

# SLUGGED!

## Brawling Rules

# players hit by rule book

By Des Houghton

AUSSIE Rules officials have thrown the book at two star players, suspending them and blaming them for causing the infamous Isle of Capri spectator riot.

At a full league meeting on Monday night, Southport winger Ross Couch had his eye permit withdrawn for four weeks. Surfing player Dale Temple had his permit revoked for six weeks after the meeting was told he had been involved in previous brawls.

Mr Sutherland said he was putting the blame for the spectator riot at the feet of the two players

who began brawling when walking from the field after the match.

Mr Sutherland said he and other eye witnesses had absolutely no doubt that Temple and Couch had triggered the riot.

"They exchanged blows after the game had finished. This is the only reason why other players and spectators joined in the brawl," he said.

### Disagreed

"If they hadn't fought there would not have been a riot."

Mr Sutherland admitted the decision by the meeting to withdraw the player permits was not a unanimous one.

The riot occurred after a heated match in which Surfing Paradise downed last year's premiers, Southport.

Mr Sutherland said there was plenty of "needle" in the game.

Even some high ranking club officials joined in the sideline war.

Mr Sutherland said club delegates and four league executives met to discuss the incident.

"I didn't get to bed until two the next morning," he said.

"It needed a lot of thrashing out. It was a serious matter and passed recently into an open fine account. It was Couch's first offence in his two years in Field Coast football. Temple is well known to us."

Mr Sutherland said although there were differences of opinion at Monday night's meeting, "I wasn't the rascal or parliament. It was pretty orderly."

Football observers say it was strange that the umpires did not take disciplinary action against Temple and Couch.

Mr Sutherland said Couch was one of Southport's most promising players. He said Temple is a "big tough man."

He said Temple was a police, well meaning person off the field.

"I don't mind him at all," he said.

Temple is a PMG linesman and part-time "boarder," he said.

Couch has a career cleaning business. He had his nose broken during the riot and so far has collected \$140 from the injured players' fund.

# FOOTY VIOLENCE

ABOUT 200 Aussie Rules fans screamed obscenities and began attacking each other after a match on the Isle of Capri on Sunday.

A violent incident on the field flared into a bloody spectator riot after the game which was between bitter rivals Southport and Surfing Paradise.

Some club officials are said to have joined in the brief sideline war.

League president Mr Frank Sutherland yesterday called on police to send in the troops to quell sideline violence.

Eye witnesses said there had been plenty of "needle" all day and that violence erupted as players walked from the field after the full time whistle sounded.

Southport club president Dr Alan MacKenzie said full back, flanker Ross Couch had his nose broken at the start of a fight on the field.

Mr Sutherland said players and fans quickly joined in as players were walking to the boundary line.

He said about 2000 spectators saw Surfing Paradise down the legging members.

"A crowd that size deserves to have police in attendance," he said.

"The clash started after the game had finished."

"The players were walking towards the boundary line and everybody got stuck in to it. But it was soon quiet, by the way heads."

"It was an unfortunate incident and will be discussed at League level."

Mr Sutherland said he knew of at least two players who went home with broken noses after Sunday's encounter.

Mr Sutherland said spectators were on edge because the powerful Southport team started underdogs against the revitalised Surfing Paradise.

He said he left the ground disgusted and did not speak to anyone.

"People aren't always normal after a tough game," he said.

"I always leave and go home and try and get it out the next day when they've calmed down a bit."

A spokesman for the Umpires' Assoc at 60, Mr Len Macleod, said he believed alcohol increased the risk of fights at games.

"Some gals have a few beers and all they want to do is get some sex," he said.

"It was well and truly out. If any kid had fallen under that crowd he could have been crushed to death."

"The law says he's not when it's like that are due for a game."

Dr MacKenzie said he didn't think police suppression would be of any benefit.

"Crowd violence is hard to overcome and I don't think police supervision makes any difference."

"One or two police on show don't stop an outbreak like that one."

Because of previous violence at Rules matches, umpires are escorted from the field by a representative from each club.

Dr MacKenzie said he acted as Southport's representative on Sunday.

"I had strained while we were taking the umpires to the dressing rooms," he said.

"The fight was still going on when we came out a good 10 minutes later. They were exchanging insults and punches."

"I don't think anyone was badly hurt."

"But it was disgusting. It was completely unnecessary."

● SFF Bulletin Sport, page 23, for the match report.

Gold Coast Bulletin: May 23 1978, p1

Gold Coast Bulletin: May 31 1978, p40

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