

SPORT

NEWCASTLE RL
Pickers build win on back of defence

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KEY PLAYER: Maitland striker Joel Wood was man of the match in Saturday's 7-2 FFA Cup round six win against Boambee Bombers.

Magpies' crunch Cup tie

Maitland hosts Olympic for spot on FFA national football stage

FFA CUP

BY MICHAEL HARTSHORN

THE Maitland Magpies are calling on the city to get behind them in their quest to make the FFA Cup round of 32.

The Magpies host Hamilton Olympic in a crunch round seven game on Tuesday night after beating Boambee Bombers 7-2 in their round six clash on Saturday.

The prize for Tuesday night's winner is national exposure with the place in the round of 32 against A-League teams and other qualifiers from state competitions.

There will be free entry for all local football club players with one accompanying adult for Tuesday's game at Cook Square Park which kicks off from 7.30pm. Entry is otherwise \$5.

"Come along in numbers to support the Magpies and

let them know that Maitland is right behind their push for a place in the Round of 32," Maitland FC president Ray Watkins said.

"It's an exciting opportunity for the club to earn a place on the national stage. The round of 32 attracts national TV coverage and there is a chance we could even host a game and bring the spotlight on the city."

Maitland earned their shot with a 7-2 win against Boambee Bombers in which striker Joel Wood won man of the match honours.

Wood has been a vital addition to a squad which boasted plenty of speed and one of the most frugal defences in Northern NSW NPL competition.

The Maitland defence was again strong, however, key defender Liam Thonton will be struggling to play after a heavy knock left him requir-

ing stitches for a cut on his eye lid

The Magpies will also be without Sean Pratt, who flew out for Europe on Sunday, and injured duo Matt Thompson and Ryan Broadley.

"Liam is a tough competitor and I'm sure he will push himself to get on the field, but we will not be taking any risks," Maitland coach Mick Bolch said.

"As he was falling he caught the back of opponents boot and opened his eye lid up.

"It's not something he can strap, unfortunately."

Olympic smashed Maitland 4-0 last month in their most recent outing.

"I'm sure the boys will be up for it. It's a chance to go on to the national stage, it's a massive game for the club," Bolch said.

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