

NEWS

We're handball heartland

JESSICA CLEMENT

THE sport of handball has found a most unlikely Australian home – and readers, you're living in it.

In a true sporting anomaly, it seems a disproportionately large number of Australia's premier young handballers reside in Hornsby and the Upper North Shore.

Twenty-nine local representatives will take to the court for NSW at National Championships next week, cementing our reputation as Australia's handball heartland.

National player Bevan Calvert, of Turramurra, puts the region's success down to a healthy local high school competition.

"We've got a strong new generation coming through, and a real tradition beginning to form through the schools around here now," Calvert said.

Handball, best described as soccer but with hands, is played at Olympic level and is especially popular in Nordic and European nations.

Calvert, 23, has recently returned from a three-year stint playing in the Danish Division 1 league to coach the NSW under-21s men's side at next week's tournament.

"I want to be here passing on what I've learned to these guys just as other older guys did when I was coming through the ranks," he said.



Bevan Calvert (right) and the vast array of handball talent now blooming in our area.

Picture: PETER KELLY

Fellow national senior squad member Curtis Eitzen will take the court for the NSW under-21 side this week.

"We're only a small sport but we're trying to build a strong following here, and as a result we've got loads of under-18s and under-21s players who are very talented," Eitzen, of Turramurra, said. "It's an exciting time for us."



What is handball? We'll give you a rundown of the game online at www.hornsbyadvocate.com.au

Names confirm area's quality

WE have three senior men's Aussie reps – Bevan Calvert, Curtis Eitzen and Richard Ridley – and three senior women's – Kim Higgins, Taylee Lewis and Gizelle Van der Merwe.

Our NSW under-21 men's reps are Eitzen, Ridley, Ailao Ale, Foon-Chak Joshua Wong and Luka Kranic and our under-21 women's reps are Lewis Van der Merwe, Julia Ale, Rachel

Lodewijks. Our under-18 men's NSW reps are Douglas Kors, Nicholas Klein, James Coutts, James Ridley, Philip Leung, Tim Anderson, Daniel Townsend, Alex Brimfield, Christopher Petrie and our under-18 women's are Tegan Poulton, Katie Handy Laura Ridley, Annalese Elizabeth Evans Smith, Breanna Seach, Alana Thomas, Emma Yi-Hua Westhefer and Olivia Mowat.