

RL: Planning is underway for Richo

League Souths Richardson
By Laine Clark

SYDNEY, June 13 AAP - It was easy to see why Shane Richardson was known as the "Darren Lockyer of rugby league CEOs" after the Rabbitohs marked their first match under new coach Arthur Kitinas with a shock 28-26 NRL victory over Melbourne.

Amid euphoric scenes at Aussie Stadium last night, the incoming Souths chief executive was already planning ways to improve the Rabbitohs despite not officially starting his new job until Tuesday.

Amongst all the back slapping and emotion following one of the NRL seasons biggest upsets, there were no rash statements or bold predictions from Richardson as he stood in a jubilant Souths dressing room.

Richardson was no closer to deciding the clubs 2005 coach despite interim mentor Kitinas improving on Souths 2003 tally of just three wins with the round 14 victory in his first game since taking over from the discarded Paul Langmack.

"Arthur is exactly the character and style of person Souths can build a whole club around, whether it be first grade coach or otherwise," Richardson said.

"The bottom line about Arthur Kitinas is that he is a good, genuine human being but everybody is talking about next season - I'm worried about Manly next week so is Arthur and that is how we are going to rebuild.

"I'm not going to talk about who is in the running for coach next year. Last week it was Daniel (Anderson), this week it was Shaun McRae and next week it will probably be Arthur Kitinas.

"What I'm not going to do is rush decisions about players and coaches because for too long in the past we have rushed decisions and that's caused us problems."

Richardson said Souths would rebuild through faith - starting with its supporters.

"We've got a fantastic history but we've got a great future too. We've got to go out and sell that to people - 6500 people out here (last night) wasn't enough," he said.

"Hopefully that 6500 people go back to the fans and say what a great game and next we'll have 13,000 people here.

"For the survival of this club we need people to come out and support it, we need them to come in and put money in the gate - we haven't given them a reason to do that at the moment but we are going to.

"You've got to have faith. Faith kept this club in the competition and faith will make us successful."

Richardson, who has used his Midas touch at Cronulla, English club Hull and 2003 NRL champions Penrith, said on-field spirit, not boardroom savvy, would turn Souths (3-1-8 season record) around.

"CEOs don't win competitions, its all about the players and Arthur," he said.

"That win just showed some spirit was left in the club which I think is important.

"... People bag rugby league players all the time and talk about them being highly paid and all that.

"But to go out there against a really top side like Melbourne and do what those young guys did was just tremendous."

Richardson summed up his first game in the Souths camp in typically modest fashion.

"It's a good start - its better than a poke in the eye with a blunt stick."