

## RL: The hard work has only just begun for Pappas

By Brent Read

SYDNEY, April 8 AAP - The hard work has only just begun for new South Sydney chairman Nick Pappas.

Pappas, the club's lawyer and George Piggins' right hand man during the Rabbitohs' fight for reinstatement to the National Rugby League, is now in the hot-seat at the game's most famous club.

He and Piggins mended their differences during a three hour meeting at South Sydney Leagues Club this afternoon, heading off a potential bloodbath at this weekend's Annual General Meeting.

Pappas and the club's new nine-man board will be ratified on Sunday.

But once the appointment becomes official, they face arguably rugby league's Mt Everest - turning this once-proud club into a force again.

Piggins, one of the most resilient and determined men in the game, spent 13 years attempting to do so.

But he was never able to find a way back to the heady days of the 1950s, 60s and 70s, when the club regularly won premierships and played in grand finals.

Instead Piggins spent his 13 years as chairman fighting costly court battles, rallying troops and scratching for the money to buy players.

It's a mark of the man that in most cases he was able to achieve what he set out to do.

Even today, as he exited the chairman's chair, he left a winner.

Piggins got what he wanted.

He wanted Pappas to take over, but he wanted him to do so with a board dominated by members of the existing board - his board.

The baton is now in Pappas' hands.

He takes over a club which re-entered rugby league last season with ample money and support - and even optimism.

In just over a year most of that has been eroded.

He'll have to contend with a nine-man board made up of five members not of his own choosing.

There will be bridges to build.

Once that's done, Pappas will have to find a way to turn around a club which has become synonymous with losing.

Pappas has promised to attract corporate dollars - or as Piggins put it, money from the "big end of town" - and turn the Rabbitohs into a force again.

But Piggins today warned it wouldn't be easy.

"Hopefully if we are ever able to get the money to be a contender you might find the red and green out there in a grand final," Piggins said today.

"But we'll have to find a lot of money, it's a long way off.

"It's a hard job. I don't think they're getting a picnic. In three years  
time he'll (Pappas) be a lot greyer than what he is now, I'll tell you that.