



TRAINING TRUANTS GET AXED

Weerona second rower Warwick Graham and Shamrocks No 8 forward Rod Mercer have lost their places in the Illawarra side to play Central North because they missed training.

Selectors have named Maori Henry Tuhakaraina (Tech College) to replace Graham and Weerona's No 8 Andy McLure, an Australian schoolboys representative last year, gets his chance ahead of Mercer.

By
TIM MULLINS

Selectors last week announced a squad of 23 players to prepare for tomorrow's Wills Trophy semi-final to be played at Vikings Rugby Field.

Coach Steve Streeter called for two formal training sessions, last Sunday morning and Tuesday night, both at Bowral.

Mercer attended neither session and Graham missed Sunday's run.

The Illawarra side to take the field is: Gary Cook (Goulburn), John Rangataawa (Weerona), Fred Whiteman (Camden), Henry Tuhakaraina (Tech College), Noel Yates (Teachers), John Campbell (Shoalhaven), Andy McLure (Weerona), Jim Flynn (Bowral), Vince Fester (Goulburn CAE), Dave Crook (Weerona), Paul Southwell (Goulburn CAE), Steve Streeter (Bowral), Gary Brimms (Goulburn), Greg Brimms (Goulburn).

The Under 21 line-up to tackle Sydney Under 21 in the curtain-raiser is: Brett Diggins, Peter Palmer, Paul Fisher, Philip Whyte, Phil Robinson, Colin Walsh, Nigel Davis, Tony Elrington, Time Lyttle, Barry Lecornu, Richie Robinson, Errol Hughes, Greg Knipe, Matthew Sherring, Steve Audsley. Reserves: John Pasfield, Brett Martin, Neil

Thompson, Steve Tressider and Nick Sverloff.

Despite the changes, the Illawarra side still looks a formidable line-up, both up front and out wide.

The front row of Cook, Rangataawa and Whiteman is as strong as any in Country.

Whiteman, a proven rep player before coming to the Illawarra competition, has crammed a lot of experience into his 20 years and recently gained selection in the Australian under 21 squad.

Cook, Goulburn's gain from Randwick, has proved one of the "finds" of the season and Rangataawa is sharing the fate of his Illawarra predecessor Geoff Arnott — deserving more recognition from Country selectors, but not getting it.

● PICTURE: Shamrocks forward Rod Mercer (heard) waits for the spoils as Illawarra team-mate Grant Hunt contests a lineout with a St George opponent.

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