

Sportember: get into action



Gold Coast Titans' Mat Rogers – an international for both the Kangaroos and the Wallabies – is putting his support behind the grass roots sporting development promoted by the Sports Rewards Foundation, headed up by Jacob Gough (right).

September will be re-named Sportember from now on, if Queensland-based sporting charity, the Sports Rewards Foundation, has its way.

Sports Rewards CEO Jacob Gough wants Australia to embrace the Sportember concept as a month that helps build grass roots support for sport and promotes its vital health and community benefits.

"We think Sportember will work a treat and we are receiving a lot of support for this month that helps to celebrate the role of sport in our society and assists worthy related causes," Mr Gough said.

Sports Rewards is an organisation that links small businesses Australia-wide with their local sporting organisations to provide sponsorship through a tailored rewards program. Its foundation has the aim of becoming the largest financial contributor to grass roots sport in the country.

Mr Gough and his Sports Rewards team have drawn some very high profile sporting stars in support for the month – including the AFL's Jonathan Brown and Leigh Mathews, swimmers Emily Seebohm and Libby Trickett, Wallaby Nathan Sharpe and Queensland Reds' Luke Morahan, NRL

champions Mat Rogers and Ben Ikin.

Sportember features a sporting goods donation scheme, in which people are encouraged to recycle old sporting equipment by dropping it off for distribution to individuals and organisations who could immediately benefit.

There is also the National Sports Day on September 17, in which people celebrate sporting awareness by wearing the colours or garments of their favourite sporting teams.

But most ambitious of all is the call to join the 30-day Lifestyle Challenge, a fund raising venture that encourages participants to enjoy 30 consecutive days of exercise, for 30 minutes each day.

"It's a whole new month – and a very exciting challenge. We have received really good interest so far," Mr Gough said.

The charities involved and supported through the month are the complementary Heart Foundation and Diabetes Australia. Importantly 50 percent of all funds raised go to assist grass roots sporting bodies and individuals, the remainder to charities.

"September is such a perfect time to hold Sportember as we are just coming out of winter and September has so many major sporting contests from the AFL and NRL finals to the Bathurst 1000 motor race, rugby internationals and a host of regional sporting finals," Mr Gough said.

"Business is a vital part of Sportember, as without business participation so much sport simply could not take place. That is the link we aim to enhance, right across the country."

Mr Gough, himself a top-level AFL player for Morningside in the Queensland competition, has been heartened by the support he has received from high profile individual competitors such as Olympic swimmer Libby Trickett and world pro surfing champion Steph Gilmore, along with leading sporting clubs such as the Brisbane Lions and Gold Coast Titans.

He has also received great support from Jetts Fitness Centres, who have also volunteered their 80 national outlets as collection points for sporting goods recycling and donations.

www.sportsrewards.net.au
www.sportsrewards.org ■