

Cougars off to strong start

THE Cougars have hit the ground running with the first training session for the 2012 season attracting 34 players at the CQ University rugby union grounds.

Most of the locally-based 2011 regulars attended the session, the first taken by new coach Joe Fenech.

Club chief executive Bevan Dingley said most of the players invited to the session had turned up, including those from areas out west, while the Cougars had also attracted newcomers to town.

He said a young man, currently attached to the Rockhampton Grammar School, had confirmed a willingness to play.

Dingley said the player was from Germany and has a football background.

Making the trip solely for the session was Frank Saunders who travelled from Mareeba to trial for the Cougars.

A number of players who have been successful in the local senior competition attended the session, including Rob Jones of Bluebirds and Nerimbera's Jade Dileen while Chris Swain, who left the Cougars during the 2011 season, trained with the squad.

Matterson Maguire of Capricorn Coast was a welcome addition while former Cougar Dylan Kussrow attended but could not take part due to illness.

Kussrow is looking forward to re-joining the Cougars.

"It is the chance to play a better brand of football," he said.

The strong-tackling defender/midfielder said he missed playing in the QSL but the break had worked out for him as he has been promoted to deputy principal at the school he teaches and now feels he is can devote the time required to play football at a higher level.

"I think I have a few good years in me yet," he joked. "Anyway I get to jet around and play football."

Following the session, coach Fenech was upbeat about the number of players attending the hit-out.

"A lot also called to say they couldn't make it," he said.

Fenech is realistic enough to know that many who turned up are too young for the Cougars but the coach said there is a problem in Central Queensland he has already identified.

"After the under-15s there is a big gap," he said, "I will be working with Football CQ and Football Queensland to find a solution."

Fenech said that was a reason he opened up the Cougars session to the younger players to make sure they were aware they had not been forgotten.



Capricorn Coast's Dylan Kussrow and Clinton's Davey Mitchell contest for possession during the Clinton and Capricorn Coast's Premier League match at the Clinton Soccer Club's Oval.
Murray Ware