

SEPTEMBER 25TH 2026

GRAND FINAL PREVIEW

THREE-PEAT OR FIRST FLAG?

INSIDE

THE STORIES
BEHIND
TWO THRILLING
PRELIMINARY
FINALS

GRAND FINAL EDITION

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SWANS VS FREO REVIEW

THE GOOD

The 'unicorn' they're calling him. Luke Jackson is a special player and, after dominating another final for Fremantle, he booted two goals and had 27 hit-outs. There's no doubt the newly appointed All-Australian deserved the honours, playing a pivotal role in Freo's victory.

The Swans deserve their praises as well after such a turbulent end to the season, with the sexual assault scandal sidelining 'The Pullman 5' from their finals roster. Belting Brisbane in the Qualifying Final and reaching a prelim, to which no one thought possible without the likes of Issac Heneny and Chad Warner. Much of the credit can be given to Errol Gulden's finals campaign, averaging 35 touches across the two games, who left nothing out there on the SCG.

THE BAD

Fremantle were able to claw back the lead in the last quarter, this was without any help from their tall forwards, Jye Amiss and Josh Treacy. The pair only booted six goals from the last three finals this year. If Freo are in for a chance this Saturday, then these two need to stand up when it matters on the biggest stage of them all.

Freo's entire first half had alarm bells ringing in the coaching box, failing to capitalise on goal kicking shots gave Sydney enough of a opportunity to reel themselves into the contest.

THE UGLY

Swans coach Dean Cox won't be wishing to relive that last quarter again, Sydney led by 21 points before conceding five goals in the final term. To lose in that manner is going to scar the playing group, whether the frustrations over the Pullman incident will cause fractures in the playing group is uncertain until all is settled.

But Freo smashed the Swans in the clearance battle 44-30, as they also controlled territory, winning the inside-50 count 67-49. Especially in the final quarter, Swans only managed to kick a point opposed to Freo's 34 point haul. It proved that without their key players, it proved a challenge too difficult for the undermanned Swans.



HAWKS VS LIONS REVIEW

THE GOOD

Fans are calling it one of the best games ever seen, a prelim final that included four last-quarter lead changes.

A daring Hawthorn side took the fight to Brisbane until the dying seconds. Nick Watson pulled some wizardry, kicking 6 goals along with Josh Ward, who played his best game for the club. But it just wasn't enough in the end to hold the reigning premiers back from reaching yet another Grand Final.

You can almost call Will Ashcroft Mr September after yet another final he dominated. Kai Lohmann bagged 5 goals, and Hugh McCluggage had 3 and 23, sealing the game with his last minute heriocs.

THE UGLY

The umpires were the target of Hawthorn fans' temper tantrum, a late game call went Brisbane's way, and they spat the dummy. Hurling water bottles and cans at umpires that has no place in our game. The AFL promised to find the culprits and hand 'lengthy bans' for the inexcusable behaviour.

Not only were the umpires on the receiving end of the fans' outbursts. A 6-year-old Brisbane Lions supporter was struck by a thrown can and taken to the hospital for stitches, while a mother and son had a bowl of nachos thrown at them post match.

THE BAD

Brisbane's star Midfielder Lachie Neale has been handed a one-game ban for an off the ball strike on Hawthorn's Jack Ginnivan. A stupid brain fade will force Neale to be at the mercy of the tribunal to be available to feature in the Grand Final.

This speaks to bigger ramifications for the duel brownlow medalist, as the media expects him to sign a three-year deal with Collingwood. Experts are now questioning if he's played his last game for the Lions, and come Grand Final day, how they'll manage without him out there.





GRAND FINAL PREVIEW



WHAT IT MEANS FOR BOTH TEAMS

For Fremantle, after a dominant season claiming the minor premiership, people were expecting them to walk into the Grand Final. A slow start against the Hawks forced them to get there the long way. Fans have been left waiting 13 years for another Grand Final berth, just the second in the club's 31 years in the AFL. A few seasons ago, Andrew Brayshaw penned a letter to teammates that read, "The first 22 men to win a premiership at Fremantle will be immortals." That motivation is fuelling the club's pursuit of their first flag this Saturday.

Brisbane on the cusp of their club's second three-peat since the turn of the millennium, Chris Fagan would be etching his name into one of the greatest coaches of the modern game. Everywhere you look on Saturday storylines dominate, it gives Will Ashcroft a chance to equal ... Dustin Martins record tally of three Norm Smith medals. The Lions have reached their fourth Grand Final in a row now and a win will solidify them as one of the greatest .. teams AFL era.



WHERE WILL THE GAME BE WON?

The midfield battle outcome will be the most vital area for each team, Brisbane have been the AFL's strongest clearance side this season, they win the ball and scored quickly for clearances. Last weekend against Hawthorn the Lions scored eight goals from centre clearances to win the game.

When Fremantle get the ball inside their forward 50, they're the best side at locking it inside. The ability for Freo to convert each inside 50 into a score will come from the work of their tall forwards.

Last time they met, Dockers beat the Lions by 25 points at the Gabba, it was Freo's tall forward entourage that saw 11 goals kicked between Voss, Amiss and Treacy. After their quiet finals series so far, if Freo even want to stand a chance against the reigning premiers, their talls need to be setting the tone and getting involved early in the game.

WHO STANDS UP?

It's hard to look past the two-time Norm Smith Medalist Will Ashcroft, one of the most important cogs in Brisbane's powerhouse of a machine. He's currently leading the Gary Ayres votes

For Fremantle, there's a plethora of players who can swing the momentum. Jackson, Serong, or even Treacy. But Hayden Young, I think, is the one who, if he backs up his preliminary final performance, he will be the match-winner for the Dockers.

When the game's on the wire, which young midfielder will carry their team to glory?

My Prediction : Lions by 27
Norm Smith Medalist : Hugh McCluggage

