

ILT Foundation grant \$40,000 to Southland District Rugby League on 21 April 2011

League employs development officer

The future of rugby league in Southland has been given a significant boost with the sport appointing its first development officer.

Invercargill's Dennis Thompson will be at the helm of rugby league's quest to provide pathways for youngsters keen to take up the sport.

Southland District Rugby League president Teaukura Moetaua said Thompson's appointment was a positive step for the code.

"The future sustainability of any sport relies on attracting and nurturing young players into the game so this is huge for us to have someone officially in a development role," he said.

"Previously there was one person trying to do everything for our sport. Now our focus is on growth – the more we can grow our participation numbers, the more money we can put back into our sport and our programmes which will ultimately benefit players at all levels."

The ILT Foundation has granted \$40,000 to Southland District Rugby League, enabling it to inject more resources into valuable game development.

ILT Foundation chairman Alan Dennis said the sport was re-establishing itself strongly in the south.

"Rugby league is reaching new heights and that's a credit to the professional approach and leadership being shown," he said.

Moetaua said Thompson emerged top of a high-calibre shortlist of applicants for the role.

"He just had the goods really. His previous experience as a development officer for Touch Southland is what stood him out from the rest and we're excited to have Dennis as part of our team," he said.

"One of the advantages is he already knows the structures needed to implement a development programme and has excellent relationships established with many schools."

Along with general development duties, Thompson will be tasked with delivering the league component of Sport Southland's KiwiSport initiative for South Invercargill and Bluff schools and will also conduct rugby league sessions during the ILT Holiday Sports Programme, which starts on 25 July 2011.

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