Week 6 AIC rugby league preview

Some of Padua College’s best-known rugby league graduates will line their playing fields at Banyo tomorrow as the AIC season gets down to its most important matches.

State of Origin forward David Shillington and Broncos premiership halfback Shane Perry will be among the old boys who will form a tunnel for the Padua First XIII as they run on to meet undefeated AIC heavyweights Marist College Ashgrove.

Padua, the alma mater of Kangaroos Paul Vautin and Paul McCabe, is celebrating its Gold V day as rugby league makes its debut on the school’s playing fields as a full AIC term sport.

Padua has a proud league history as an original member of the Confraternity Carnival and it has invited some members of its best teams over the years, including Confraternity Carnival champions.

The old boys will like the fighting spirit of a First XIII team that has performed very well this season, including a remarkable draw with St Brendan’s College, Yeppoon, that sent Padua into the Confraternity Carnival semi-finals in July.

Padua stormed back from a 0-18 deficit that day, forming a bond that will be needed when they attempt to end Marist Ashgrove’s winning run.

Padua have lost only once in the AIC season – falling narrowly to Iona College in the opening round after again clawing back from a halftime deficit.

Iona and Marist Ashgrove remain unbeaten ahead of their final-round clash next weekend but Padua can keep its hopes alive of a shared premiership with victory in tomorrow’s match.

Padua’s Head of Sport Scott Maguire – another old boy who played senior football with much success – said the school had tried to keep its players fresh during a long season.

“Some of our players have had the AIC rugby union season earlier this year, then Confro and now the AIC league season so we’ve tried to change things up in the last few weeks,” Maguire said.

“And some players have also played representative and club football so they have done an excellent job.

“We know that Ashgrove have had a really good season and many of our players and the Ashgrove players know each other and get on well. We’ve all been to Confro together and now we’re still going in this AIC season so we’re looking forward to this weekend.”

In other round six matches to be played at Padua’s grounds, Iona College will look to extend its unbeaten run against St Edmund’s College while St Patrick’s College takes on Villanova College.