

INTERSTATE COACH'S REPORT - Headings

NAME: Brett Holmes

SPORT: Rugby League Exchange

1. SELECTION OF SQUAD / TEAM

The 2007 School Sport NT Rugby League Exchange was hosted by the CITY Cluster at AUSTAR Oval in Marrara.

The selection panel for this year's team was then Coach Graeme Dobson, Lorraine Caldwell (Sports trainer), Jo Cochrane (Manager) and Tony Ashton (NTRL representative).

It is difficult for me to comment any further as I was not involved in the selection process.

Please find a list of the selected players attached.

2. PRE-EVENT TRAINING PROGRAM

Due to my late call up as replacement coach it is difficult for me to comment on the training program prior to my involvement and was not given any feedback from either of the previous coaches as to what had been done at their sessions.

In the 4 week period which I was involved in the side the team trained up to twice a week at Archer Oval. These sessions were skill based with players being given a supplementary fitness program. All players were expected to follow this program or to complete some type of fitness activity other than the team training sessions, players were then asked to submit a weekly training log outlining their fitness related activities each week, these logs were submitted either via e-mail or hand written and handed in at selected training sessions.

Attendance at the team training sessions was not as good as it should have been. I put this down to a combination of the following reasons;

- Change of coach (twice) and therefore a number of date changes of sessions, especially to fit in with my shift work
- The changes occurring during school holidays which made it difficult to contact all players, as well as a number of players going on long breaks over this period
- A large proportion of the team being based outside of Darwin/Palmerston (5 out of 17)
- The unavailability of Lorraine due to Army reserve commitments for the majority of the holidays

3. OUT-OF-DARWIN TEAM MEMBER PREPARATION

Unfortunately due to my late call up I was not informed of what was set up for the players from outside of Darwin. Upon my appointment I attempted to contact with both the player and family, concentrating on those selected in the original side. The majority of my contact was through Rugby League people who I identified in their regional area and who maintained the players training over the period prior to the Exchange. These people were sent information regarding team plays, patterns etc

I would like to thank:

Gerry McCarthy – Tennant Creek

Jon Reagan – Nhulunbuy

These people did a magnificent job and ensured that their respective players were fully prepared for an intensive week long Rugby League Carnival.

4. INTENSIVE WEEKEND / CAMP / WEEK

Our pre exchange intensive two day camp was based at Richardson Park. The players completed up to 4 training sessions a day, based mainly towards getting them used to each others style of play. The sessions were short and sharp with the emphasis on team patterns and plays. This was extremely important due to the high percentage of players from outside of Darwin, unfortunately this also meant that we were not able to extend the team as much as I would have liked.

To break up the camp, team building/bonding sessions were incorporated into the timetable on both days. Day 1 the team went to Zone 3 Laser Game and Day 2 we went Rock Climbing at Doctors gully. Both

activities were well received and served a great purpose in bringing the players together as a team and providing a well earned break from a very intensive training schedule.

The activities on the first day were concluded with our Team presentation, where all players received their School Sport NT gear from Helen Taylor and their playing strip (which was donated by the NTRL) from Barry Moore (CEO of the NTRL); the presentation evening was finished with a team meal at the Fasta Pasta.

I would like to thank the NTRL for the use of Richardson Oval and its facilities for the two day camp. Find attached a copy of the program for the intensive weekend training camp prior to the carnival.

5. COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE

As has been mentioned previously this team received a great deal of support for from the community and without it I believe would not have been as successful as it was.

Listed below are the particular organisations who assisted our team, and who I would like to make a special mention of Thanks to.

NTRL – Provided us with use of their ground and facilities for no cost, and donated the full playing strip as well as \$6000 towards the cost of the trip

Palmerston Raiders Rugby League – use of their ground and equipment

Northern territory Institute of Sport – use of their ground, equipment and audio visual gear which enabled us to put together a team video

Nth Qld Cowboys NRL Club – provided shirts, shorts and caps which were used as awards for players

6. GAMES REPORT

Due to the disrupted preparation, my lack of knowledge of the players and the new trial draw format the goal that we set was to finish in the top 5. Unfortunately we fell one short being defeated in the 5th/6th game by a well drilled ACT side. Due to an anomaly in the draw we played ACT when a true reflection of the sides on their results would have seen us playing VIC on the final day, which I believe we could have won. In saying this I could not fault the effort of each of the players throughout the exchange, each player to a person gave it their all and were extremely competitive in all of the games, in fact we only lost two games by one try or less and with the other results as they were we could well have finished as high as third place had we taken our chances.

I am very proud that our team achieved the best result by an affiliated states team against the eventual winners QLD, this is the yardstick against which we need to be measured and it shows that our players are able to compete against the best in the country which is all that I can ask of them as a coach. The final score of (40 – 0) was not a true reflection of the effort put in with the opposition scoring three tries in the last five minutes.

The players were complimented by all who came into contact with them on their behaviour both on and off the field; they were excellent ambassadors for the NT and Rugby League.

Our results are as follows:

Day 1	NT	0	v	Qld	40
Day 2	NT	24	v	WA	0
	(Tries: Josh Watson, Tyrone Cannell 2, James Redman, Brody Race; Goals: Haiden Fitz-Slade, Brandon Simpson)				
Day 3	NT	10	v	ACT	16
	(Tries: Brad Sneddon, Brody Race; Goals: Haiden Fitz-Slade)				
Day 4	NT	8	v	VIC	10
	(Tries: Tyrone Cannell, Rhys Reagan)				
Day 6	NT	38	v	SA	4
	(Tries: Josh Watson 2, Robert Greenwood 2, Brad Sneddon, James Redman; Goals: Haidyn Fitz-Slade, Brandon Simpson, David Munro, James Ramsay, and Jake Power)				

NT 6 v ACT 18
(Tries: Josh Watson; Goal: Robert Greenwood)

Final Placing

1. QLD
2. NSW 1
3. NSW 2
4. VIC
5. ACT
6. NT
7. WA
8. SA

I would also like to personally thank both Jo Cochrane (Manager) and Lorraine Caldwell (Sports Trainer) for the excellent and professional manner which they went about their job, both on and off the field, whilst at the Exchange in Sydney.

I found Jo to be an extremely enthusiastic and organised person; she is very personable and was very good at communicating with the parents. She proved to be an excellent manager and I would have no problem in recommending her for any future position which she may apply for.

Lorraine's input prior to travelling away was relatively minimal due to her Army Reserve commitments but came into her own whilst away. She was very diligent in her sports trainer duties at the exchange and undertook a great deal of the manager duties when Jo unfortunately fell ill and was hospitalised for the last few days of the exchange.

To conclude, this experience has been difficult for me because I wasn't involved from the outset. Not knowing the players and having never seen them play prior to going away made this trip quite a challenge, as well as travelling with two relatively inexperienced officials especially to Rugby League. In saying this it was extremely rewarding and the players gave everything they could, unfortunately the results didn't give a true reflection of their effort.

Brett Holmes