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Namoi Valley Independent Sport

Thursday, September 17, 2009



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Gold, gold, gold for Gunnedah



IN their Australian uniforms, Donna Hickey, Lauren Robertson and Cath Murray show off their medals from the world titles.

GOLD, gold, gold – for Gunnedah.

That was the story at the world triathlon championships on the Gold Coast, when Gunnedah's Donna Hickey and Cath Murray were first home in their age division of the world titles and Lauren Robertson won the world aquathlon title, also in her age group.

The three were members of the official Australian team for the world titles, having qualified at major events over the last year.

Donna Hickey took the gold for the sprint distance triathlon (750-metre swim, 20km bike ride and 5km run) in the 50-54 age group, overhauling a Great Britain competitor to win by 20 seconds.

Cath Murray won the 45-49 years title from another Australian competitor with a Canadian third.

Lauren Robertson won the world aquathlon title in the 30-34 age bracket and also claimed the silver medal in the triathlon 30-34 years.

The titles drew thousands of competitors from 42 countries around the world, including New Zealand, the USA and Canada, Brazil, France, Germany, the Netherlands and United Kingdom.

Donna Hickey said that competing in the titles had been "a tremendous thrill".

"It was so exciting to be there with thousands of competitors, as part of the Australian team," she said.

"You couldn't describe the atmosphere."

According to Lauren Robertson, the three are still "struggling to get our heads around it (their wins)".

"We haven't thought about what's next, because we're still on a high," she said.

But the three haven't ruled out a trip, "somehow," to the next world titles in Budapest, in Hungary.

Reece Jaeger to tour UK, France with AIS

FRESH from a man-of-the-match performance in the Group 4 under 18 grand final last Sunday, Gunnedah's Reece Jaeger has been selected in an Australian Institute of Sport team to tour France and the United Kingdom later this year.

The 18-year-old is one of 24 players in the AIS squad, which will play two matches in the south of France, as well as games in Manchester and Cardiff (Wales) in the UK.

The touring party leaves on November 13, returning on December 8.

The rangy fullback or centre played brilliantly in his team's 50-10 win over Moree in the under 18 grand final against Moree at Scully Park, West Tamworth, buoyed by the news two days earlier that he had been selected in the touring squad.

The team was announced by Brian Johnson, the former St George fullback and Warrington (UK) coach who is now the head coach of the AIS rugby league squad in Canberra.

Johnson said the squad would be made up of the best young talent in the country.

"Apart from being a league tour, it will also be a cultural experience," Johnson said.

"As an example, we'll be going to the Western Front, to Villers' Bretonneaux, where Australian troops won the undying praise of the French people for the way they fought in World War 1.

"Everyone on the tour will be researching the Australians' role in the war."

A Year 12 student at St Mary's College, Jaeger has been signed by NRL club, the Roosters, next season.

He would have gone down to the Roosters straight after completing his HSC but will now be in France and the UK.

The Roosters have given him the time off for the tour. In July, Jaeger played in the NSW Combined Catholic Colleges' side which reached the final of the Australian Schools' Championship. The team was beaten 40-12 by Queensland in the decider.

Meanwhile, Gunnedah Rugby League Club will wrap up the season at its presentation night in the Services and Bowling Club on Saturday evening.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 43



REECE Jaeger makes a break in the Group 4 grand final won by Gunnedah at Scully Park, West Tamworth.

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