

= The Matty Johns Show =

The Matty Johns Show was an Australian variety television show largely focused on the National Rugby League ( NRL ) competition , starring former rugby league player Matthew " Matty " Johns . It first aired in 2010 on Thursdays at 7 @. @ 30 pm in New South Wales and Queensland , on the Seven Network . The show usually ran for 1 hour . It was produced by Matty Johns and John Singleton .

The show 's rugby league content was directly comparable to The Footy Show , produced by the Nine Network , which has been on air since 1994 . The Matty Johns Show was described as a " smut @-@ free " , more family @-@ friendly version of it . The Matty Johns Show also featured interviews , music and character @-@ based skits . Portions of it was co @-@ hosted by Shane Webcke , Jason Stevens and Chloe Maxwell . The house band , Aston , gained attention for their arrangements of popular music , using classical instruments .

The show 's first season in 2010 rated strongly , and was compared favorably to The Footy Show by critics . It had been criticised for lacking serious football analysis , but had also been praised for its typically Australian character @-@ based sketches . The Controversy Corner segment of the show was briefly spun off as a standalone Sunday morning program during the 2010 NRL finals .

The Matty Johns Show did not return in 2011 .

= = History = =

Matty Johns was a professional rugby league player from 1991 to 2002 . He played for nine seasons with the Newcastle Knights , during which he and the Knights won the 1997 ARL season . He then played one season each with the Wigan Warriors and the Cronulla @-@ Sutherland Sharks . During his career , he played in the State of Origin series for New South Wales four times , played international tests for Australia eight times , and was part of the Australian squad that won the 1995 Rugby League World Cup .

He made his first forays into entertainment in 1999 , appearing in the low @-@ budget film In Search of the Holy Grail , which screened at the Newcastle Film Festival . He played Reg Reagan , a stereotype of Australian rugby league players .

= = = The Footy Show = = =

In 2002 , after his retirement from professional rugby league , Matty Johns became a regular performer on The Footy Show . The Footy Show is a popular variety show based on the NRL competition and broadcast by the Nine Network in those states where rugby league is the dominant football code ( New South Wales and Queensland ) . It should not be confused with the identically @-@ named The Footy Show based on Australian rules football , which is targeted at the other states of Australia where Australian rules is dominant .

Johns was a popular member of the cast of The Footy Show , and played several characters for the show . He further developed the Reg Reagan character as a beer @-@ swilling rugby league fan , and the character became hugely popular . He also appeared as Trent , a gay flight attendant . In 2004 , Johns recorded a novelty song and wrote a book , This Is My Life in character as Reg Reagan , and produced a DVD featuring both characters . He also commentated on Nine 's telecasts of rugby league games . In 2008 , he wrote a second book , From the Sheds , under his own name . He also became assistant coach of the Melbourne Storm NRL team .

However , in 2009 , Johns was suspended by the Nine Network over a sex scandal . It emerged in 2009 that Johns had participated in group sex with several Cronulla players and a young woman seven years earlier , in 2002 , at a hotel in Christchurch , New Zealand . She claimed to Australian current affairs program Four Corners in 2009 that she had suffered psychological problems as a result .

Matty Johns and the other players were investigated by police and cleared of any criminal wrongdoing . In May 2009 , Johns appeared on the Nine Network 's A Current Affair program to

explain his role in the event . He admitted having sex with the young woman , but claimed that it was consensual . He was later described as appearing during this interview like a " broken @-@ down wreck " . Johns later said that he " disconnected " for a month after his suspension . He stated that his wife and family experienced " great pain " in the midst of the publicity . He said , " It took us a long time to get over it . It pains me they have to go through it again . " There was speculation that his media career was over .

During his month off , the Newcastle Knights approached him about coaching their team . He was later approached by Laurie Daley to become an assistant coach to the Country Rugby League side in the City vs Country Origin series . In August 2009 , the Nine Network approached him about returning to commentary duties , reportedly offering \$ 600 @, @ 000 a year for him to continue with Nine . However , Johns turned down all of these offers and instead began a collaboration with Australian media stalwart John Singleton .

