

## **PSM COMBINE CAMP – Open Letter From Managing Director Chris Orr**

I am proud to say that the inaugural PSM Combine Camp held at the Runaway Bay Sports Super Centre last weekend was a tremendous success with all participants and attendees giving the concept great reviews.

On the Thursday it was all about the junior elite players within our new PSM Elite Academy plus some selected wildcards from around the South East Queensland area. These young men were put through the Combine program which incorporated Fitness and Physical testing plus Defense / Attack drills that were conducted by NRL Coaches from the Parramatta Eels, Melbourne Storm and Gold Coast Titans along with a host of NRL Stars (Ben Barba / Nate Myles / Greg Bird / Ashley Harrison / Kevin Proctor / Jason Taumalolo / Brenton Lawrence / Kalifa Fai Fai Foa). These young players were provide a tremendous experience through participating in the PSM Junior Academy with many receiving one on one coaching advice from the likes of Parramatta Eels Coach Brad Arthur and John Cartwright.

Then came Friday morning the day of the **PSM Combine Camp**, from 7am they arrived looking for their **“Second Chance”**. They came from all over the World, one as far as New York City, there were many players who made the effort travelling from Perth, Melbourne even driving from places like Dubbo and Newcastle to be involved. This was their second chance and for many it was seen as their last chance to secure a Pro Career. They registered, were handed their Combine kit supplied by our sponsor BLK and divided into either the NYC Group or the NRL Group depending on age.

Once registered and dressed each athlete completed a full body scan from the Global Bodies Team, this provided the athlete with detail information of where they were currently with their health and fitness levels.

The participants were then separated into their groups and then handed over to highly regarded NRL Strength & Conditioner Dan Ferris and his team of Strength & Conditioning volunteers from Griffiths University. They were put through a warm up before going straight into an endurance test. (“Beep Test”) This was to test the athletes desire and mental toughness on top of their endurance level, with some surprising results from both age groups.

Over the next 2 hours the athletes were tested to measure their strength, speed, power and agility.

- Strength – Bench Press
- Speed – 10m / 20m / 40m sprint test with speed gates.
- Power – Vertical & Horizontal Leap
- Agility – 10m-agility drill tested with speed gates.

Whilst the testing was being conducted the athletes were being evaluated by NRL & State League Scouts who watched on and compared the athletes test results each time they were posted inside the Combine HQ Tent. They also took notice of how the athletes conducted themselves between drills.

Once the physical and fitness testing was completed the athletes had short lunch break before again dividing into NRL & NYC groups and directed to either the attack or defense sections to be drilled and assessed by NRL coaches and Players. This was the prime opportunity for the Scouts to move from drill to drill observing the individuals to see what level they were at with regard to their football sense and physicality. These drills were full contact and performed with a high level of intensity.

Finally towards the end of the day the athletes were divided into positional groups and addressed by NRL players and coaches about what is expected of players who play that position within the NRL, Kevin Proctor spoke to the edge backrowers whilst Ben Barba spoke to the outside backs. The NRL Stars also open themselves up to questions from the groups where both the Coaches and the NRL Stars provided their personal knowledge and advice about reaching and securing a pro career. They also made suggestions on what the individuals should concentrated on in the following days trial games.

At the completion of the Combine on the Friday the athletes had endured 6 hours of testing, drills and mentoring before a warm down session in the Runaway Bay Sports Super Centre pool. They were congratulated on completing the inaugural Rugby League Combine and acknowledged for their efforts. However it was made known to all of them that they were only halfway through the process and with the Combine Trial Games starting at 9am the following morning. It was advise to go home rest up, hydrate and come ready to play.

The Combine Trial Games were scheduled to play an NYC game followed by NRL game. These groups were coached by up and coming coaches and supported by NRL Stars. Special mention must go to Greg Bird who looked very comfortable behind the clip board and I sense a Coaching career in future for the Birdman.

The games were played in the right spirit with no foul play reported. Thankfully there were only minor injuries and a special thank you must go to our referees, trainers, strappers, first aid and support staff who made the day run smoothly and created an enjoyable experience for all those involved.

The talent on show was there for all 11 NRL scouts to witness with many commenting on the high standard. When it got to the final two games (Possible V Probable) you could sense the Scouts were excited and the players were focused to perform.

Unfortunately not everyone can make it through to final games and again I would like to make special mention to Greg Bird for his honest advice to those who missed out. It was simple but effective. ***“Gents this is not the end of your rugby league journey, next week I will be playing along side Brenton Lawrence in the Australian team and like some of you he was not discovered till late in his career (age 26). So my advice is go home train harder, focus on improving your game and come back next season a bigger, faster, stronger player to hopefully win yourself a Pro Career”***

The players also heard from Manly Sea Eagles Head Scout Dave Warrick and Broncos Assistant Coach and Now Black Hawks Head Coach Christian Wolf about the importance of today as a positive step to stay on course to work towards a pro career.

The two final games were played at a ferocious pace with the forwards hitting and running like there was no tomorrow. This was certainly proving to be some players ***“Second Chance”*** as some were making sure they gave it everything.

As the final whilst blew and the teams came together for a photo opportunity with all coaching staff and support staff you could sense something special had just occurred. It was the end of the inaugural PSM Combine Camp and in everyone’s eyes who took part it was a tremendous success.

Thank you again to everyone who participated, supported it and assisted making it a success. I would like to make special mention to our sponsors listed below and to Tracey and her team of volunteers for their massive effort. I would also like to thank our own PSM players for supporting it and assisting making the experience for these players a positive one. Your encouragement throughout the three days was exceptional and it was great to see you interact and engage in conversations with the players involved within the Combine or Camp.