

SPORT

Chasing new agreement

RUGBY LEAGUE

BY MITCH JENNINGS

BEGA'S Kezie Apps and Tathra's Adam Elliot have been vocal in the ongoing dispute between the NRL and the Rugby League Players Association (RLPA), in support of changes to the code's central bargaining agreement.

Dragons skipper Apps insists the battle with the NRL over a first women's CBA has "nothing to do with money" as the dispute threatens to halt the beginning of the NRL season.

The game's male and female players remain at loggerheads with the NRL as their representative body, the RLPA, looks to negotiate a new CBA after more than a year of back and forth over pay and conditions.

While male players have the safety net of the previous agreement that carries over until a fresh one is negotiated, the women remain without a watershed first CBA.

It leaves the game's female players without NRLW contracts or a proposed schedule despite the addition of four new teams this season.



Kezie Apps insists the dispute between players and the NRL over a women's CBA has nothing to do with money. Picture - Dragons Media

Apps said the uncertainty was frustrating for the players after several years of growth in the game.

"I feel really sorry for the clubs, especially the new clubs coming into it, not having a clear direction of where they could go," Apps told ACM.

"I feel for the coaches and obviously the players as well.

We can't plan our lives and plan the next however many months because we don't know what it looks like yet.

"Girls like myself have to relocate, girls have work and family [concerns]. They need to be able to weigh those things up against what they might be offered.

"It's just really frustrating that we can't have a clear

view of what we're doing." Apps insisted the idea it was a pay dispute couldn't be further from the truth.

"It's got nothing to do with the money, it's about having the security that, if we do sign a contract, we know what we're signing up for and what's protected.

"We have come a long way as a game but it's still got a

long way to go." The sentiment was shared by newly signed Knights lock Elliot during an interview with local radio in Newcastle.

"If it gets to the point where we've to do something extreme, I'm really confident that all the players are going to buy into it and be working together for that common goal."

Rego open for Bega Devils

PRESEASON training has kicked off for the Bega Devils, as the soccer club looks toward the upcoming season.

The club is on the hunt for some more coaches as well as players, said president Tim Cummings who is hopeful for sides in all age groups in 2023.

"This year we're coming back pretty strong. Last year our under 14s boys were undefeated and we've been pretty competitive the last 10 years," he said.

With dates yet to be confirmed, Mr Cummings said that it's looking like the season will kick off toward the end of March, with sides from under 7s, 8s, 9s, 10/11s, 12s, 14s, 16s, Reserves, First Grade and Ladies expected for the Devils.

Registration is via dribl.com.au or the Bega Devils Facebook Page for all the other info, with training 5.30pm on Wednesdays at the Valley Fields.

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Tathra Sea Eagles in league with London



Players from the London Chargers celebrating during a recent trial match with Rangers. Photo supplied

■ From back page

While the partnership has only just been formally announced, both clubs said that they expected it to be popular for players looking to experience a new walk of life.

"The London Chargers saw it as a great opportunity for players and families to come to Australia and not just experience Sydney, Melbourne or Canberra but the Bega Valley," Mr Hughes said.

"For our guys, the opportunity to live in London and for example to be able to visit France on the weekend is

something that a lot of our player have never imagined."

As for the Chargers, Mr Peut agreed that teaming up made sense and was an opportunity like no other for players at his club wanting to experience Aussie footy and life in an Australian country town.

"We wanted to establish a bit more of a formal link and share resources, ideas and philosophies. Hopefully over the years to come we can get that steady flow of players going both ways.

"By each getting certain players, teaching them up

and sending them back hopefully they're better people for it," Mr Peut said.


The partnership isn't the first exciting news for the Tathra club this offseason, also re-signing first grade and reserve grade coaches for the 2023 season, as well as recently announcing the signing of Fijian import Filipie Tauva Soutia.

With preseason ramping up, the Tathra Sea Eagles are looking forward to another big season, following a first grade grand final berth in 2022.


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