

Magpies blitz Blues in fiery Australian Rules grand final

THE SOUTHPORT Magpies completed the 1975 Gold Coast Australian Football competition season undefeated when they trounced the Coolangatta Blues by a massive margin of 54 points in Sunday's grand final at Owen Park, Southport.

Southport never looked in danger of losing the premiership flag after unleashing a paralysing eight goals' attack early in the first quarter before the Blues had registered a score.

The final scoreline read: Southport 26-16-172 to Coolangatta 17-16-118.

The match, although marred by some fiery clashes between players, lived up to grand final expectations and there were few spectators who left the ground before the final siren.

Spectacular football was played and the Blues, even though they lost a lot of ground in the first quarter, came back strongly to match the Magpies' fast scoring rate over the final three quarters.

Umpire praised

Umpire Brian Spence, controlling his first grand final, earned a lot of favourable comment for his exhibition.

The Blues, kicking to the Queen-St end, attacked from the first bounce, but the strong Southport defence stood firm.

Magpie Steve Hunter was prominent for good marking and clearing dashes.

Southport settled down quicker than Coolangatta and were going forward in effective passages of play.

With an open forward line, the Magpies were able to slam on goals with accurate kicking.

Their star, Bill Ryan, was at his brilliant best rucking or resting in a pocket.

Centre Ian Rankin kicked their first goal and Ryan, after marking and being awarded a 15 metre penalty when hung on to, put the second on the board.

The Magpies, playing their own brand of fast play-on football, were doing everything right.

More goals to Webb,

Rankin, Kelly and Eastman put Coolangatta in a grim position.

There seemed to be Magpies everywhere and the Blues were further embarrassed when Hunter broke up a likely Coolangatta scoring move with a clearing run to find Rankin who played on to Webb for a major

Brawls

A big melee broke out and after it was brought under control Witton kicked goal eight for Southport.

Player clashes continued and the umpires had their hands full breaking them up.

Roylance sent the Blues forward and Hooper, from a free kick, brought up the Blues first goal.

However, both Witton and Cheel replied with goals for Southport.

Southport held a winning lead of 55 points at quarter time.

Again it was Coolangatta, through Hooper, who attacked first.

But again Hunter cleared and let the Magpies take it forward for Willardson to goal.

There was another fiery exchange, but players were less tense and starting to settle down to play some good football.

The Blues began to fire, but Southport's rock like defence must have been heartbreaking for them.

Taylor made things brighter when he kicked Coolangatta's second goal.

But this small joy was short lived when Rankin hooked a great goal.

Arnold gave Warren a chance and he kicked a great goal on the run for the Blues.

Both sides began play-

ing good football and it was goal for goal.

The Blues, playing a lot faster, were getting their share of kicks and their forwards were more mobile.

Their defence was looking much better.

However, at half time Southport held a big 10-goal lead.

Some good football was played in an even third quarter.

The Blues lifted their game, but could not get a break to reduce the leeway.

Crockett scored first for Coolangatta, but Rankin and Cheel both goaled to put Southport further ahead.

Arnold kicked the Blues ninth only to see Rankin and then Ryan, with a strong mark, goal.

Fight back

Showing a lot of courage, the Blues kept fighting to get back into the game.

Their rovers played a part in their tenth and eleventh goals.

Ford broke away, found Arnold who took a courageous mark and goaled from an angle.

Then the roles were reversed when Arnold passed to Ford who kicked straight.

From the bounce, Arnold gathered in and beat the field to drive the 12th through.

The Blues had come alive and were attacking vigorously.

But Ryan, with towering marks, saved the Magpies on several occasions.

Southport held a 64 points lead at three-quarter time.

The Magpies' blistering first quarter effort made the game and the 1975 flag safe for them,

but the Blues at no stage gave up.

When Rankin goaled early in the last quarter many fans thought it was the straw which broke the camel's back.

But the Blues doubled their efforts to go forward and Taylor goaled.

What an exciting last quarter it would have been if Southport had only held a two or three goal advantage.

The speedy Watts, a clear winner all day, Ford, Arnold and Patterson gave the Blues chances.

It was an even last quarter with the Magpies holding their advantage of 10 goals until a burst by Coolangatta of three goals by Taylor, Arnold and Casey made the Blues score look better.

To the end, both teams were going in hard.

Due to a late start, the match finished on dusk.

Just before the final siren, Jordan, with a long kick that bounced through, put the Magpies' 26th goal on the board.

Southport won the 1975 premiership in the same way they had performed throughout the season. No team deserved a premiership more.

They were unbeaten throughout the season and the nearest any team came to topping the Pies was four goals.

In the second semi-final, they had an easy win over Coolangatta and further proved their greatness in the grand final.

They are a champion team and in my opinion the best to play on the Gold Coast.

Coolangatta, in any other season, probably had a premiership team, but their turn must just be around the corner.

—JACK REBBECHI

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