

NEW SOUTH WALES

- Fullback: JARRYD HAYNE (Eels)**
Age: 26, Origins 18
Back to his preferred position of fullback in game one and repaid coach Daley with an electrifying best-on-field display.
- Wing: WILL HOPOATE (Eels)**
Age: 22, Origins 1
Remarkable return to Origin football after leaving the game at the end of 2011. Has been in sensational form for the Eels.
- Centre: JOSH DUGAN (Dragons)**
Age: 24, Origins 3
Blues' coach Laurie Daley says Dugan is more than capable of handling Maroons' strike weapon Greg Inglis in his fourth Origin appearance.
- Centre: MICHAEL JENNINGS (Roosters)**
Age: 26, Origins 11
Didn't see alot of ball at Suncorp but kept opposite number Justin Hodges on his toes when it did come his way. Potential match-winner.
- Wing: DANIEL TUPOU (Roosters)**
Age: 22, Origins 1
Solid game in his Origin debut without producing the acrobatics he delivers at club level. Has the ability to score remarkable tries.
- Five-eighth: JOSH REYNOLDS (Bulldogs)**
Age: 25, Origins 3
Aggressive player who looks made for the Origin arena. Great effort in the series opener, especially in linking with go-to man Hayne.
- Halfback: TRENT HODKINSON (Bulldogs)**
Age: 25, Origins 1
Looked comfortable in his debut at Suncorp alongside Bulldogs' teammate Reynolds. Kept those quiet who pushed for Mitchell Pearce's retention.
- Lock: PAUL GALLEN (Sharks)**
Age: 32, Origins 17
Silenced the jeers at Suncorp with an inspirational and tireless effort from the word go. Would be fitting if he held the Origin shield aloft.
- Hooker: ROBBIE FARAH (Tigers)**
Age: 30, Origins 9
Like Gallen, Farah bleeds Blue and stings from the pain of being close without tasting Origin success. Steered the Blues around expertly at Suncorp.
- Prop: AARON WOODS (Tigers)**
Age: 23, Origins 3
The damaging ball runner translated his Tigers' club form to make a statement up the middle in game one. Set to become a Blues fixture.
- Second-row: RYAN HOFFMAN (Storm)**
Age: 31, Origins 9
A key figure of a resolute defensive line in game one, The Storm forward is a consistent and proven performer at all levels of the game.
- Second-row: BEAU SCOTT (Knights)**
Age: 30, Origins 6
Typical no-frills performance at Suncorp but the hard-nosed Knight delivered what coach Laurie Daley wanted on the left edge.
- Lock: GREG BIRD (Titans)**
Age: 29, Origins 14
Suspension forced him out of the series opener which will only make him more determined to bash the Maroons into submission.

BLUES' INTERCHANGE

- TRENT MERRIN (Dragons)**
Age: 25, Origins 8
- JAMES TAMOU (Cowboys)**
Age: 25, Origins 6
- LUKE LEWIS (Sharks)**
Age: 30, Origins 15
- ANTHONY WATMOUGH (Sea Eagles)**
Age: 30, Origins 13

Blues wary of 'underdog' ambush

By BEN WALKER

IT may seem strange to say that a team 1-0 up in a State of Origin series has everything to lose in game two but that is the scenario facing New South Wales when they host Queensland at ANZ Stadium on Wednesday night.

The Blues were terrific in game one, defending stoutly for the final 20 minutes to hold on for a 12-8 victory that has hopes high that this is the year they end the Maroons' eight-year dominance.

Adding to that confidence is the fact Mal Meninga had to pick a 22-man squad for this game to cover the loss of halfback Cooper Cronk and injuries to key players Billy Slater, Greg Inglis and Cronk's replacement Daly Cherry-Evans.

Surely it's all set up for NSW to brush aside a depleted Maroons and win back the shield and bragging rights.

Maybe not. All of a sudden Queensland has gone from the raging favourite with bookmakers and pundits to a despised outsider.

The side is missing one of its superstars; if the others play they won't be 100 per cent, and they will be playing away from home.

The football world is against them and they've managed to win back the underdog status they've thrived on since the first Origin clash back in 1980.

At the same time Laurie Daley's men are being pumped up as "dynasty breakers", "the best chance in a decade" and will carry the "favourites" tag. It's a situation tailor-made for a Queensland ambush.

Despite their struggles, the Maroons, with their backs to the wall, may be a more dangerous proposition this time around than they were in game one.

While the exact makeup of the Maroons side is yet to be properly determined, things have gone swimmingly for New South Wales.

They're missing the Morris brothers and replaced them with Will Hopoate and Josh Dugan but the key stakeholders in their game one win are still there.

Beau Scott handled the Johnathon Thurston-Greg Inglis combination with his solid defence, the 'spine' of fullback Jarryd Hayne, five-eighth Josh Reynolds, halfback Trent Hodkinson and hooker Robbie Farah remains in tact, and they get Greg Bird back into the squad after he missed game one due to suspension.

There's no doubt the blowtorch will be on Reynolds and Hodkinson.

They got the job done in game one when there wasn't as much on the line but this time around they have a series to go and win.



BLUES V MAROONS

- GAME 1:**
NSW 12 d. Queensland 8
- GAME 2:**
June 18: ANZ Stadium, Sydney
- GAME 3:**
July 9: Suncorp Stadium, Brisbane

NSW skipper Paul Gallen runs the ball during game one of the State of Origin series at Suncorp Stadium.

