

SPORT

Magpies community gets behind their boys

SOCCER

BY MICHAEL HARTSHORN

CARL Thornton knows that when he walks out onto the Maitland Sportsground as skipper of the Maitland Magpies in Wednesday night's FFA Cup tie against Central Coast Mariners he and his teammates will be bringing to fruition the dreams and hard work of everyone involved at the club.

Since joining the Magpies with his brother Liam for the 2016 season from the Weston Bears, it has become apparent that Maitland FC is more than just a football club to the dedicated committee and hardworking volunteers.

"This has become a community and a family to us and all the boys are so excited about representing every member of that family and community on Wednesday night," he said.

"Since Bolchy (senior coach Mick Bolch) has come he has really brought the club together from the junior teams through to the 18s and 20s it is a real community club now.

"He has made some good additions to the squad which have strengthened the team, but I think it is that real community feel around the club at the moment which is so important.

"The committee members play a really big part of that. They are very passionate about involving the juniors on match days and for the senior players to be getting out to watch the juniors play and getting involved in training sessions."

Thornton said the FFA Cup was important for everyone involved at the club and he would love the community



SKIPPER: Maitland Magpies skipper Carl Thornton says the entire Maitland Magpies community will be represented by his team on Wednesday night.

to share in the special nature of the competition with the Magpies coming up against an A-League opponent.

"It has to be rewarding for people who have been involved in the club for as long as some of the supporters and committee members have.

"Even past committee members who have moved aside now they worked so hard to get into the top league and now they are in

the top league for the club to be doing well and be put on the national stage has to be a massive reward for the all the effort they've put in throughout the years."

The Thornton brothers have blood ties with Maitland with their uncles Brett and John Cowburn playing for the Magpies in 1980 grand final winning side.

The family connection has been further strengthened with their cousin Nick, Brett's

son, joining them at the club from the Newcastle Jets.

"It is great having his A-League experience around in the lead-up to the game," Thornton said of Cowburn

"We've got a pretty experienced squad. A lot of our players who have played at high levels even some boys who have played overseas as well as throughout Australia."

Thornton said unfortunately good mate Ryan

Broadley will be sidelined with injury on Wednesday night.

"One of the main reason why Liam and myself initially came across was to play with our mates Ryan Broadley and Blake Thompson and we've made so many great friends since being there.

"We've thoroughly enjoyed our time since moving there. No regrets."

You can book your tickets at www.maitland.nsw.gov.au

Bears, Magic play out thriller

SOCCER

THE Weston Bears and Broadmeadow Magic finished on equal terms in one of the best games of the NPL season.

The 1-all draw was probably a worthy result as players from both teams stumbled off the pitch exhausted after end-to-end action for the full 90 minutes.

Magic's Mitch Oxborrow opened the scoring in the 33rd minute when at full stretch he managed to get his foot onto the end of a James Virgili cross to beat Weston keeper Tristan Esquilant.

Five minutes later, however, Regan Lundy evened proceedings when he slammed home a clever backpass from Chris Hurley, who had been surrounded by four Magic defenders, inside the 16-yard box.

Bears assistant coach Craig Stoker said both teams had chances to win but neither could break the deadlock.

"From a natural supporter's point of view it would have been one of the games of the season," he said.

"Both teams played really well and while the three points would have been fantastic, a draw was probably the fairest result.

There were two very tired set of players at the end it was real end to end.

"There were chances, we had a one-on-one and another chance bounce off the inside of the post without crossing the line. It was won of those games it probably wouldn't have been right for either team to win."

Weston are second on the table, two points behind Edgeworth, with Magic third and Maitland fourth.

— MICHAEL HARTSHORN

Maitland's minor premiership hopes alive

SOCCER

THE Maitland Magpies secured all three points in an unconvincing 3-2 win against Lake Macquarie at Cooks Square Park on Friday night.

There was a collective sense of relief when the referee's whistle ended a disappointing second half and Maitland can now concentrate fully on their historic round of 32 FFA Cup tie against Central Coast Mariners on Wednesday night.

There are less than 100 grandstand seats left at the Maitland Sportsground but

plenty of general admission available.

Maitland were fully in control at half-time with a clever goal to Alex Read in the 25th and Joel Wood finding the right corner of the net from the penalty box shortly before half-time after Read was brought down in the box at the end of bullocking run through Lakes defence.

The Magpies had several other close chances and continued in the first 10 minutes to threaten to increase their lead with the best chance a stunning volley by Nick Cowburn off a deflected shot by



GOAL: Maitland players congratulate Joel Wood after he scored from the penalty spot. **Picture:** Smart Artist.

Jimmy Thompson, smashing off the left post.

But an errant pass go-

ing forward left Magpies keeper Matt Trott exposed and it was game on as Nick

Charlesworth pounced to score for the Roosters in the 59th minute.

The Magpies continued to pepper the goal and as he has done so often this season Wood scored when needed to give Maitland a 3-1 lead in the 85th minute.

But once again Lakes took advantage of a defensive mishap and their captain Samuel Walker scored in the first minute of overtime.

Magpies coach Mick Bolch said going forward the Magpies needed to take their leads from an excellent first half.

"We probably were a bit unlucky not to get another goal to lead 3-0 but we controlled the game and everyone was on song.

"However, the second half was really disappointing and we made it really hard work for ourselves. We dropped our intensity and paid twice for defensive mishaps.

"I think going forward it was really positive to see Thommo (Matt Thompson) starting and playing for 65 minutes and Grant Brown had his first game back after five weeks with a foot injury."

— MICHAEL HARTSHORN