

Galuvao told: Quit for God

- By Dean Ritchie
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GIANT forward Joe Galuvao has been told by Souths owner Russell Crowe to swap the paddock for the pulpit and become a religious minister to free up money for Craig Wing. *Source: The Daily Telegraph*

THE NRL will monitor South Sydney's salary cap after the club finalised a \$1.2million deal with former Test star Craig Wing last night.

The Daily Telegraph understands Wing will today announce his four-year deal with the Rabbitohs.

Wing's deal pushes Souths to their salary cap ceiling - the club hoping to ease that strain by offloading second-rower Joe Galuvao and at least three other players.

The NRL is aware of the situation and salary cap auditor Ian Schubert is already making discreet enquiries in case Galuvao refuses give up his \$350,000-a-year contract.

Galuvao has been told by Souths co-owners to consider swapping the paddock for the pulpit and become a religious minister so the club can free up money for Wing. And others are on the outer as well.

The former Panther, though, is digging in and wants to remain at Souths until his contract ends at the end of 2008. The Rabbitohs are also unlikely to re-sign halfback Joe Williams, fullback David Peachey, prop Luke Stuart and hooker Stuart Webb.

Peachey said yesterday he wanted to play again in 2008. Galuvao was told by Souths co-owners Russell Crowe and Peter Holmes a Court that he had a limited future at the club. He has been playing reserve grade for most the season.

The former New Zealand Test player continues to have close link with the Penrith Christian Life Centre - a fact not lost on Crowe.

"He had a meeting with Russell Crowe and Peter Holmes a Court and they told him he wasn't part of their plans," said Galuvao's manager Allan Gainey. "Russell suggested that he retire and go into the ministry.

"Joe was gobsmacked. Joe is very supportive of his church and he involves himself. They may have thought Joe's main focus was the church but he's always fitted football and the church together."

Galuvao last night rejected suggestions he should become a minister. "The church is a big part of my life, being a Christian," he said. "But being a minister is a bit far-fetched. I was a bit surprised (it was mentioned) but it's something I'm passionate about."

Galuvao has vowed to fight his way back at Souths and is refusing to walk away from the club or his contract. Asked about his meeting with Crowe and Holmes a Court, he said: "They spoke about the realities of the club and where I stood. I have a contract here and, as for now, I'm here to stay."

Gainey said his client simply cannot be shown the door. "Joe is young enough and wants to back himself," he said. "He won't be going anywhere. I'll do my best to find a club but Joe isn't compelled to go. He can't just be shovelled off.

"The Gold Coast had some interest six weeks ago and now it seems Joe isn't part of Souths' plans. I told Peter Holmes a Court that Joe still has a contract."

Holmes a Court denied he and Crowe attempted to push Galuvao into the ministry. But he did say: "We know he is very serious about his church and he's actively involved in his church. We asked Joe what he wanted to do and if he wanted to end up in the ministry.

"We wanted to know if that was part of his life. We ask all our players what they want to achieve in life. You don't need wholesale carnage to fit players under the salary cap."

Galuvao has battled injuries in recent times and will play Premier League this weekend for Souths' feeder club, Norths. Peachey said he would meet Souths chief executive Shane Richardson tomorrow to determine his future.

The former Cronulla fullback wants another year at Souths but would also discuss with Richardson a possible career after football.

"I know in my heart what I want so I want to know what they want to do with me," he said. Asked would he be disappointed if Souths did not re-sign him, Peachey said: "Yeah I would. But Souths have given me a second chance to play in the NRL."

If Souths cannot sign Peachey, the fullback hopes to be employed by the club to help local Aboriginal kids. Wing said the Roosters could have signed him.

"Here we are in June - I could have been signed before the season started," Wing said. "It's very hard because I had so many good years at the Roosters."