

RUGBY LEAGUE INTERNATIONALS OF THE 1970s ARE VISITING GUNNEDAH

Graham Eadie one of game's greatest

GRAHAM Eadie was a passionate footballer – and now he's passionate about helping young talented rugby league players find a career in the game.

Over the next three days the Manly, NSW and Australian fullback will be in Gunnedah with two other internationals, Larry Corowa and Steve Martin, to conduct skills sessions with young players, under the Aussie Sport Skills program.

The visit will culminate in a two-hour session at Kitchener Oval from 11am Saturday involving youngsters from Gunnedah Public School, Gunnedah South and St Xavier's.

Graham Eadie was a rampaging fullback who was a fixture in representative sides through the 1970s, also winning four Sydney premierships with Manly.

Originally from Woy Woy, Eadie played 233 games for Manly between 1971 and 1983, scoring 1917 points (71 tries, 847 goals and three field goals).

He played 12 Tests for Australia between 1973 and 1979, scoring two tries and kicking five goals.

In 1974 Eadie won the prestigious Rothmans Medal, Sydney rugby league's best-and-fairest award.

He played for NSW in the first State of Origin match in 1980.

Eadie joined English club Halifax in 1986, scoring 16 tries through the season, a record for a fullback.

His efforts helped Halifax win the 1986-87 club championship and 1987 Challenge Cup, in which he won the Lance Todd trophy as player of the grand final.

Eadie coached Halifax in 1988, Bilambil in northern NSW in 1989-90, the Gold Coast Seagulls reserve grade in 1991-92, the Seagulls juniors for four seasons, the Gold Coast Chargers in 1997-98 and South Tweed seniors in 2000-01.

In 2006 he was named in Manly's team of the century as the No 1 fullback.

Eadie has been heavily in the media since retiring as a player, writing for Rugby League Week, hosting chat shows on radio and appearing as guest speaker at a large number of league functions.

His league career was crowned last month when he was named as one of Australia's greatest 100 footballers in the game's 100 years.

According to the citation, the chosen 100 represent "the spirit, skill and determination that has made the game what it is today."

Larry Corowa was an electrifying winger for Balmain, NSW and Australia.

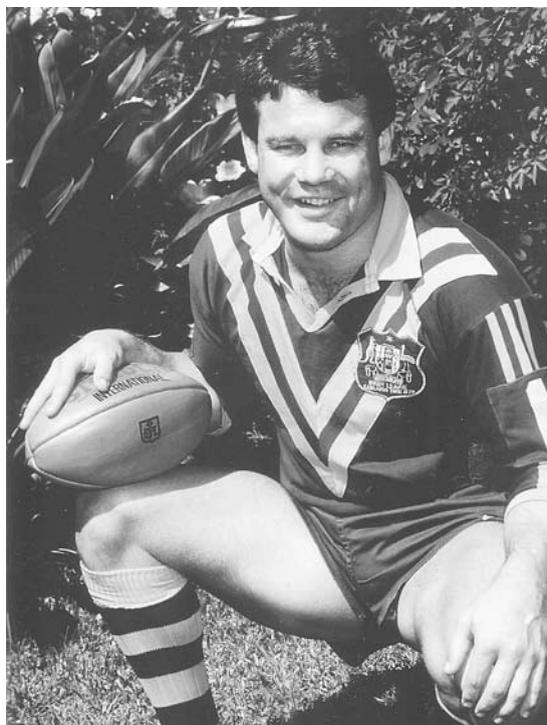
He played two Tests in 1978-79 and the following year was awarded the MBE for his services to the game.

Corowa joined Balmain in 1978, scoring 24 tries that year, many in spectacular style.

He was the fastest man in rugby league but his career was disrupted in the early 1980s by illness and injury.

Steve Martin was a former AFL player, from Wagga, who played for Manly, Balmain, NSW and one Test for Australia.

He was a dynamic halfback and toured England and New Zealand with the Kangaroos.



GRAHAM Eadie in his Australian guernsey.

