

**RL: Richardson gets his man**

League Souths  
By Brent Read

SYDNEY, July 5 AAP - South Sydney chief executive Shane Richardson had several qualities in mind when he began his search for a new coach of the NRL club.

For starters, the person had to be of good character.

They also had to have experience - recent history suggested the Rabbitohs wouldn't gamble on another rookie coach.

The winning candidate had to have a proven track record and be able to handle pressure.

Enter Shaun McRae, the current coach of English club Hull.

McRae's colourful coaching career included stints at Canberra and St Helens as well as international experience with Australia, New Zealand, Great Britain and Scotland.

Now you can add Souths - one of the most high-pressure jobs in rugby league - to that resume.

"The first thing about it is you don't last for nine years in the English game without having some ability as a coach because it's pretty cut-throat over there," said Richardson, who also announced caretaker coach Arthur Kitinas would become McRae's assistant.

"I felt we needed somebody with a proven track record.

"We couldn't take the risk again of taking somebody on that was trying to learn the game, and that's no disrespect to the coaches that have been here.

"I felt we needed somebody who could handle the pressure.

"This is a pressure-cooker in the NRL and again my knowledge of Shaun was that he could (handle) that."

That knowledge stretches back to their time at Gateshead, where the pair kept the club afloat on a shoestring budget before it folded.

They then teamed up at Hull, where the famous club went within 24 hours of extinction.

Under McRae, Hull now sits in second place on the English Super League table ahead of traditional giants Wigan, Bradford and St Helens.

"I think he suits us," Richardson said.

"He's had to take over clubs that were really struggling and in difficult circumstances.

"He's had to show a demeanour and a calmness under pressure that we probably need here.

"He's had to treat people really well and develop young kids and ... I think we have to do that here.

"He's got his chance and I'm sure he will take it with both hands."

And Richardson gave a commitment McRae would be given time to turn the Rabbitohs around.

The club's past two coaches - Craig Coleman and Paul Langmack - have both been sacked.

"I've been in the game now, in rugby league, for 16 years at this level and I haven't sacked a coach," Richardson said.

"I can't talk about what's happened in the past, I can only talk about Shane Richardson.

"I don't make appointments lightly and I don't sack coaches lightly.

"He has a commitment to me and I have a commitment to him going forward and that's all I need to talk about - the future.

"I can't be responsible for what happened in the past.

"My track record has been that coaches are given an opportunity, so will Shaun McRae."