

# Confident Stratford flying

Ben Blomfield

blomfieldb@tcp.newsltd.com.au

## Win sees Dolphins on top of ladder

STRATFORD coach Glenn Binskin says his men now have the confidence to win the premiership after beating Leichhardt 1-0 on Saturday night.

Binskin's team used a home-ground advantage to sink the Lions in Round 11 of the FNQ Football premier division. The win cements Stratford at the top of the ladder

after sharing the perch with Leichhardt in the lead up to the match.

The victory also heralds a new attitude within the Dolphins, after fears surfaced the side was battling complacency following a 2-0 loss to cellar-dwellers Mareeba in Round 10.

Binskin said his men con-

trolled almost 80 per cent of the game and that victory had now put them on path to win the premiership.

"I think now we're on our way," he said.

"In total we probably had about six chances, two hit the posts."

The game was locked at 0-0 at halftime before Con-

nell Breton found the net late in the second stanza to give Stratford their eighth win of the season.

"We had to change our gameplan because they were playing with an extra man in the middle and we hadn't been training for that," Binskin said.

In the other men's games,

Edge Hill against Mareeba was called off after referees deemed the ground unplayable. The match will be replayed later this season.

Edge Hill coach Rob Wales slammed the decision, saying the ground was in a good enough state to play.

"We've got guys working round-the-clock water-

ing it and greenkeepers as well working on the trouble spots," he said.

"It means we've only played one game in the past month, it's just like we're back to the start of the season.

"So we are a bit upset we didn't play but that's how it goes."

Innisfail's home match against Marlin Coast was also called off because the ground was too wet.

In the ladies division, Stratford lost to Leichhardt 3-2.

## Bulls happy to take ugly win against Whitsunday

AS far as victories go, the FNQ Bulls' 1-0 triumph over the Whitsunday Miners in Mackay was about as attractive as Pim Verbeek's haircut, but winning coach Peter Tokesi is not about to hand back the three points.

A 0-0 draw looked likely on Saturday night after both sides squandered scoring opportunities during the match but Josh De Nittis' 89th minute strike ensured the Bulls enjoyed a pleasant bus ride back to the Far North.

The substitute's timely finish also keeps the Bulls fourth on the Queensland State League ladder with seven rounds of the regular season left.

While it will not rank as one of his side's best performances this season, Tokesi said all teams had to win ugly at some stage.

"We spoke about it after the game about how we've played well in the past and lost games," he said.

"The players were a little bit disappointed

Andrew Piva

pivaa@tcp.newsltd.com.au

at how they played but then it sunk in that we got the three points.

"We need to get these points, not so much to stop the other teams above us getting away, but because we're in fourth and we're the first team everyone below us is chasing."

Tokesi was particularly impressed with the contributions of goalkeeper Angelo Serafin and teenage midfielder Peter McGrath, who continues to develop at senior level after making the jump from the under-19 ranks.

