Latrell’s late start for trial

LATRELL Mitchell almost didn’t make the trial that eventually saw him included in the NSW under 16 rugby league side to play Queensland at ANZ Stadium next Wednesday night.

He had been named to play in a Possibles/Probables match at Leichhardt Oval but the journey to Sydney was anything but smooth. He was travelling with his parents and they met with car trouble near the Central Coast. The Mitchells finally limped into Sydney only to meet peak hour traffic.

“Dad rang to tell them we were running late,” Latrell said.

“We got there five minutes before kickoff.”

This meant he missed the first quarter of the game. However, Latrell did enough when given a run to be named in the squad to play as a curtain raiser to the State of Origin game next week.

He is the Manning River Times-Iguana Sportstar of the Week, earning a $50 open order at Iguana.

While he hasn’t been officially informed, Latrell thinks he’ll be named at fullback for the Blues and admits he can’t wait until the kickoff. He’s been a spectator at ANZ Stadium, but this will be the first time he’s played there.

He was pretty happy with the way he played in the trial but admits he wasn’t overly confident about gaining a spot in the State team.

Latrell’s already had a busy season. He played in trials last October for the Newcastle Harold Matthews (under 16s) team. While he missed a spot with the Knights, he was spotted by scouts from the Central Coast Centurions. This meant he had to spend summer travelling to the Central Coast for training – on one occasion the squad completing a 10km run on a day when the temperature topped 40 degrees.

Latrell was fullback for Central Coast and the Centurions made the semi-finals where they were beaten by Cronulla.

He started playing rugby league with Taree RSL Red Rovers and was a regular member of the Group Three representative teams.

He now plays halfback for Taree City’s under 18s.

Latrell’s attracted a bit of interest from NRL clubs, but nothing concrete has been decided yet. A year 11 student at Chatham High, Latrell lists basketball and fishing as his other sporting interests.

Playmaker’s season over

By Phil Wilkins

FORSTER-Tuncurry Dolphins have had a major setback in their Lower Mid North Coast rugby union campaign with playmaker Matt Nuku probably lost for the season with a broken collar bone.

The New Zealander sustained the fracture in the Dolphins’ 45-7 defeat of the Manning River Rats last Saturday. The extent of his shoulder injury not confirmed until scans early this week.

Nuku has been playing the best rugby of his two years in the Great Lakes, training well and playing constructive football as five-eighth on the team’s five-game winning wave, either distributing the ball to his dangerous centres, Chris Wynne and Tom Harris, or kicking shrewdly to initiate offensives.

Nuku has been informed he will be out of action for 10 weeks but the Dolphins are clinging to the hope of his recovery in time for the play-offs of the Tallwoods and Harrington Waters Golf Course-sponsored premiership. It is a thin straw.

In his absence, the Dolphins are still on top and have their wizard, Jamie Fernando, the medical man from Gulargambone.

With the second-placed Dolphins only two points behind competition leaders, the Wallamba Bulls, much is at stake in the clash at Nabiac tomorrow, especially from a morale point of view.

The Bulls are enjoying their most successful season with just the one loss in eight rounds, and that by a single point to the Dolphins, 15-16, on April 27. However, a second defeat by the Dolphins tomorrow would start gremlins jumping in the club.