

## SPORTSMONDAY

## RUGBY LEAGUE

## QUEENSLAND CUP



The Cutters trained on the beach with the support of the Mackay Surf Lifesaving Club. Cutters from back left, Todd Seynour, Chris Guimelli, Jim Bryant, Brendan Crouch, Adam Schubert, trainer Jim Wilson, Jamie McDonald, Sam Granville, Luke Srama, Luke Young, assistant coach Don Saunders, middle, Cody Norton, Matt Mannion, Shane Muspratt, Aaron Barba, Dan Goddard, front, manager Steve Nielsen.

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# Great expectations

## Muspratt and his side aim to win all home games in 2008 Q-Cup

By **JIM MULCAIR**  
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EVERYTHING is new for the Mackay Cutters rugby league outfit. New team. New coach. New expectations.

But first-time coach Shane Muspratt has a 100-year-old attitude to his game, rugby league.

"For a 100 years it's been about scoring tries and getting through another team to win; that's not new," Muspratt, a 65-game NRL veteran, most recently with the Cowboys and Young Guns, said yesterday.

Muspratt will play halfback with the Cutters when they debut in the Queensland Wizard Cup next season but he won't be captain.

As coach he will leave the on-field chat to the yet-to-be-selected captain, thus avoiding any conflict with referees that would arise if he was captain and coach.

That leaves the man who replaced Johnathon Thurston when required at the Cowboys last year, to craft a team that is "not just competitive" in the state league in 2008.

That process continued at the weekend when the 26-man squad trained at Harbour Beach with the support of the Mackay Surf Life-

saving Club, building fitness, condition and understanding between players and staff.

It's a long way to kick off for the Cutters when they take on the Cairns North Pride in Cairns on March 15 in both teams' debut game in the comp but Muspratt is pushing his men hard.

Muspratt will have drawn up a team made up of available Cowboys' fringe players, five "imported" players based in Mackay, and about a dozen who play in the Mackay Rugby League competition.

"It's not about having a team that is just competitive. It's about an aim in our first year of winning all our home games, picking up a few away points and making the finals," Muspratt said yesterday.

"Rugby league is about winning and the Cutters are about that," he said.

Having the team in prime condition is essential. Already the squad is doing three weight and three field sessions a week.

Saturday's field work is a conditioning session, no ball work. Tuesday is conditioning with ball. Thursday is an all-skills workout.

Strategy and game plays comes onto the roster after Christmas.

Muspratt likes the idea of coach-

ing a lot.

"As a half back I've always had a leadership role. I've learnt a lot from all my past coaches I've taken a bit from every coach," he said.

He cited Nathan Brown, of St George, Jason Taylor, South Sydney and Graham Murray, Cowboys

as ex-halfbacks who made the grade as coaches.

Muspratt said the Cutters' squad was strong and keen and the city of Mackay was taking the team on board as well.

"We have had a lot of businesses contacting us wanting to be foundation members, a good early

sign," he said.

The Cutters play their first trial against the Cairns North Pride at Moranbah on February 16.

If you can't make that match ABC will televise the Cutters' second game in the Wizard Cup on Saturday March 22 against Wynnum Manly at 2pm.

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<b>FRED CLAUS (PG)</b> CITY ONLY MON 3.50, 6.20PM	<b>HITMAN (MA15+)</b> MT PLEASANT ONLY MON 10.30, 12.35, 2.40, 4.45, 6.50, 9.15PM
<b>1408 (M)</b> CITY ONLY MON 10.45, 1.00, 3.10, 6.30PM	<b>THE GAME PLAN (G)</b> MT PLEASANT ONLY MON 10.45, 1.00, 3.15, 6.15, 8.35PM
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