THE ORIGIN STORY SO FAR

TOTAL WINS Qld 51, NSW 45, Drawn 2
SERIES WINS Qld 17, NSW 12
TOTAL POINTS Qld 1607, NSW 1546

MOST POINTS IN A GAME

Ryan Girdler	NSW	32
Lote Tuqiri	Qld	18
Michael O'Connor	NSW	18
Mal Meninga	Qld	16
Darren Lockyer	Qld	16
Dale Shearer	Qld	16

LEADING COACHES

Longest serving coach: **Qld** - Mal Meninga 23 matches (15 wins, 8 losses) and Wayne Bennett 22 matches (11 wins, 10 losses, 1 draw).
NSW - Phil Gould 24 matches (14 wins, 9 losses, 1 draw)



Ryan Girdler

Most man-of-the-match Awards: Wally Lewis (Qld), eight.

Oldest player (Queensland): Petero Civoniceva, 36, (2012).

Oldest player (NSW): John Ferguson, 34 years and 348 days - June 28, 1989.

Youngest player (Queensland): Ben Ikin, 18 years and 83 days - May 15, 1995.

Youngest player (NSW): Brad Fittler, 18 years and 114 days - May 30, 1990.

Most consecutive wins: Queensland, six (May 17, 1988-June 28, 1989).

Mission toughened Will for Origin push

AS a rugby league player, everything has just fallen into place for Will Hopoate.

He won a premiership at Manly as a teenager and also represented his state in the same year in 2011. When he came off contract, he had a host of clubs after his services, and when he eventually came back to rugby league after a two-year Mormon mission, he helped turn wooden spooners Parramatta into a top four team.

He now finds himself on the cusp of helping NSW end Queensland's record eight-year stranglehold on the State of Origin series.

There have hardly been many obstacles to overcome during his time as a footballer, and while he didn't

elaborate in detail as to what he went through during his mission, it's clear he believes it will hold him in good stead come kick-off next Wednesday.

"Being away for two years and facing quite a bit of adversity and rejection, it's helped me to be a bit more mentally stronger and a bit more thick-skinned," Hopoate said. "I think that helps."

From the moment Laurie Daley brought him into camp as 19th man for game one, Hopoate was always going to be the man to fill a hole in the back line if injuries played a part this series.

While Daley wouldn't give much away in the lead-up to his team announcement, he said Hopoate was not out of his depth despite only three

months of football under his belt in three years.

Hopoate spent plenty of time in Queensland during his Mormon mission, and while there was plenty of love in his heart, he said he needed to evoke a different emotion in game two. "They're the enemy and we're going out with the aim to win and likewise for them," he said.

"My goal at the beginning of this year was to be selected in the 17 for Parramatta. Now to be wearing a sky blue jersey, it's a dream come true. I'm feeling happy to be here at the moment and to be around these high-profile calibre players here will definitely help me out."

QUEENSLAND

- Fullback: BILLY SLATER (Storm)**
Age: 30, Origins 23
Has been a key figure in the Maroons' dominance over the past eight years however a shoulder injury may force him out of game two.
- Wing: DARIUS BOYD (Knights)**
Age: 26, Origins 18
Slotted straight back into rep mode at Suncorp and scored his trademark couple of tries on the back of solid ball movement.
- Centre: GREG INGLIS (Rabbitohs)**
Age: 27, Origins 22
Maroons' powerhouse was dangerous every time he touched the ball at Suncorp. A repeat performance is needed to level the series.
- Centre: JUSTIN HODGES (Broncos)**
Age: 32, Origins 19
Looked short of a gallop in the series opener but still lethal from dummy-half. Capable of a match-turning piece of brilliance.
- Wing: BRENT TATE (Cowboys)**
Age: 32, Origins 22
Great competitor who always puts the team before himself. Played well in beaten Cowboys team against Eels.
- Five-eighth: JOHNATHAN THURSTON (C'boys)**
Age: 31, Origins 28
Missed a couple of key tackles that led to tries at Suncorp. An off-night at ANZ is not an option for the Maroons' superstar.
- Halfback: DALY CHERRY-EVANS (Sea Eagles)**
Age: 25, Origins 3
Into the game early at Suncorp due to Cooper Cronk injury. Niggling knee complaint a major concern for the Many playmaker.
- Prop: MATT SCOTT (Cowboys)**
Age: 28, Origins 15
Workaholic prop wasn't as influential in game one as he has been at club and Origin level. Needs to step up if the Maroons are to draw level.
- Hooker: CAMERON SMITH (Storm)**
Age: 30, Origins 31
Ankle injury hampered his attack in game one but still produced 40-plus tackles. Inspirational leader who won't give up without a fight.
- Prop: NATE MYLES (Titans)**
Age: 28, Origins 24
The series opener wasn't Myles' best Origin with his game riddled with errors and missed tackles. Will enjoy stoush with clubmate Greg Bird.
- Second-row: CHRIS McQUEEN (Rabbitohs)**
Age: 26, Origins 4
Had an impressive debut Origin series last year but wasn't a key contributor in this year's opener at Suncorp. Needs to step up.
- Second-row: SAM THAIDAY (Broncos)**
Age: 29, Origins 20
Proven Origin performer who missed game one and several club games through injury. His return is a big plus for the Maroons.
- Lock: BEN TE'O (Rabbitohs)**
Age: 27, Origins 5
Played off the bench at Suncorp but could be in the starting line-up following injury to former Broncos' teammate Corey Parker.

MAROONS' INTERCHANGE

- MATT GILLET (Broncos)**
Age: 25, Origins 7
- JACOB LILLYMAN (Warriors)**
Age: 30, Origins 6
- DAVE TAYLOR (Titans)**
Age: 25, Origins 6
- AIDAN GUERRA (Roosters)**
Age: 26, Origins 1

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