

Sports Stars Line Up in Barcaldine

Hockeyroo, Nikki Hudson, Footy Show personality and jockey, Allan Robinson, Australian Rugby Union legend, Chris "Buddha" Handy and Bronco's star, Justin Hodges will be the celebrity guests at this year's Tree of Knowledge Festival Sports Dinner.

The dinner will kick off the Festival on the Friday night, April 30 of the May Day long weekend and with its impressive line up of well known celebrity sports people is sure to attract a huge crowd.

Event organiser and Central West Rugby League President, Mr Brett Harvey said the Sports Dinner is always a highlight of the Festival and they expect this year's event to outdo those held in previous years.

"Every year we have tried to keep up the standard of speakers and if this year's line up doesn't pull a big crowd I might as well give it away," said Mr Harvey.

The guest speakers represent a diverse range of sporting codes and between them boast a host of talents and achievements.

Nikki Hudson is the co-captain of the Australian Women's Hockey team. She won gold at the Sydney Olympics in 2000, was a member of the team at Athens in 2004 which ranked 5th, and co-captained the Beijing 2008 Olympic team.

Footy Show favourite and larrikin jockey, Allan Robinson is sure to add a heap of humour to the night.

A self-professed bush jockey Robinson holds the national record for the most wins in a season riding 223.5 winners in 2005 – 2006.

Few names are more synonymous in the world of Rugby, than larger than life sporting icon, Chris "Buddha" Handy who is in constant demand as a guest speaker, both in the rugby and corporate world.

A former barrel-chested prop forward, 'Buddha' Handy created mayhem on world rugby fields with his uncompromising and rugged play. Earning his Wallaby colours, he played in six internationals and joined a select band of Wallabies, lifting the Bledisloe Cup in victory on two occasions against arch rivals, the All Blacks.

Playing in the Centres, Justin Hodges is one of the Brisbane Broncos present day stars.

While his 2010 season has gotten off to a bad start due to injury, his 2009 season was once again outstanding for Hodges.

His credentials speak for themselves having played 11 matches for Queensland and represented Australia in 10 test matches between 2006 and 2009. He is a proven representative performer known for his ability to single-handedly win games.

Each year the Sports dinner, which is organised by the Central West Rugby League (CWRL), has grown in popularity so much so that this year the event has seen a change of venue from the town hall to the Crawchie Pot.

“Last year we had the likes of Trevor Gillmeister, Duncan Hall and Olympic volleyballer, Selina Scobel and it was an excellent night, but I think in light of the line up of the guests we’ve been able to secure this year the dinner will be even bigger and better,” said Mr Harvey.

“We are anticipating at least 250 people attending, last year we had around 180 in the town hall and it was just too cramped.

“We are hoping the change of venue will help us to cater for more people as well as build on the atmosphere,” he said.

Mr Harvey said proceeds of the night, as those have done so in the past, will go towards the development of junior players within the Central West

Mr Harvey said, in recent times the CWRL has been working in partnership with RYMA – Rural Young Males and Alcohol, in actively encouraging young men to look after their health and take responsible steps regarding the use of alcohol following games.



Chris "Buddha" Handy



Justin Hodges in action for the Broncos