'Pies steamed up over poachers

'They're wasting their time'

POACHERS will be 'shot down in flames' — that's the fiery warning from champion Gold Coast Australian Rules club, the Southport Magpies.

"We won't tolerate them, we won't let them destroy the strong club that we've built up, winning three consecutive grand finals," said club secretary Bill Hassall.

"Maybe we'll talk to them over a table, but we will not be party to anyone coming in the back door and trying to knock our players off," he said.

Club president, Alan MacKenzie, said poachers from other Gold Coast clubs were wasting their time.

"We will not be clearing players to other Gold Coast clubs," he said yesterday.

"We are not bringing good players into the Gold Coast competition from interstate just to have them taken off our doorstep.

"If other clubs want to secure good players then they should do what we had to do — look for them outside the area and try to make it possible for them to come here and work here," MacKenzie said.

Tough season

The Rules season is expected to be the toughest for a long time, with the addition of experience from outside coming into the Gold Coast this year.

And Lismore returns to the scene after an absence of several years.

Lismore has done well to build up a strong side in an area where Rugby League dominates.

The Gold Coast Australian Football League competition gets under way on April 2.

Top club Southport, looking for its fourth successive senior flag, will have added strength in the return of Grant Jones and Andy Stewart, who were missing from last season's premier side.

Training started at Owen Park showground this week and will continue on Sundays at 9.30am opposite the Pacific Hotel and again on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 5pm at the showground for the next month when official practice games will start.

Bob Webb will again captain coach the Magpies senior side while Barry Rudd will lead the reserves and Barry Lowe the Colts.

Gold Coast Bulletin: February 11 1978, p68