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NRL Grand Final: North Queensland Cowboys beat Brisbane Broncos in golden-point thriller

By Paul Newman

Updated about 6 hours ago



Thurston 'the greatest player we've seen', says Michael Morgan



Hunt a shattered figure at NRL grand final



NRL Grand Final Photo Gallery



PHOTO: [Maiden premiership ... the Cowboys celebrate their first NRL title after Johnathan Thurston's late heroics.](#)
(AAP: Dean Lewins)

The North Queensland Cowboys have won their first NRL title after Johnathan Thurston kicked a golden-point field goal to beat the Brisbane Broncos 17-16 in a thrilling grand final at the Sydney Olympic stadium.

The Cowboys trailed 16-12 for most of the second half before winger Kyle Feldt scored in the corner in the final seconds to take the game into golden-point extra-time.

Broncos half-back Ben Hunt dropped the ball from the extra-time kick-off to give the Cowboys a golden opportunity to snatch victory.

Thurston was set up for the field goal for the first tackle. He was swamped by the Broncos defence but could not be stopped from his second attempt moments later after a strong hit-up from prop James Tamou.

From 20 metres out, Thurston kicked the winning field goal in the 83rd minute of the game to send all of North Queensland into a celebration frenzy.

Thurston went on to win the Clive Churchill Medal for the best player in the grand final.

Immediately after the dramatic win Thurston was shaking and in disbelief over what he had achieved

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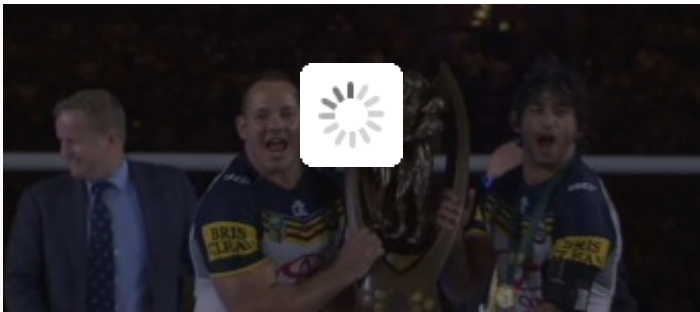
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for the club he loves dearly.

"I am speechless, I can't believe it," he told Channel Nine after the match.

"I can't believe what I have just done. I love these boys, they have worked so hard. They work so hard, I see them every day, the sacrifices that they make, what they do for us every day. I love the club. Wow, I can't believe it."



VIDEO: [Thurston heroics seal Cowboys' maiden NRL title](#)
(ABC News)

Was the 2015 edition the greatest NRL Grand Final of all time?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

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It was just the second grand final appearance for the Cowboys who were beaten 10 years ago by the Wests Tigers in the 2005 decider.

Thurston's co-captain Matt Scott was proud of finally being able to win the NRL trophy for the North Queensland region.

"Twenty years through the highs and lows, we have finally got a premiership to bring home," Scott said.

"I'm just so proud of the boys. The effort they showed against such a quality opposition, and just the ability to stick with it, and keep turning up for each other."

SCOREBOARD: BRONCOS v COWBOYS

	16-17	
at Sydney's Olympic stadium, October 4 2015		
375	Tackles	320
7	Linebreaks	3
11	Errors	12
76%	Completion rate	76%
Broncos: C Oates, J Reed tries; C Parker		

Opposing tribes gather in Sydney and across Queensland for NRL Grand Final

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The dramatic win denied the Broncos a seventh premiership and an eighth title for coach Wayne Bennett.

It was a disappointing end to Brisbane captain Justin Hodges' 251st and final NRL game.

Hodges looked to be going out a winner after the Brisbane defence had repelled numerous North Queensland attacking raids in the second half.

The Broncos led 14-12 after an electrifying first half in which both sides scored two tries.

Brisbane winger Jordan Kahu kicked a 43rd minute penalty goal to stretch the lead to 16-12. The Cowboys then dominated possession but could not crack the Brisbane defence.

Midway through the second half a cut-out pass from Thurston was dropped by centre Kane Linnett with the line open.

Four minutes later Cowboys full-back Lachlan Coote had a try disallowed due to a double movement after he was cut down by a Matt Gillett tackle just before the line.

Hunt's golden-point knock-on was preceded by a lifting tackle on Linnett in the 77th minute that saw him placed on report.

con, pen; J Kahu con, pen

Cowboys: J O'Neill, J Tamou, K Feldt tries; J Thurston 2 cons, 1 field goal

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PHOTO: Delirium ... Cowboys team-mates mob Johnathan Thurston after his winning field goal. (AAP Image: Mick Tsikas)

The Cowboys consequently marched down field before Thurston gave the ball to five-eighth Michael Morgan in the dying seconds, who drew three defenders before flicking the ball out to Feldt who dived over in the corner to level the scores at 16-16.

Thurston misses first opportunity to snatch win

Thurston's conversion from the sideline, that would have won the game for the Cowboys at the end of regulation time, hit the post before the North Queensland star captured the victory in extra-time.

The Broncos posted the first try in the seventh minute with a stunning 90-metre effort when Anthony Milford collected an off-load from Adam Blair and sprinted down field before finding Jack Reed who sent Corey Oates storming down the left wing to score the opening try. Parker, who a few minutes earlier had kicked a penalty goal, converted to give



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the Broncos an 8-0 lead.

The Cowboys responded two minutes later when Jake Granville broke from a scrum to step inside Corey Parker before sending centre Justin O'Neill over next to the posts for the first North Queensland try. Thurston converted to take the score to 8-6.



PHOTO: [Distraught ... Justin Hodges \(R\) of the Broncos consoles Ben Hunt after the final whistle.](#)

(Getty Images: Mark Kolbe)



PHOTO: [Miracle try ... Kyle Feldt scores in the corner in the dying seconds of regulation time.](#) (Getty Images: Cameron Spencer)

Feldt threatened to give North Queensland the lead just a couple minutes later but was tackled into touch just before the corner post.

Then in the 25th minute the Cowboys took the lead when dummy-half Granville sent Tamou crashing over

next to the posts which Thurston converted to put his side 12-8 ahead.

Brisbane re-captured the lead six minutes before half-time when Gillett scooped up a dropped ball from Thurston to send Reed over. Jordan Kahu converted to give Brisbane a 14-12 lead at the break.



Antonio Winterstein of the Cowboys offloads the ball in a tackle by Justin Hodges of the Broncos during the NRL grand final at the Olympic stadium on October 4, 2015 in Sydney, Australia. (Getty Images: Renee McKay)


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