



## Article provided by Goss Goss -

Bev James has asked a number of older players in the Association to describe some of the events which took place during the first 13 years of the Association.

This request could turn into a series of stories under the banner "Where Are They Now?" Let us start with Grae Mackinnon who produced a table tennis newsletter titled "The Southern STTAR" during the period 1976 to 1980. Grae was very enthusiastic with his newsletter, collating match results from the home and away competition, typing, copying (probably on a Gestetner) stapling and distributing copies to all playing venues. Initially he charged 25 cents a copy but that rose to 40 cents by 1980.

While Grae was producing "The Southern STTAR" he also produced the "Southern Boot" covering matches in the Southern Football League. It was interesting to see that Grae is still involved in producing the "Southern Boot" – see article "A life less ordinary" in the Southern Times Messenger on 2 May 2007 – some 30 years after kicking it off.

Some of the articles included in Grae's "The Southern STTAR" during 1980 touch upon the need for a dedicated table tennis centre with John Matovinovic being the main contributor to Letters to the Editor.

A contributor called "The Dobber" also got into the act – his or her contribution is reprinted below (this time via a computer).

### "ANOTHER PIECE OF CORRESPONDENCE (Gadzooks! They're ALL trying to get into the act!)

Dear Editor,

I see you have two experts clamouring for space in your magazine these days and both carry on a bit about coaching. I feel it is my duty to point out there is another coaching expert around, but he is such a modest chap it is up to me to push his barrow for him. And to prove his standing in the table-tennis fraternity let me tell you of a little event coming.

The Onkaparinga Club is turning on a car observation trial and barbie on Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> starting at Hackham Hall at 10.30am and I hear they are keen to have anyone and everyone have a bash at their obstacle course.

Now, their Social Committee have come up with some bonzer prizes for the winners of this prestigious event, and they are:-

- |               |   |
|---------------|---|
| First Prize-  | One hour of FREE table-tennis coaching from Gossy (That guy who stuck his foot in the door and said The Egg couldn't have his statue in Mr. Macho's Center – must find out what this Center thing is .) |
| Second Prize- | Two hours FREE coaching from Gossy.   |
| Booby Prize-  | Ten hours FREE coaching from Gossy.   |

Now, it should be obvious to all that the Onka types have a great detail of faith in Gossy. If they hadn't lined up Gossy as No.1 then they would have approached Mr. Macho or The Egg event though it must be costing them a packet for Gossy's

expertise. And if you don't believe me, I've seen a piece of paper says he's a Coach complete with purple ribbon and a coat of arms – real impressive it is – Gossy wouldn't miss one piece of paper from that carton. (Must sneak a look UNDERNEATH the paper in that carton).

So, there you are Mr. Editor – how's that for a revelation. And seeing Mr. Macho is raving on about this Center thing, later in the season I might be able to do some more dobbing when I discover what it is all about.

■ The Dobber”

Southern Times Messenger

NEWS



**A life less ordinary**

**PUTTING THE BOOT IN:** A weekly routine for Southern Football League stalwart Grae Mackinnon. Picture: Stephen Laffer 199148

**By JAI BEDNALL**

LIKE a hot pie and a cold beer, no game of Australian Rules is complete without a quick flick through the footy budget.

Without Grae Mackinnon, the man behind the *Southern Boot*, Southern Football League crowds would have been without this simple pleasure for the past 30 years.

It's a testament to the Port Noarlunga man's passion for the local game that he has battled through the endless phone calls and long hours chasing up information for so many years.

"I do have my moments when I wonder why the hell I'm doing it," the 61-year-old said.

"Last Thursday I was up until 5am getting everything finished. I only ended up having two hours sleep.

"But I've made some really good friends through it, and I get real pleasure when I see the kids reading it."

Mr Mackinnon has certainly come from very humble beginnings.

After writing a weekly newsletter for the Southern Tennis Association in the early 1970s, he was approached by the SFL, which asked him to consider writing a footy budget.

"I wanted to get into sports reporting of some kind and this seemed like a good way to get in," he said.

So in 1976, the first *Southern Boot* arrived at local ovals.

"The first handful of issues just included the guernsey numbers of the players," Mr Mackinnon said.

"It was very amateur compared to what it is now.

"I even did my own drawings for a while using a stencil, but I soon gave that up."

Gradually, he has been able to improve the budget. It has now grown to a 48-page magazine which includes team lists, head-to-head records, results, a quiz and sponsors.

"It's a lot bigger now because there's 14 teams. There were only eight when I first started."

Three times, in the mid-1980s, the early 1990s and the early 2000s, a lack of income forced Mr Mackinnon to stop publishing.

"But I keep coming back."

A new agreement with the league has gone a long way to solving those problems.

"I now get one cheque from the league and they do the chasing up from the clubs," he said.

"Each club buys 50 copies for a home game... I'm getting about 400 copies printed every week."

Advancements in technology also have helped, although Mr Mackinnon admits he is not the "quickest person to pick up new things".

"It took me a while but I've finally decided to give email a go this year."

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**q&a**  
Grae Mackinnon

**Q: What does your weekly routine involve?**  
A: Thursdays are always a late night, because I have to get the teams from each club after training and then have the Boot ready for the printer on Friday.

**Q: Who are the best teams you have seen in the past 30 years?**  
A: Definitely the Plympton side of the late 1980s, they were incredible. The current Morphett Vale side is very close too, and also Happy Valley through the 1990s.

**Q: Who are the best players you have seen?**  
A: My favourite was Wayne Potter, a really skilful midfielder who played for Willunga and McLaren Flat in the 1970s. Mark Jolly from Brighton is one of the more recent players. He looked like Potter, played like Potter, and was every bit as good as Potter. And also Alan Twigden, from Morphett Vale in the 1980s.

**Our people**

