

NRL grand final: Billy Slater's career ends with Melbourne Storm's loss to Sydney Roosters

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PHOTO: Billy Slater shows his disappointment after the Storm lost to the Roosters. (AAP: Joel Carrett)

Billy Slater is living proof that fairy tales do not always have happy endings.

The retiring Melbourne superstar was looking to end his 319-game NRL career with another premiership at Sydney's Olympic stadium.

But the match did not go to script, with the Sydney Roosters crushing the Storm 21-6.

"This finish is not how we planned, but that's footy," Slater told Channel Nine.

"We tried our best, but that is the way it goes sometimes."

The 35-year-old almost did not make his farewell appearance. He had to [overturn a shoulder charge ban at the NRL judiciary on Tuesday night](#) to even take his place.



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PHOTO: Storm great Billy Slater is wrapped up by the Roosters defence. (AAP: Dean Lewins)

With passionate Roosters fans making up about 90 per cent of the grand final crowd, they made it clear they were unhappy with the decision.

Warming up for the game, Slater missed the parade of retiring players but he was booed when the ground announcer called out his name.

And once the match was underway he was also targeted by the Roosters faithful each time he touched the ball.

Not that he got to do that as often as usual with Roosters' five-eighth Luke Keary's kicking game limiting Slater's impact on the match.

Slater was unable to add to the incredible tally of 23 tries in the finals, including one in each of his past three grand finals.



PHOTO: Latrell Mitchell carries Billy Slater over the line to score a try for the Roosters. (AAP: Craig Golding)

But he may have won some fans back as he sought out injured Roosters half-back and long time teammate Cooper Cronk on the bench immediately after full-time.

Slater said friendship was just one thing he would take from his career.

"I am really grateful for the career I have had and for the friends I have made," he said.

"Rugby League has taught me a lot of things — selflessness, respect, and I appreciate everything that everyone has done for me."

AAP

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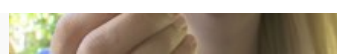
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