



The Rabbitohs brawl – there'll be no winner

Crikey.com.au – Jeff Wall writes

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The news that yet another "power struggle" is under way in the South Rabbitohs NRL Club can only benefit those who want to relocate the club or consign it to history.

Since their triumphant return to the NRL, the Club has underperformed on the field, and struggled to stay above water financially.

The last thing the Rabbitohs need now is a power struggle, but that's exactly what is going to happen with the long-time powerbroker of the Souths Juniors Leagues Club, Henry Morris, running for the football club board – with the ultimate goal of deposing the Chairman, Nick Pappas.

The club is engaged in a battle with the Lord Mayor of Sydney over the future of Redfern Oval, its recruitment campaign for 2006 fell short of expectations, and the decision by the Pappas-led Board to relocate to Telstra Stadium continues to be questioned. Meanwhile, the privatisation proposal from Peter Holmes a Court and Russell Crowe remains on the table.

At least the Rabbitohs will have something in common with Telstra Stadium – both are in dire financial straits.

The Rabbitohs need stability in the boardroom and success on the field. Since the Club was re-admitted in 2002 it has finished 14th, last, last and 13th. The Club's end of year report card will surely say "must do better."

Today football clubs need strong leadership off the field as well as on. It may be true that Souths Juniors have bailed out the football club but you have to question the timing of the George Piggins driven campaign to oust the current Chairman, Nick Pappas.

The NRL is no doubt watching the latest development with interest, and, hopefully, concern. And those in the game who want to run the Rabbitohs out of town – to Gosford, probably, or out of the game completely – will be rubbing their hands in anticipation.

It would be a sad day for the game if they get their way.