

Source = AAP Sequence No. = a6234 Received : 05 Jul 2004 21:26:35
r t bc-League-Souths 05-07-04 0556

RL: Richardson gets his man

League Souths Nightlead
By Brent Read

SYDNEY, July 5 AAP - Incoming South Sydney coach Shaun McRae is looking forward to turning the Rabbitohs into a premiership force - but called on the NRL club's supporters to remain patient.

Souths chief executive Shane Richardson today confirmed McRae, currently coaching Hull in the English Super League, would take up a two-year contract at Redfern from next season.

Current caretaker Arthur Kitinas will act as his assistant.

"I know they have had to be patient in the past," McRae told AAP from Hull tonight.

"I trust, with us all working together, that their patience will be worthwhile.

"They have to believe everybody will give 100 per cent to the cause."

"I'm really looking forward to the challenge.

"It's a great challenge but I think it's every coach's dream to coach in the NRL."

McRae's colourful coaching career has taken him from Canberra to the north of England, including stints at St Helens and Gateshead and international experience with Australia, New Zealand, Great Britain and Scotland.

"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.

"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.

"Hull is very similar to Souths," McRae said.

"They had a lot of history and they hadn't been that successful. When I got here five years ago everybody was talking about survival.

"Now they're talking about what position we're going to finish in the finals."

Richardson said: "I think he suits us.

"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.

AAP bar/tdw

05-07 2125