

# SUPER GULLS KINGS OF GIPPSLAND FOOTBALL

BY CLEM PITT

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Warragul are the undisputed champions of Gippsland football after their LVFL double premiership at Yallourn last Saturday.

The scoreboard shows that Warragul defeated Moe by four points in the senior match, and Traralgon by two points in the curtain raiser.

Both victories were highlighted by dedication, determination, courage, skill, and, above all, team discipline.

Moe and Traralgon measured up as worthy opponents, being equally prepared to give all for their respective clubs.

To lose by such narrow margins would suggest that luck played a role in their downfall and in two see-saw matches this point must be conceded.

However, to succeed in sport, and particularly in an LVFL grand final, teams must make their own luck.

There are no second prizes in football and it takes planning to win through.

This starts way back at annual meeting stage

and progresses through recruiting to tough club matches to semifinals and eventually the all-important grand final, which surpasses all others for tension and atmosphere.

Along the way, many things can happen — internal wrangles, close defeats, frustrating injuries etc — that coaches and committees must sort out as part of the game.

In this regard Warragul was no different to any other club — meeting, accepting, and overcoming problems large and small on the way to the grand final.

Both Warragul teams suffered vital defeats in the finals that threw tremendous pressure on the ability of coaches Gahan and Roche to re-

store players' confidence in their ability to do better next time.

Warragul seconds were thrashed by Traralgon reserves, yet fought back to thrash Moe reserves next start and enter the grand final.

Warragul seniors lost the qualifying semifinal by seven points to Moe and suffered vital casualties at the same time.

Yet they fought back to beat a great finals team, Sale, by five points to reach the senior grand final.

Preparations for the double premiership bid had to be made while patching up injured stars Ken Robinson, Bob Baldry and Mick Gargan.

Then in the very last practice session of the

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season, crack defender Tom Topalovic went down with a sprained ankle and became a doubtful starter.

It was another problem that had to be overcome at 11 am on the morning of the match when a broken hearted Topalovic, after a fitness test, put club before glory and declared himself unfit to play.

I felt Topalovic's action was one of the greatest "club before self" gestures I have seen in 35 years of senior sport.

It led to some of the most drastic switches ever known in a senior football club and fully taxed the trained discipline of both teams.

This is the chain reaction that occurred 30 minutes before the reserves were due to start.

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WARRAGUL reserves pictured before the grand final against Traralgon last Saturday. One player — John Cramp — was still changing. Other are:

Back (l to r): Jim Johnson (trainer), Norm Canobie (trainer), Chris Cameron, Wayne Smith, Graeme Manley, Chris Batten, George Neille, Peter Sargeant, George Clements, Tony Ireland, Trevor McDevitt, Brian Hemming, Bruce Clasby (trainer), Ken Scammell (runner).

Front: Barry Decker, Jock Morrison, Tony Waters, Robert Proctor, Kevin Roche (coach), John Jackson (captain), Duncan Carmichael (v-c), Geoff Nott, John McLure, Bert Jackson.

