

Sport Action

SHARK POWER

Crushing 94-point grand final win

RULES

By Terry Wilson

SOUTHPORT re-emerged from a three-year slumber to once again establish themselves as the powers of domestic Australian football competition in Queensland with what is believed to be a record win in the QSFL premier division grand final in Brisbane yesterday.

The undisputed wealthiest club in the State smashed rivals Mt Gravatt 26-13 (169) to 11-9 (75) at Windsor Park. The 94-point margin is understood to be a new mark, but was unable to be confirmed last night.

Southport's previous biggest winning margin was by 59 points in 1990, although they were twice hammered in grand finals by 61 points in matches against Morningside in 1991 and 1993.

Yesterday's flag was Southport's seventh from 11 grand finals since they first entered the State's major football competition, the old QAFL, in 1983 when they were debut premiers.

Breached

Money attracts good players — rivals clubs suggest the salary cap limit has been well and truly breached — and so it was for the Sharks, who played like Rolls Royces and their depleted opponents like Mini Minors.

From the opening bounce, the Sharks ripped into the Vultures to the extent that, at quarter-time, the game was as good as over with a lead of 8-2 to 1-2.

Mt Gravatt put up some fight in the second and third quarters, but the new champions finished as they began, with a surge of class that netted a final term of 9-6 to just 1-4 from their shattered rivals.

There was not a bad player for Southport. Their dominance was so complete that Grogan Medallist Jeff Brennan was permitted a relatively quiet one — but it didn't hurt team performance at all.

Elsewhere there was simply too much skill, pace, toughness and solidity.

The pace came from wingman Scott Bamford, the Brisbane Lion who took the Joe Grant Medal for best on ground, and flanker Fabian Webb. Their speed and running to open spaces earned them hauls of 4-5 and 4-0 respectively.

The defence of Ian Dargie, Craig Mansbridge, Dean Bowtell, David Johnston and Lincoln Hughes added to the toughness of Richard Maloney and Ian Dargie in the middle and the forwards subsequently finished off. Craig Wilson (5-0) and Brent Green (4-2) were among the goals.

And coach Danny Brennan praised the efforts of youthful pair Brad McMahon and Marc Woolnough, who shared ruck duties. Woolnough, headed for Geelong in the AFL next year, finished the match off with a spectacular mark in the goal-mouth that perhaps summed up the day for the Sharks.

"It was a sensational effort from a bunch of blokes who were totally committed," said Brennan.

Mt Gravatt worked hard, particularly at bringing the ball through the middle where Mark Keck, Jamie Dobbs and Brad Jones were good, but they didn't have the ammunition to match the Sharks.

■ Bamford wins Joe Grant Medal, Page 22.



ABOVE: The Southport Sharks celebrate their record-breaking QSFL grand final win at Windsor Park yesterday.

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BELOW: Southport ruckman Marc Woolnough (45), the teenager heading for Geelong in the AFL, outjumps Mt Gravatt rival Shane Dupuy during yesterday's grand final. Pictures: DAVID CLARK.

