the Thunder eased off in the second stanza and added a further two goals in the last seven minutes. Basger made it 4-0 before the scoring was completed by Chris Zeballos three minutes from time.

#### OPEN MEN

##### Round 7

ACT Cobras 5 (Jason O'Dwyer (2), Travis Dries, Gavin Schipp (og), Robbie Cattanach) NSW Lightning 0 Southern NSW 5 (Darryl Fernandes (2, 1 pen), Robert Foti, Bradley Ferraro, Sam Davies) Tasmania 4 (Mark Page (2), Alex Gordon, Jacob Clamp) ACT Colts 1 (Lukas Cole) Victoria 0 NSW Thunder 5 (Jarrod Basger (2), Daine Merrin, Raymond Miller, Chris Zeballos) Southern NSW Flame 0

### Semi-Finals

ACT Colts 2 (Goran Josifovski, Elia Salloum (pen)) ACT Cobras 3 (George Cattanach, Trent Flanigan, Jason O'Dwyer) Victoria 1 (Joao Da Silva) NSW Thunder 2 (Jarrod Basger, Chris Zeballos)

### TABLE

Pos	Team	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	PTS	
1	ACT Colts	7	3	4	0	15	12	+3	17	
2	Victoria	7	5	1	1	20	6	+14	17	
3	NSW Thunder	7	4	2	1	18	4	+14	16	
4	ACT Cobras	7	5	0	2	24	9	+15	15	
5	Southern NSW	7	2	2	3	13	21	-8	10	
6	NSW Lightning		7	1	3	3	11	19	-8	9
7	Southern NSW Flame	7	0	3	4	14	23	-9	6	
8	Tasmania	7	0	1	6	12	33	-21	2	

3pts - WIN, 2pts - Score Draw, 1pt - No-Score Draw

### LEADING SCORERS

(Golden Boot tally is calculated in round-robin matches only. This tally includes whole tournament)

6 George CATTANACH (ACT Cobras)

5 Robbie CATTANACH, Jason O'DWYER (ACT Cobras), Lukas COLE (ACT Colts), Chris ZEBALLOS (NSW Thunder), Joao DA SILVA (Victoria)

4 Jarrod BASGER (NSW Thunder), Darryl FERNANDES (Southern NSW), Danny RISTEVSKI (Southern NSW Flame), Kui MU (Victoria)

3 Travis DRIES, Trent FLANIGAN (ACT Cobras), Misko NAUMOSKI, Nathan WALKER (ACT Colts), Miles DOWNIE, Greg GIOVENALI, Daine MERRIN (NSW Thunder), Robert FOTI (Southern NSW), Williams MOBS (Southern NSW Flame), Jacob CLAMP (Tasmania), Andre CARO, Oner SIMSEK (Victoria)

2 Daniel FULTON (ACT Cobras), Goran JOSIFOVSKI, Elia SALLOUM (ACT Colts), Giacomo DI MENTO, Goran LJUBOJA, Marino MUSEMECI (NSW Lightning), Bradley FERRARO, Peter GAFFNEY (Southern NSW), Michael OLIVERIA, Franc PIERRO, Doug WOODWISS (Southern NSW Flame), Andrew CLARK, Alex GORDON, Mar PAGE, Liam SCOTT (Tasmania), Ahmed AZZAM, Jonathan BARRIENTOS, Hara YOSHINAO (Victoria)

1 Glenn SMITH, Pat ROSS-MAGEE (ACT Cobras), Kristian COLLINS, David DEXTER (ACT Colts), Denny DUTRA, Giovanni LEUZZI, Justin McLEAY Gavin SCHIPP (NSW Lightning), Corey BICZO, Raymond MILLER (NSW Thunder), Sam DAVIES, Mitchell DEL TURO (Southern NSW), Russel CRIGHTON (Southern NSW Flame), Joshua QUAN (Tasmania) own GOALS