

Shattered Jones exits to be with his ill son

BRAD Jones' teammates broke down and cried when they were told his four-year-old son Luca had leukaemia.

Jones last night arrived back in France to join his family after fielding the tragic call on Friday.

The news has left the Australian squad with a feeling of helplessness just days before the opening of the 2010 World Cup.

"They were visibly upset," a Socceros source said last night.

"They are probably still in a bit of shock, to be honest.

"It's a bit of a blow to the bloke because his World Cup is in jeopardy but, more importantly, his son has been diagnosed with leukaemia.

"The players wished him all the best."

Jones, 28, was told Luca had leukaemia on Friday by his former wife, Julie.

He immediately informed his friends.

The following day Socceros captain Lucas Neill broke the devastating news to the squad, hours before the friendly against US. Some players broke down and cried.

Paul Kent

News Ltd, South Africa

"He was gutted," a source close to Jones, who did who want to be identified, said last night.

"He decided to fly straight over to France to be with his kid."

Jones, 28, was about to live the dream after surviving the cut to be Australia's back-up keeper at the World Cup.

However, he is now a shattered man.

Luca is in St Tropez with his mother.

Jones arrived yesterday, while the rest of his family, flying in from Perth, was expected to arrive last night.

The Australian squad quickly closed ranks around Jones, with news of his withdrawal held until his family in Australia could be informed.

Jones told friends he was unsure whether he will try to get back to South Africa to play in the World Cup.

While the squad was preparing to play against the US, a devastated



Devastated: Socceros keeper Brad Jones.

Jones was packing his bags before heading to Johannesburg airport to fly to his ill son's side.

It is not known how long Luca has been ill.

Jones was vying with Reading's

Adam Federici for the back-up position behind Socceros goalkeeper Mark Schwarzer.

Federici was the early favourite for the back-up role. However, Jones looked favoured to secure the role after a strong second-half performance against New Zealand in Melbourne two weeks ago.

Football Federation Australia last night applied for special dispensation to have a fourth keeper come in to replace Jones.

Under FIFA laws, only injured players can be replaced. However, the FFA believes they have a strong case and will give him up to the second game against Ghana on June 19 in Rustenberg.

But, emergency keeper Eugene Galekovic was last night placed on standby.

Socceros coach Pim Verbeek was expected to hold a press conference last night to inform the Australia media.

Jones is goalkeeper for English Championship side Middlesbrough, having just secured the No.1 jersey after being the long-term back-up to Schwarzer.

QAS just too quick for Bulls

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THE FNQ Bulls were out-paced and out-skilled by the Queensland Academy of Sport on Saturday night, going down 1-0 at Borzi Park in the latest round of the Queensland State League.

The two sides played out an 11-goal thriller in Round 4, with the Bulls winning that contest 7-4 in Brisbane.

But the goals did not flow as freely in Mareeba, despite encouraging signs early.

The home side nearly scored 10 seconds after the kick-off thanks to a neat interchange of passing and had a header saved on the goal-line two minutes later.

But the promise of another goal-fest soon disappeared as the QAS sprinted their way into contention.

The visitors' leg speed and man-on-man pressure was phenomenal, causing the Bulls to continually fluff their first touches.

The QAS effort was rewarded midway through the first half when striker Elliot Ronto fired home from the edge of the box to score.

While their passing was not as crisp as their rivals', the Bulls managed to create chances in both halves but failed to take any.

Bulls coach Peter Tokesi said his side's inability to hit the target was a problem.

"At the beginning of the year I said we'd lose more games from inside the attacking six-yard box than the other one and that was the case tonight," he said. "I can't fault the effort but we need to convert that into goals. It's no good pulling a rope to pull a building down if it's just going to fall on top of you."

He said his team went away from what worked against QAS earlier this season.

"Most teams have two or three quick guys but the whole QAS squad, even their bench, is quick," Tokesi said.

"That's what you're up against, so you have to beat them with ball speed, not leg speed. But we didn't do that tonight."



Crossing over: Leichhardt's Matt Murphy on the attack against Stratford's Stuart Dunn in their premier division clash at Castor Park yesterday.

Picture: JAKE NOWAKOWSKI

Dolphins show cutting edge to power to top

STRATFORD powered to the top of the FNQ Football premier division soccer table after surviving a spirited Innisfail challenge at Castor Park yesterday.

The Dolphins trailed 2-1 at half-time. Damien Musumeci's double handed his side the early advantage before goals to Aaron Bull and Josh Craig, in addition to Daniel Sherwin's first-half strike, secured Stratford's win.

Victorious coach Glenn Binskin said his team had responded well to a halftime blast after a scrappy first half effort.

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"After that, we started the second half well and got our shape back and dominated just by doing the simple things well that have got us this far," he said.

Binskin believed the turning point of the match came in the second half when Dolphins goalkeeper Phil Sorensen stopped a Cutters shot from point-blank range and said that other teams may not enjoy the same fate.

"I think other teams are going to find it hard to win a game down

there, Innisfail are a very improved team," he said.

Cutters coach John Cavanah was disappointed at the loss but buoyed by the fact his team now expected to win against top-quality opposition and not merely be competitive.

"We played some beautiful football in the first half but we got a bit complacent and I don't think we strung two passes together in the second half," he said.

Leichhardt's 3-1 loss, their second in as many weeks after starting the season with six successive victories, was not a cause for concern, accord-

ing to attacking midfielder Pasco Rogato.

"We created chances in the first half and didn't capitalise on them," he said. "In the second half, we lacked the intensity they had."

Marlin Coast coach Fab Soncin said the win had been an improvement on recent efforts.

"It was good in that we built up the play well and we also defended better," he said. "It was an important win for us."

In the other premier division match, FNQ Fusion beat Mareeba 3-2.

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In control: Bulls defender Cameron Morrison looks for options against QAS.

Picture: JIM HATCHMAN