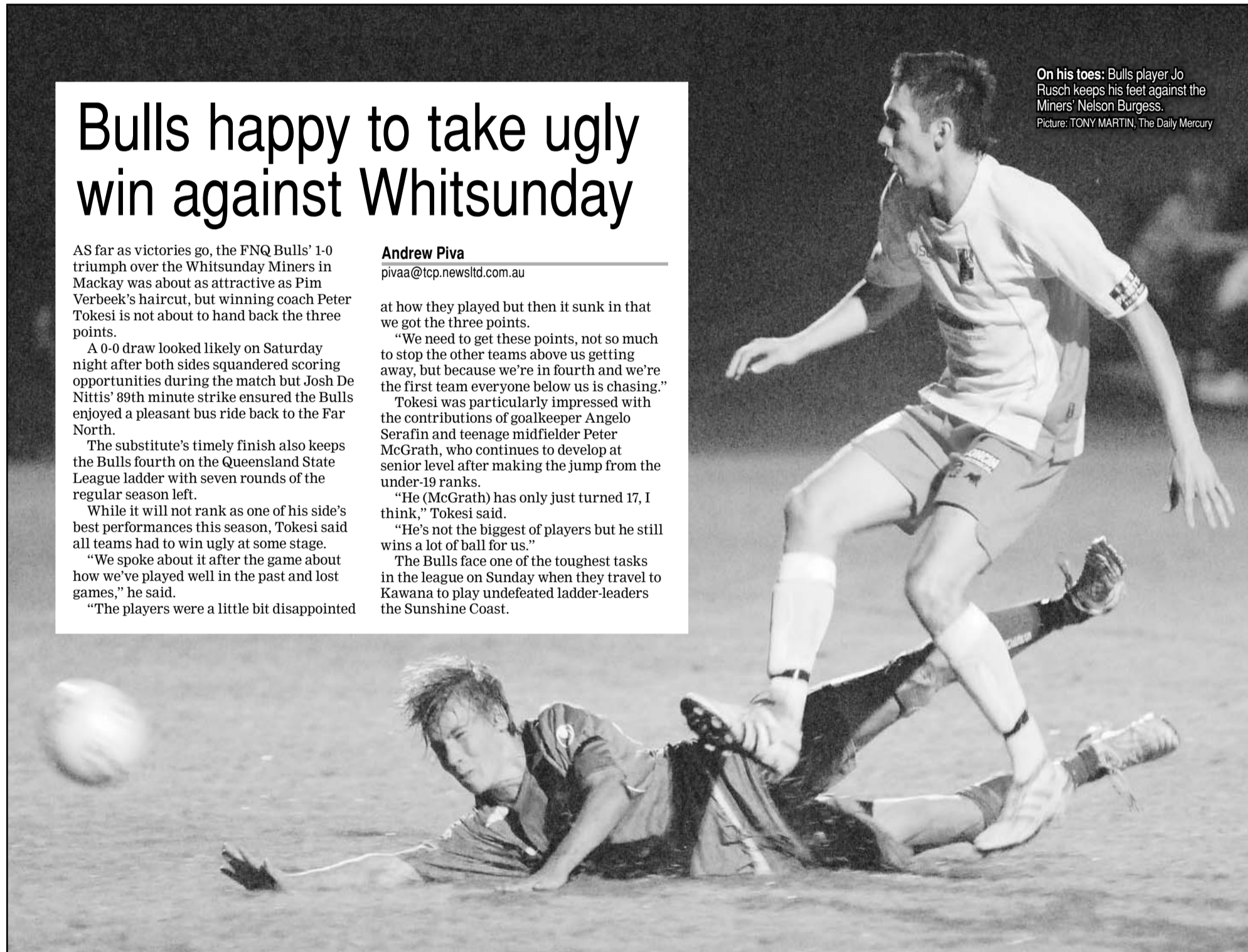
"He (McGrath) has only just turned 17, I think," Tokesi said.

"He's not the biggest of players but he still wins a lot of ball for us."

The Bulls face one of the toughest tasks in the league on Sunday when they travel to Kawana to play undefeated ladder-leaders the Sunshine Coast.

On his toes: Bulls player Jo Rusch keeps his feet against the Miners' Nelson Burgess.

Picture: TONY MARTIN, The Daily Mercury



### NETBALL

## Pumas miss out

THE Marlin Coast Pumas missed out on a win during the last cluster weekend of the Tier 2 Netball Championships in Brisbane.

The Pumas played four games, going down to Lions (59-33), Tigers (77-44), Lynx (55-43) and Cougars (86-30).

Pumas coach Karen Stormont said the match against Lynx was their best performance.

"Lynx had been rolling a lot of teams but for a while it looked like we were going to draw with them," she said. "It was just one of those games where everybody clicks. I always want the players to make three leads for every pass and that's what they were doing."

"Everyone worked really well together."

Stormont said shooters Darcie Donnelly and Erin Stormont were Pumas' most consistent players over the weekend.

### MOTO GP

## Stoner grabs podium finish

AUSTRALIA'S Casey Stoner claimed his first podium finish of the season at the Dutch MotoGP, as victory for Spanish rider Jorge Lorenzo extended his overall lead in the championship.

Stoner was third behind Yamaha's Lorenzo and another Spaniard in Honda rider Dani Pedrosa.

Stoner, the 2007 world champion, was delighted with the top-three finish.

"It is a nice result for us, although it should have happened a lot earlier than this," the 26-year-old said.

Lorenzo—who has won four races—leads Pedrosa by 47 points after six races.

### TOUR DE FRANCE

## Contador tip

THE "voice" of world cycling, Phil Liggett, believes Spaniard Alberto Contador "holds all the aces" going into this week's Tour de France.

The SBS commentator is about to cover his 39th consecutive Tour and said the Astana leader was a deserving favourite.

"He (Contador) holds all the aces because he knows his ability and if he's fit and can find his form, I don't think he can be beaten," Liggett said. "Watching Contador this season, he believes he is the best bike rider. But if he gets too cocky, too confident, it could bring him undone."

Australia will have two genuine yellow jersey contenders with Michael Rogers (HTC-Columbia) and Cadel Evans (BMC) ready to fire.

### GOLF

## All going sweet for English Rose

ENGLAND'S Justin Rose fired a two-under par 68 to take a three-shot lead over Ben Curtis after three rounds of the PGA Tour's Travelers Championship.

Rose, who won the Memorial three weeks ago, put himself in position to make it two titles in as many starts as he built a 54-hole total of 16-under 194. He set the 36-hole tournament record with rounds of 64 and 62. And he was just a stroke off the best 54-hole total in tournament history even after his putter cooled off.

"I'm really happy to have a day like that on the greens and still shoot 68 and still maintain my lead," he said.