## WARRAGUL RESERVES, LVFL PREMIERS — 1974

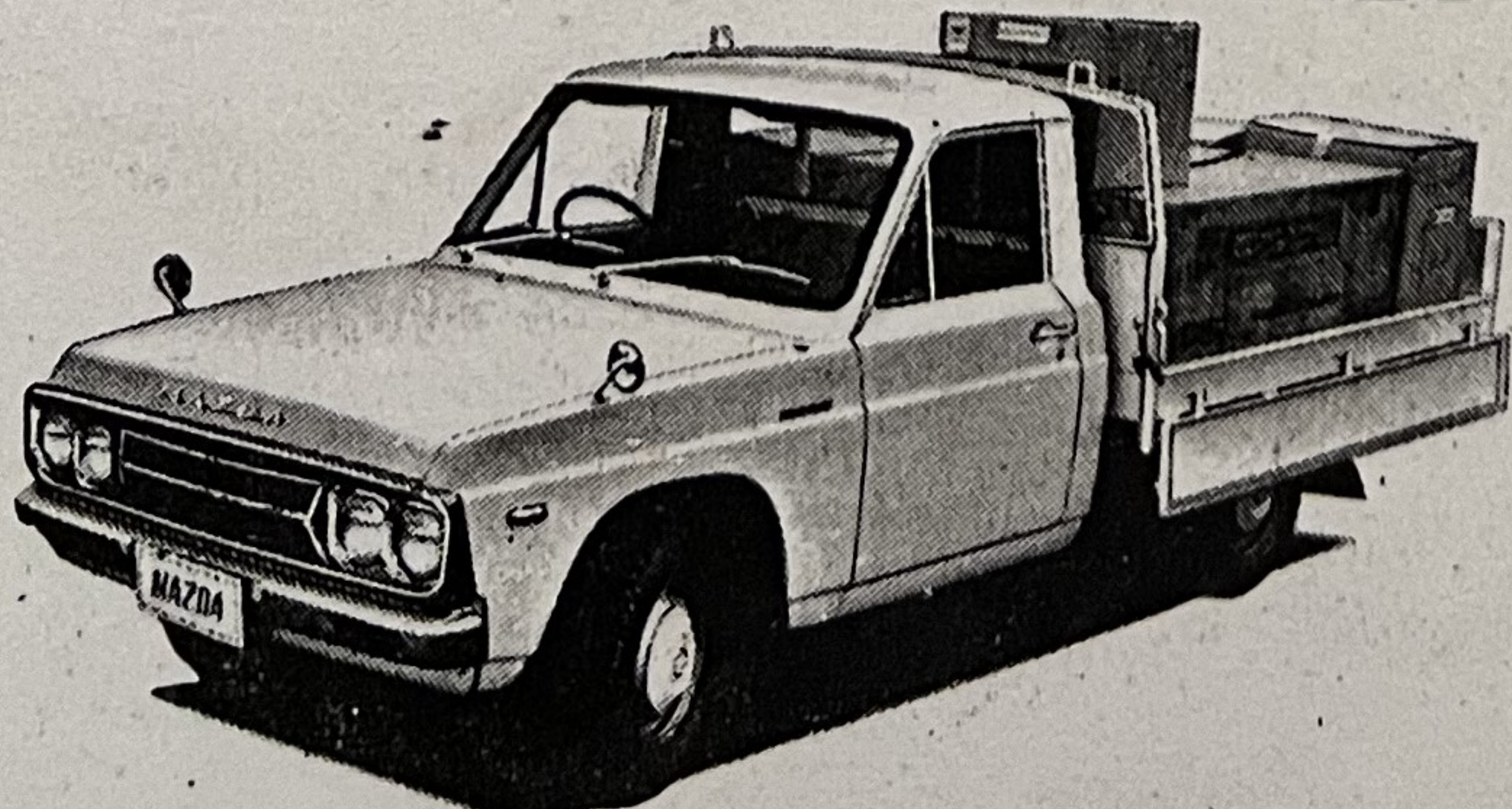


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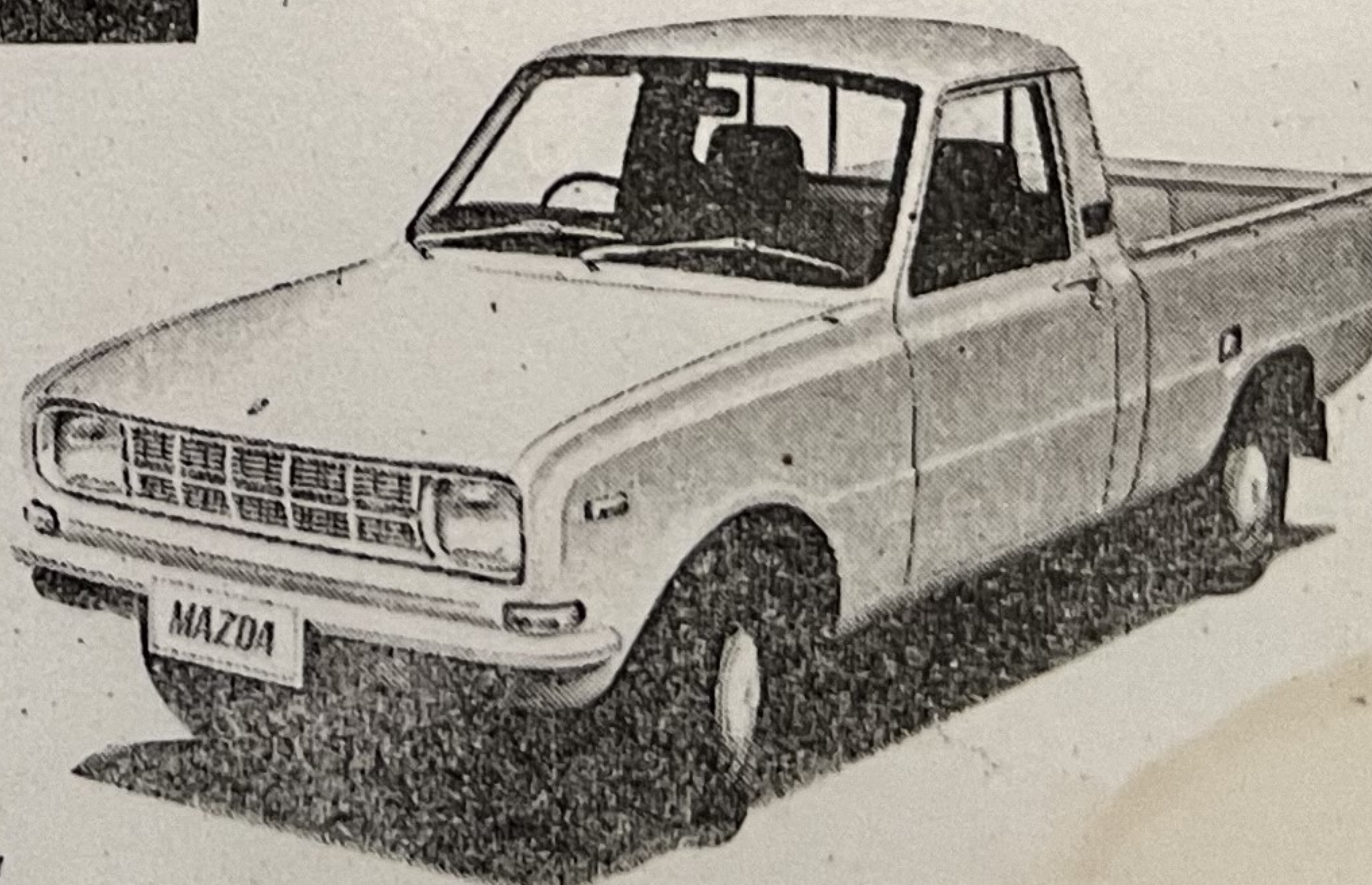
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