Cat’s out of the bag, now Foran has to Manly up over Eels deal

By PAUL CRAWLEY
A STUNNED and angry Kieran Foran last night surrended months of careful planning surrounding his exit strategy from Manly when it was revealed he had agreed to join Parramatta on a four-year deal worth a whopping $47 million.

As Eels fans celebrated the club’s biggest signing since the Super League war split the game, stunned Manly officials and coach Geoff Toovey claimed they had no idea Foran had made his final decision. Although the announcement had been mooted for weeks, it is understood Foran desperately wanted to tell his teammates and coach Toovey before the deal was made public.

But that opportunity was stripped from him when a clearly shocked Toovey was left exposed when he appeared live on Fox Sports’ NRL 360 shortly after the news of the deal broke last night.

Toovey could not believe Foran did not tell him if the deal was finalised given they saw each other yesterday and Foran didn’t mention it.

“I saw Kieran today and he is the type of guy that would tell me what is going on but I have no official news that that is the case,” Toovey said.

“I am unaware of it. The man involved would come up and tell me if that was the case.’’

Even Manly owner Scott Penn was not informed that Foran was leaving, while chief executive Joe Kelly last night said the club had met with Foran’s management yesterday and no deal was confirmed. Toovey was “filthy” he had not had the chance to reveal his news to teammates and Toovey before they found out last night through the breaking news.

Manly were not scheduled to train today, which only added to Foran’s dilemma about when he could tell his teammates as a group.

Grass cuts it for Davis Cup

AUSTRALIAN tennis icon Todd Woodbridge says Darwin’s ability to produce a pristine grass court playing surface won it historic hosting rights for this year’s Davis Cup quarter-final.

Australia will play Kazakhstan in the July 17-19 tie at the Marrara Sporting Complex.

A purpose-built playing court and two practice courts will be installed adjacent to the Marrara Indoor Sports centre in the Territory’s first taste of Davis Cup tennis.

Woodbridge, a 16-time Grand Slam doubles winner, said the playing surface was always a critical factor in winning ties and playing on grass was Australian tennis’ best option.

“Playing on grass in winter is really not an option down south and the weather and climate in Darwin is ideal in that sense,” he said. “Grass is certainly Bernard Tomic’s best surface and Lleyton Hewitt’s best surface, while Nick Kyrgios made the quarters at Wimbledon last year.

“They are the places with Thanasi Kokkinakis and Sam Groth who will be in Darwin this year, though we don’t know what injuries will be between them. And we’re playing Kazakhstan, who beat Italy in the first round. They’re not so well known to tennis people but they are a very solid team and have two players in the world’s top 30.’’

Sports minister Gary Higgins said the Territory had aced Cairns in winning the hosting rights for the Cup clash. “It’s taken a lot of work over the last couple of months from the Government, Tennis NT and Tennis Australia, but we’ve got there and it’s a fantastic result for the Territory,’’ he said.

“We had to wait on the result of the Czech Republic round but as we won that the preparations began in earnest.

“We’ve begun preparations at Marrara already. The biggest cost to us will be setting spectator stands in from the Australian sporting icon, the greats that started yesterday.

“The NT has a women’s over-35 and mixed open team in action under coaches Steven Raymond and Greg Bond.

The ‘Territory Devils’ are expected to test the highly rated NSW and Queensland sides with their speed and evasive skills.

FOOTROT FLAT

OVER 35 WOMEN: Candice Allen; Renee Williams; Casey Cameron; Amy Braddick; Samantha Phillips; Nicole Palmer; Judy Mitchell; Michelle McIvor; Sally Di Cesare; Anne Reynolds. Coach: Craig Irvine.