

Cowboys call up Vaughan

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Pride talent reined in to tackle Broncos

THE Northern Pride's much vaunted pathway to rugby league's elite level has already become a reality for southern signing Josh Vaughan.

The outside back, who won a Queensland Cup premiership with Tweed Heads last season, linked with the Pride in the off-season for a change of pace and will find himself in the fast lane next week when he joins the North Queensland Cowboys for their trial match against Brisbane.

Vaughan headed to Townsville yesterday and will train with the

Cowboys this week ahead of Saturday's trial against the Broncos in Rockhampton.

The fleet-footed three-quarter said pushing for a Cowboys spot had not been the main lure in joining the Pride, with the life-style on offer in Cairns the main attraction.

"(It was) just something differ-



Josh Vaughan

ent," he said. "I wanted to come up and have a change of life and why not do it where I could play footy as well?"

"It was a good opportunity, they sort of talked about (possible opportunities with the Cowboys) a little bit, nothing was set in concrete but it's just going to be a good opportunity (this) weekend too."

While Vaughan is relishing his chance to showcase his talents to the Cowboys, he said the Pride remained his focus.

"The priority is to hit form with the Pride and hopefully help the boys out there and you never know what might happen," he said.

"I've always been lacking that next step, so hopefully this year's the year, see what happens."

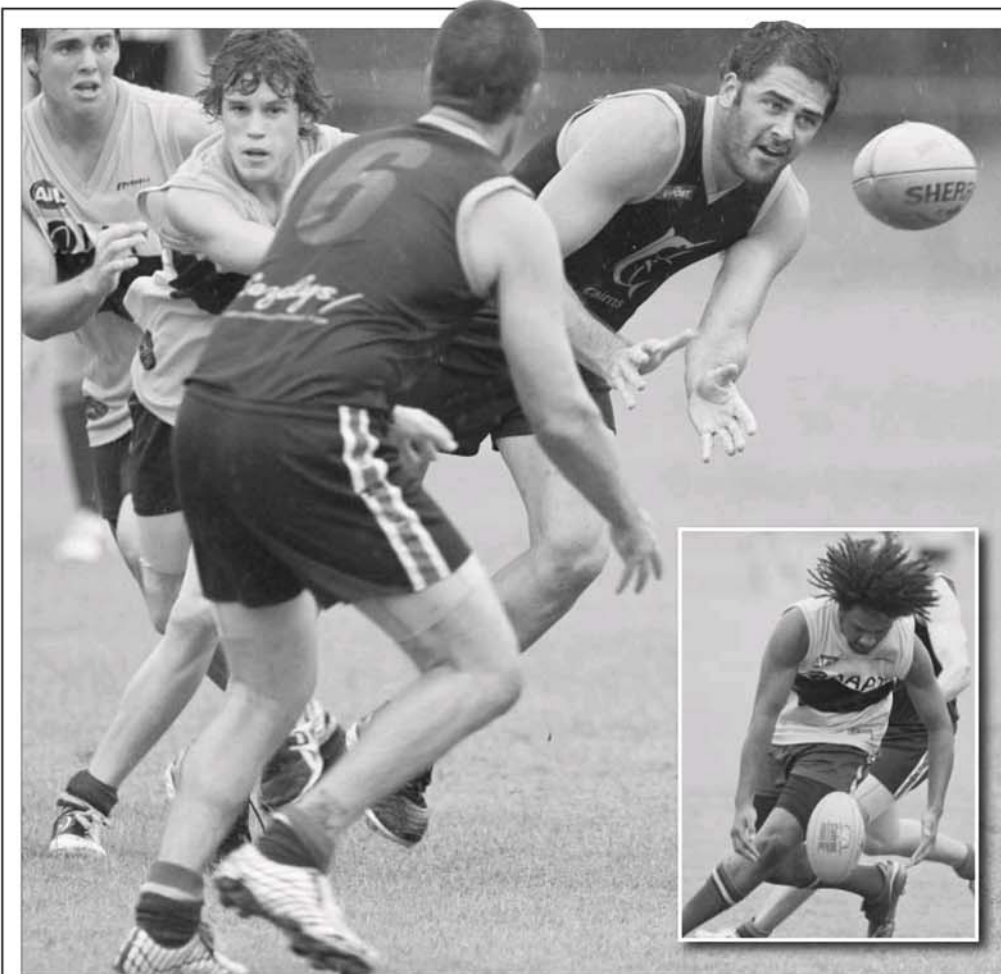
Vaughan watched the Pride's first pre-season hitout from the sidelines last weekend with coach Andrew Dunemann giving his fringe players a chance to impress in the club's inaugural trial at Yarrabah.

