

ALL SEEMED HOPELESS — THEN MAGPIES SWOOPED!

Northridge, purchases the ball away from the waiting hands of Southport opponents in Sunday's big Aussie Rules match at Owen Park. Northridge was one of the Demons' best players.

THE Southport Magpies staged an amazing whirlwind finish to snatch victory by a point from Surfers Paradise Demons in a breath-taking Gold Coast Aussie Rules preliminary final at Owen Park, Southport, on Sunday.

The Magpies were in a seemingly hopeless position at three-quarter time.

They trailed by six goals against the faster,



BILL RYAN

confident Demons who had they kicked six or ten would have had an unassailable lead.

But Southport, led by its brilliant fourth premier ship in a row, gradually bridged the gap as 40 minutes ticked away and at the first seven o'clock, the scrum-half read Southport 15-18 (100) Surfers Paradise 14-2 (107).

Former VFL player, Bill Ryan, rose to an unbelievable height during the final term to inspire the trailing Magpies. Ryan was dominant all over the field in the vital last quarter as, every Southport player lifted his game in grab victory in a madly exciting, nail-biting finish.

It was fitting that Ryan, hoisted the winning scores behind, followed a great mark when the scores were locked seconds from the finish.

Surfers, clearly the superior side for most of the game, had their chances to win the game conclusively. But the honours belonged to Southport, whose magnificent fighting spirit enabled them to win from a hopeless position.

The Magpies have won their way into their fourth consecutive grand final and will contest the flag

Ryan steers premiers to 4th straight grand final

with Ucolongona next Sunday.

Big crowd

A large crowd watched the final in warm, sunny conditions — with a freshening breeze which favoured the southern end goal, to which the Demons attacked.

The Magpies started quickly and Sid Short, crashing down from the centre, kicked.

Mike Hering, John Goodwill and Ian Lidstone were playing well for Surfers and they appeared to have an edge in speed.

However, the Southport defence was holding on and the Demons were making little headway with the breeze.

Surfers were continuing in attack, but chances were being wasted with inaccurate kicking.

Frank Lord goalled from a free and Shane Tyrrell, from behind the posts, raced into goal for another.

Missing, owing cleverly, kicked six fourth and the Demons slipped away to a handy lead despite their inaccuracy.

Surfers' small men were too fast and were providing many chances for their forwards.

They continued — on their winning way in the second term and Robert Hird's two goals against the breeze were costly to the Magpies.

Frank Kelly was winning kicks with strong

play. The Magpies were ineffectual and were persisting in playing from behind their opponents.

Ryan, in the ruck, and Short were striving to get the Magpies moving. But the Demons' defence, led by Ben Liddicoat and Warren Schult, were able to turn back Magpie attacks.

Surfers' flankers, Goodwill and Hering, were winning well and Mike Hering was the best rover.

Taylor injured

Southport, making no headway with the breeze, were in a desperate position when Zane Taylor limped off.

They had too many players below form and had it not been for Ryan, Short and Phil Hertz, they'd have been completely overrun by the Demons.

The Magpies had been unable to reduce their lead with the aid of the breeze and trailed by 31 points at half-time.

Surfers were leading in the race for the ball and their backing up and teamwork was first class.

Goals by Stuart Kray and Lidstone increased their lead.

Ryan's high marking and lightning football was bringing team notes into the play.

Desperate play by Short gave Ken Clark, who had been held by Rick Hering, and Milton Davis, now in full forward, opportunities for goals.

Southport rovers were coming into the game, as Ryan controlled the rucks.

The match improved as a contest as the Magpies' forward line was functioning better.

However, the Demons steadied and goals by Lord and Ian Wallace restored their composure.

Lord was a danger to the Magpies with strong marking and fine positional play.

Southport were doing well against the breeze and goals from Davis, Short and Rick White reduced the big lead of the Demons.

Wallace and Lidstone were smart forwards for the Demons, but Barry Lowe and Phil Hertz were keeping the pressure on their opponents to restrict scoring.



The Magpie improvement was reflected on the scoreboard as they added six goals against the breeze.

However, their task appeared hopeless as they still trailed by 34 points at orange time.

Surfers' faster small men appeared to give them an edge and the Demons showed no signs of waning.

John Ched, at centre half forward, scored a nice snap goal and Milton Davis threaded through another from an angled shot.

Short pulled down a 'scrammer' and his kick found Ryan for a goal, which brought the Magpies' supporters to life.

They were now playing

like men possessed and Ryan was fantastic as he marked strongly all over the ground and gave a superb ruck display.

Peter Willandren, Morris, White, in fact the entire Southport side, suddenly came to life as though inspired.

Another goal from Ched and the Magpies moved to within 14 points.

Liddicoat, a strong player for the Demons, goalled, but Morris answered for the Demos with a lovely kick.

Ryan's marking during this term was incredible and when he and Ched each goalled the Magpies were within a point and the big crowd were wild.

Surfers' Paradise showed their class when

Lord and Hering combined — and Liddicoat marked and goalled with a great pressure kick.

With only minutes remaining Clark had a chance, but was just off target.

Then the brilliant Ryan, from another great mark and equally fine kick, levelled the scores.

In a fantastic finish to a great game, Ryan marked again and his point gave the Magpies the match by the narrowest margin.

The Fics had come from nowhere to pip the Demons on the post in a finish that defies description.

Best players: Bill Ryan (S), Sid Short (S), Michael Hering (SP).

Rules scores at a glance

SOUTHPORT	1-1	2-8	8-12	15-18 (108)
SURFERS PARADISE	4-11	6-15	12-22	14-23 (107)

SPNT: Southport — W. Ryan, S. Short, P. Hertz, W. Morris, J. Ched, R. Webb, S. Lowe. Surfers — M. Hering, B. Liddicoat, J. Goodwill, M. Farmer, F. Lord, K. Hering, P. Kelly, I. Lidstone.
GOALS: Southport — J. Ched 3, M. Davis 3, K. Clark 2, S. Short 2, W. Ryan 2, R. White, W. Morris, G. Hoppas, Surfers — F. Lord 3, I. Lidstone 3, K. Hird 2, B. Liddicoat 2, I. Wallace, S. Kelly, M. Hering, S. Tyrrell.

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