At the end of his career, he became a highly-regarded coach with West Tamworth and North Sydney, Featherstone Rovers in England and South Sydney.

The Aussie Sport Skills program has been under way in Gunnedah since February, under the eye of co-ordinator Matt Fitzgerald.

The program concentrates on developing the ball skills of youngsters, with emphasis on speed, ball movement and kicking.

Squads have been named from three primary schools in Gunnedah and players will take part in the skills sessions to be conducted by the three former internationals.

The squads are:

Gunnedah Public (Martins): Mitchell Matthews, Blake Loker, Kih McDonald, Nick Smyth, Daniel Lawlor, Tyler Silver, Hayden Smith, Kris Lodge.

St Xavier's (Eadies): Luke Walsh, Hudson Smith, Will Wilson, Clay McCann, Lachie Cochrane, Jack Reeves, Isaac John, Elliott Jones, Michael Knight.

Gunnedah South (Corowas): Hayden Loughrey, Lachie Flemming, Brodie Small, Jackson Ludlow, Justin Carter, Matt Hassen, Marcus Hayne.

Tomorrow there will be a sport pathways talk at Gunnedah High School at lunchtime, followed by a meet-the-visitors function at the Courthouse Hotel from 4pm.

On Friday evening from 7pm there will be a social evening at the Gunnedah Services and Bowling Club, with Graham Eadie as guest speaker.

During the evening a NSW State of Origin guernsey, signed by all members of the 2006 winning team, will be auctioned.



LEAGUE greets Brett Kenny, left, Laurie Daley, Mal Meninga and Graham Eadie at a recent function. Eadie will be in Gunnedah over the next three days and will be guest speaker at a function in the Services and Bowling Club tomorrow night.

Baseball debut on new ground

THE Courthouse Hotel Giants Baseball Club will play its first home game in eight years at the new location, Donnelly Fields, on Saturday.

The Giants have been travelling to Tamworth each weekend for their competition fixtures but now have their own ground.

The Giants have stepped into the top league this season.

The Giants' long-awaited debut in A grade last Saturday turned into a real baptism of fire, against the white-hot Tamworth Knights.

The Giants fielded an inexperienced line-up and were taken to the cleaners, 15-1.

Only Jamie Eveleigh and Daniel Traynor had tasted first-grade experience, with Brad Hamilton, Bon Winsor and Jeremy Lee playing baseball for the first time – they were thrust into the side when five players had to withdraw through other commitments.

The Knights' pitching was exceptional, producing 13 strike-outs against the Giants' batters in the six-inning game.

Jamie Eveleigh, Matt Agostino and Daniel Traynor all produced a hit and Jodie Revell gained two outfield hits.

The Giants' only run came in the sixth inning when Agostino's outfield hit brought Daniel Traynor home from second base.

The Giants fielded well in each inning, gaining two outs before the Knights had scored in four of the six stanzas.

But the standard slipped away late in each innings, the team committing nine errors for the game.

Captain Jamie Eveleigh wasn't disheartened with the result.

"The guys played well in patches but lacked the consistency you need to win games.

"The key is to keep coming back, keep learning and improving. I'm sure we will be a much better side in a few weeks' time.

"The Knights have an awesome pitching team but we obviously helped them out with our errors in the field.

"Our team has great spirit – it was very evident from the first pitch. We're all looking forward to our first home game."

In B grade, the Giants played out a hotly-contested 7-all draw.

Matt Agostino, Brad Hamilton, Jeremy Lee and Bon Winsor all gained hits.

Michael Flannery and Hamilton gained points from the umpire for best on field.

In C grade it was the same story with the Giants and the Cougars locked at 12-all when the game was called.

Brian Howarth led the team well in his first game as captain with Carl Block, Shaun Cross and Hayden Anderson all impressing in their first baseball game.

All three teams will be playing at Donnelly on Saturday with a 12.30pm start and spectators and new players are more than welcome.

According to Jamie Eveleigh, the home fixtures are a good opportunity for potential players to see if they would like to take up the game.

"It's a really enjoyable game," he said.

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