The Pride continues its pre-sea-

son this weekend in a trial against fellow Queensland Cup newcomers Mackay at Moranbah on Saturday night.

Meanwhile, the Queensland Rugby League's Northern Division is calling for nominations for North Queensland's team of the century which will be named as part of the rugby league's Centenary celebrations this year.

The public will be given an opportunity to vote for their favourites during April and May but can help the short-listing process by nominating players to the division office at northern@qrl.com.au.



Facing the pack: South Cairns Cutter Steve Shaw (ball) finds a way through the nimble Lions, while (inset) under-18 rep player Marley Anderson scraps for the ball. Pictures: MICHAEL WATT

Young Lions show courage against tall Cutters

THE Cairns Lions under-18 AFL side is well prepared for an assault on country championships, according to regional development manager Eddie Skiba.

The young Lions side had its final hitout against South Cairns on Saturday ahead of next weekend's championships at Rockhampton. And while the Lions lost the match against their bigger-bodied opponents by 20 points, their pressure, run and endeavour pleased Skiba.

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South Cairns virtually rotated two sides throughout the match.

The Cutters took a 24-point quarter-time lead but from that point on were matched by the teenagers in greasy conditions at Watsons Oval.

Mitch Nicholson was the standout from an even team performance for the Lions.

"As the game went on you could

see the team's confidence grow and you could see their intent to implement the sorts of things we have been working on at training for some time," Skiba said.

"The most pleasing things to come out of the game was firstly the team's competitive spirit and also their ability to pressure and harass the opposition right through to the final siren."

Skiba said Saturday's performance combined with an earlier win against a

representative Townsville side should hold the under-18s in good stead at the country championships.

"Although they lost on Saturday, they will take a lot of confidence from that result, and the previous one against Townsville," Skiba said.

"So they're looking pretty good, but it's always hard to know how well they will go because there is not a lot known about their opposition."

Bad racing luck cruels kart pair

CAIRNS pair Lydon Dodge and Thomas Janusz missed out on the major placings but remained content with their 2008 Victorian Karting Championships performances yesterday.

Both drivers reached the final of their respective divisions with Dodge finishing 15th in the clubman light class and an accident forcing Janusz out of action in the clubman super heavy decider.

Dodge, who started the final 16th on the grid, said he had learned much about his new CRG team kart, putting him in good stead for the 48th National Sprint Kart Championships in Launceston next month.

"The kart didn't come on as quick as we would have liked," he said. "Our best times came at the end of the race which was a bit too late."

"It's only the second time I've raced in the go-kart. It was tough still learning about the go-kart and about a new track I'd never been to."

Dodge will use day/night meets in Townsville on Saturday and Cairns a week later to assist his preparations for the nationals.

"That gives us two more high-class meetings for testing, especially with the chassis, and we can see what happens when we change a few things," he said.

Janusz was disappointed his final came to a finish when he was forced to veer off the track to avoid an accident ahead of him, sliding into the sand and ending his race.

Janusz hoped to also contest the nationals in Launceston but will otherwise eye off other opportunities with the Queensland, New South Wales and South Australian Opens all shaping as likely campaigns this year.

Malthouse slams new bench rules

COLLINGWOOD coach Mick Malthouse has warned that the NAB Cup Grand Final might end up being decided by the blood rule under the AFL's controversial interchange restrictions.

Speaking after the Magpies were thrashed 4.15.10 (136) to 0.7.13 (55) by Adelaide in Abu Dhabi on Saturday night Malthouse continued his attack on the trial rule, which is only in place for the pre-season competition.

The Collingwood coach said the cap of 16 interchanges per quarter meant the Magpies were unable to field numerous players they usually would have and some they did include had to spend extended spells on the bench.