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RL: Revolution continues at Redfern with Richardson appointment

League Nightlead
By Brent Read

SYDNEY, June 2 AAP - The revolution continued at South Sydney tonight with Penrith chief executive Shane Richardson joining the NRL club - an appointment described by Rabbitohs boss Nick Pappas as the most significant in a decade.

The Richardson coup capped off another tumultuous day for the club and Pappas, who fronted the media to discuss last night's axing of coach Paul Langmack.

And it emerged late tonight that the position of New Zealand Warriors coach Daniel Anderson was also under review, with owner Eric Watson flying into the country tomorrow to meet with management.

Pappas, meanwhile, fronted a media conference today to explain the sacking of Langmack, all the while keeping the Richardson appointment under his hat.

But the club was forced to confirm they had secured the services of the Penrith boss when the Panthers released a statement wishing their former chief executive all the best.

Pappas said current chief executive David Tapp would remain with the organisation, most likely in a sponsorship and marketing capacity.

"I have always had a high regard for Shane Richardson," Pappas said.

"He saw the challenge and he's a man for challenges.

"I think it's the most significant appointment we have made in a decade."

Richardson is expected to start next week, with his first duty to find a new coach for the embattled club.

His appointment won't be the end of the sweeping changes at Redfern.

Pappas warned rugby league fans to "watch this space" amid speculation the club was poised to make an approach to the Bulldogs over the contract of Braith Anasta.

Anasta, the nephew of former chairman George Piggins, has another year to run on his deal with the 'Dogs.

"I'm on contract (at the Bulldogs) until the end of 2005 so it's not even worth talking about right now," was Anasta's response tonight.

Richardson has a reputation for re-building clubs.

He made his name at Cronulla, where he formed a potent partnership with coach John Lang, the pair transforming the Sharks into a premiership force.

He then headed for England where he helped form the Gateshead club before returning to Australia to join Lang at Penrith.

Together the pair led the Panthers to last year's premiership - two years after they collected the wooden spoon.

"I have had a great time at Penrith," Richardson said in a statement tonight.

"It's a great club with great players and great fans. I am just moving onto another challenge."

If a challenge is what Richardson is looking for, it's what he'll get at Redfern.

The club has been a basket-case since its return to the NRL in 2002.

Langmack's axing was the latest in a string of high-profile incidents at Redfern.

Pappas today defended the decision to relieve Langmack of his duties with another year to run on his contract, revealing the board had decided two weeks ago to replace the coach at the end of the season.

Pappas said the string of poor results, culminating in the recent loss to the Warriors, had forced the club's hand.

"What we thought was the position had reached a critical point," Pappas said.

"The board received reliable information that the players no longer supported the head coach, that the coach had lost their confidence.

"We were disturbed by that.

"It was information that was trickling to the board over a period of time.

"We were also disturbed obviously that the side wasn't competitive.

"We made a decision to draw a line in the sand at the end of the season ... but the Warriors game was a deep concern because the Warriors were a shell of a side.

"The players were trying their hardest but there was just nothing."

The club has already been linked with several coaches, namely premiership-winning mentor Chris Anderson.

However, it's understood the former Test coach is not in the club's or Richardson's plans.

His namesake Daniel Anderson could also loom as a potential replacement if he is shown the door at the Warriors.

Warriors chief executive Mick Watson tonight confirmed all positions within the club were under review.

"We have to front up tomorrow," Watson said.

"Eric is flying into the country. I could be gone or Daniel could be gone. We have a review."

Premier League coach Arthur Kitinas will be in charge of South Sydney's first grade squad in a caretaker capacity for the remainder of the season.

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