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By ARN

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The 2010 American National Rugby League season starts on Saturday, June 5 and one team determined to make its mark this year is the Northern Raiders.

For the first time since its formation, the club has brought in players from overseas to join its predominantly homegrown roster.

The rationale for importing the two Australians is to help bring more structure to the club's game plan as the Raiders are renowned for their somewhat unorthodox style.

"We open it up every play," says assistant coach Tim Lawrence. "We can strike from anywhere and we will attack both sides in the same play on our second touch.

"Teams just don't try that stuff on the first tackle, but that's what makes us dangerous and fun."

The club was established in 2002 and prides itself on finding and promoting homegrown talent.

Prior to signing on, captain and Connecticut native Tony Kalamas had never played either union or league, yet he is now a top 25 try-scorer in the AMNRL.

Matt Reilly of Long Island is a solid union player who has adapted well to both league and sevens.

"There are a lot of differences between union and league," says another local player Justin Coffman. "I love them both, but league is a good place for players with natural ability to excel every game no matter what position on the field.

"This is open field action for all 80 minutes. Imagine five penalty plays in a row with a sort of 10s or sevens feel to it. Open subs like hockey. It's great and everyone plays a ton. That's league in a nutshell."

The Raiders want to grow Rugby League in the Northeast and consequently are aiming the bulk of their recruiting efforts at union players in the Tri-state area of NY/CT/NJ, but they're also willing to put up any American players from anywhere in the country and give them a chance to try the 13-man code.

There are several spots still open on the club's roster for this season and they're keen to hear from any interested players.

For more information on joining the club, please email Raiders GM Joel Venables at rugbyrugby@optonline.net