



# Meninga likes what he sees in Cowboys

**by Michael Thompson**  
 michaelthompson@townsvillebulletin.com.au

MAROONS coach Mal Meninga was in Townsville yesterday and he liked what he saw in the North Queensland Cowboys.

Four Cowboys have made Queensland's 25-man preliminary State of Origin squad for game one of the series on May 25 and Meninga hasn't discounted more being named as the season progresses.

"The Cowboys have been going really well this year, it's a reward for some good form," he said.

"Johnathan, Matty, Dallas and Willie have been loyal servants and great players for Queensland for several years so it's a just reward."

Meninga said even fan favourite Matt Bowen, who missed out on selection for game one, could get a call-up if he stays in form.

"I can't predict it but Matty can control his own form and I reckon he's playing the best he ever has," he said. "His attitude is good, he's a got a really good aggressive attack

and he's getting his speed back after all the injuries he's had recently.

"He's only going to get better with age, if he can just control what he does and he keeps on playing well, an opportunity will come his way."

Meninga was in town as part of a Suncorp Bank agribusiness tour and has made stops in Cloncurry, Richmond and Charters Towers during the week. The former Australian and Queensland great labelled the trip as a mini-holiday before the rigours of Origin get under way: "It's a good wind down for me before we get into Origin which is fairly intense."

One man who experienced an intense start to the year was Cowboys coach Neil Henry and Meninga was pleased to see his former Origin assistant back in the winner's circle.

"Neil's got them going along really well and he's a fantastic coach. He just needs the players to jump on board and play well really," he said. "That's probably something that

was missing last year, but this year they've got that happiness back which is good and they're enjoying what they do."

The Maroons mentor said it was already evident that the Cowboys were a new-look outfit after visiting the team during a training run before their season opener against the Brisbane Broncos.

"I saw through that training run how focused they were and how much they really want to do well and play well," he said.

"They seemed really content and happy and that's a good sign for a club, everyone's working in the same direction by the looks of things."

Meninga said the Cowboys were every chance of being a finals contender provided injury doesn't take too heavy a toll before September.

"And it's good to have Brent Tate back I reckon, Tatey adds another dimension to the side," he said.



**Mal Meninga**