

SPORT

Clout, Waters battle for lead



BOUNCE BACK: Yamaha Rider Luke Clout is looking forward to returning to the Maitland track for round seven of the MX Nationals.

Yamaha's Luke Clout will be gunning to grab the MX Nationals series lead back from Husqvarna rider Todd Waters when the series hits Maitland for round seven on the weekend. Waters leads by just three points from Clout who had a disappointing sixth round in Gympie. "Maitland is a track that I have raced at a few times and enjoy riding so I will put this one behind me," Clout said after Gympie. Story page 22

NEWCASTLE RL Pickers 20 minutes short of contenders

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Magpies to carry Cup costs

SOCER

BY MICHAEL HARTSHORN

THE Maitland Magpies will need to bear the cost of the \$15,000 of mobile floodlighting, required to play their FFA Cup round of 32 fixture against the Central Coast Mariners at Maitland Sportsground.

Maitland FC president Ray Watkins said Maitland City Council had turned down a request from the club for help in providing support to bring the Sportsground up to standard.

The Cup tie is to be played on July 31 and Watkins said the club had resisted the less costly option of playing the game at either Broadmeadow or Edgeworth because of the importance of holding the game in Maitland.

"Because the game will be broadcast live by Foxtel, additional mobile floodlighting will need to be brought up from Sydney, as the lighting at the Sportsground is inadequate for the purpose."

"This is a national competition, which brings national

awareness and exposure to Maitland, it just would not be right to hold the game out in a suburban Newcastle ground.

"There is however the option of moving the game to Newcastle, and discussion was held with FFA yesterday in that regard, or even putting a \$5 'Floodlighting Levy' on tickets, which are waiting to be put online.

"However, these options would be counterproductive to our original aim of bringing a national spotlight onto Maitland, and providing a value for money sporting event."

The Magpies are hopeful that fan interest and local corporate support can ensure they are not left in debt.

"We are now actively on the lookout for a community minded corporate sponsor to help make up the shortfall in costs for the game," Watkins said.

"We would also like to believe that we will attract increased community support for the event and achieve increased crowd numbers at

the game."

Watkins said despite the impact of the council's decision the club would not be changing its decision to provide 500 free general admission tickets to the youth of the area.

"It is important that we take the opportunity of the increased exposure and celebrity of the event to attract as many young supporters as possible.

"Indications from management at the Mariners is that they will be bringing up several bus loads of their supporters, plus they are anxious to promote the game.

"Maitland still has a few games of NPL competition to play before the game, but indications are that we will have a full squad complement available for selection in whatever way they can."

"It is a classic David verse Goliath struggle, but one in which we have a real chance of pulling off an upset."

"We want as many Maitland people there as possible to enjoy that possibility."

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