

# It's League and Rules neck and neck with Soccer a dark horse

GOOD MORNING . . . "The promoters of a move to bring Australian Rules to the Gold Coast are extremely encouraged by the response they are receiving."

*This was stated by Mr John McCann, of 83 Turpin-Rd, Labrador, who was one of the convenors of a successful meeting in the Masonic Hall, Burleigh Heads, attended by 35 people.*

He also paid tribute to Mr Roley Daniels who gave a great boost to the code by teeing up a ground at Currumbin.

That little lot is from the Gold Coast Bulletin of May 30, 1961.

Well, from little acorns great oaks grow, and Messrs McCann and Daniels and the other 33 who made up the meeting at Burleigh 12 short years ago must be happy with the way their particular oak has grown since Rules today is vying with Rugby League as the Coast's most popular winter spectator sport.

Rules bods explain the remarkable growth of the code to its appeal to the public while other codes' followers say that the mass migration of Vics here over the past 12 years is the reason for its following.

Well, whatever it is, there's no denying that it's here to stay and the original 35 did sow a good seed.

Following that 35 have been a long list of dedicated officials and others who have given unstintingly of their time and energies.

With more ready made fans from the South arriving here to settle every day, it seems that soon Rules will be the dominating footy code on the Coast unless other codes make more spirited efforts to promote their own brands of the ball game.

Rugby League, the game just tipping Rules out of the popularity stakes at present, is vigorously promoted here also.

On this side of the Border it would be a photo finish as to which code has the greatest following.

However, once the Border is crossed into New South Wales, Rules fades away and League comes on very strong with seven strong clubs to nil between Coolangatta and Mullumbimby.

Grateful as they are to Group 18 for having them in their comp, the time must soon come, when the Coast teams must play in a Brisbane competition if the players are ever going to advance to State representation.

Good and convenient though the local competition is, the fact remains that it is a NSW comp and a backwater for Coast players as far as being seen by the right people is concerned.

The race for top code on the Coast will go on for many moons yet and may eventually be decided by which code catches them young enough.

Here the League has a decided advantage with its junior and schools competitions.

With Rugby Union, it is a different matter. This is purely a fun game and the Union boys are not out to compete against any other code.

They play the game for the love of it and for the game's sake and couldn't care less whether it's in front of 20,000 people or just their own relations.

Union is a way of life rather than a game and anyone who has played it will readily tell you that he has had more fun playing and living Union than any other game or code of football.

So in the race for the biggest following here, you can discount Rugby Union.

Union is a player's game, not a spectator's game and it's all the better for it.

Soccer, on the other hand, is a spectator sport and must decidedly so.

Soccer is the dark horse in the fight for fans and could, after some years, win this fight.

It's chief appeal is that it is an international game, being played in every country in the world,

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whereas League is confined to practically Australia, France, England and New Zealand, and Rules to the Australian Southern States.

Soccer, too, has an influx of ready made fans coming here all the time and, no doubt, although immigration is to be restricted somewhat, many more will come.

My summing up of the football race on the Coast right now is this.

Popularity wise, Rugby League and Aussie Rules about neck and neck, with soccer in a position where later it could topple both and Union tailed off last.

Promotion wise, Rules leading here in front of League at the moment, and again soccer third and needing a kick in this department. Union not really interested in this aspect of the race, although its publicity is improving all the time.

Future possibilities if things take the same course as they are taking now — Rugby League and Rules to lead for some considerable time until finally (and this could take years) overhauled by soccer, with Union to be enjoyed by its followers until Armageddon.

I am sure the 35 who convened at Burleigh Heads long ago would be happy about that situation.

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