= = = John Singleton = = =

John Singleton is an Australian media entrepreneur , a rugby league fan and former part owner of the Brisbane Broncos . Johns and Singleton founded a television production company in November 2009 , in which each owns a 50 % stake . They developed a show to rival The Footy Show , and it was pursued by both the Seven Network and Network Ten . The Seven Network signed the new show and aggressively promoted it , even before it had a name .

Johns is under an exclusive contract with the company until 2011 , and may not appear on any other electronic media without Singleton 's approval . According to Paul Kent of The Daily Telegraph , the deal with Singleton and Seven " has the potential to make him wealthy far beyond anything he could have achieved had he remained at Nine . "

= = = Recruitment of on @-@ air talent = = =

Matty Johns asked former rugby league player Shane Webcke to be his co @-@ host . Webcke played prop forward for the Brisbane Broncos from 1995 to 2006 . He also played State of Origin for Queensland 21 times , played international tests for Australia 20 times , and was part of the Australian squad that won the 2000 Rugby League World Cup . Webcke provided rugby league commentary for Seven News and read the sports bulletin for Seven News Brisbane . Webcke was initially hesitant before he accepted the offer to co @-@ host The Matty Johns Show , and said at the time :

" I was pretty thorough in terms of going and seeing Matt and seeing what they had in mind ; the actual guts of the show , what they were going to be about and that it was definitely something new ... I wanted to make sure that we were trying to do something that was rugby league , that was different and that I just liked the feel of . "

It was reported that Johns also pursued former rugby league player Mario Fenech , who appears on The Footy Show , and that Fenech declined the offer to join the new show . Matt Nable , former rugby league player turned screenwriter , worked as a writer on the show .

= = = Premiere = = =

The first episode of The Matty Johns Show aired Thursday evening , 25 March 2010 , three weeks into the NRL season . It was Johns ' first television appearance since appearing on A Current Affair in relation to the sex scandal . The Australian Associated Press reported that Matty Johns ' performance on his first show was " impressive " , and that he appeared " nervous but cheerful " . The Daily Telegraph 's Phil Rothfield compared the " far brighter and more radiant " appearance of Johns in his first show to the " broken down wreck " seen on A Current Affair in May 2009 in the context of the sex scandal .

= = = Future = = =

Towards the end of the 2010 season , Matty Johns said , " I 've been really happy with what we 've done - particularly the mix at the back end of the year . " The show was slated to return in 2011 , as the show was initially contracted for two years .

Seven offered Johns the 10.30pm Thursday timeslot , which Johns had the option of declining owing to a clause in his contract . Co @-@ host Webcke was not happy with the late time , and Johns ' producers perceived that there may be difficulty in booking guests at that time . Consequently , Johns declined the offer and sat out 2011 on full pay . It has also been suggested that success of The Matty Johns Show depended on the success of related AFL show The Bounce , which failed in 2010 . The future of The Matty Johns Show is currently unclear .

= = = Related projects = = =

Johns discussed the possibility of new projects with the Seven Network during 2010 . He also developed two sitcoms , which are being shopped to the major commercial networks .

The popular Controversy Corner segment was spun off into a Sunday morning one @-@ hour program during the 2010 NRL finals series . There was also a " Daily Telegraph edition " of Controversy Corner in the week before the 2010 NRL Grand Final . Starting in the summer of 2010 , co @-@ host Jason Stevens began hosting a variety program on 7Two called Big J 's Place .

= = Style = =

The Matty Johns Show was pitched as a family @-@ friendly variety show based on the National Rugby League ( NRL ) competition . It is primarily aimed at New South Wales and Queensland audiences ( in which NRL is the dominant football code ) . The show features many comedy sketches , recurring characters and celebrity interviews in a variety format . This mixture has resulted in criticism from some media observers for a perceived lack of serious football analysis . Sports website The Roar notes that the show appears to be made to slick ( and expensive ) production values .

= = = Comparison with The Footy Show = = =

The Footy Show is a variety show based on the National Rugby League ( NRL ) competition , broadcast weekly by the Nine Network . The rugby league component of The Matty Johns Show is directly comparable to The Footy Show , and The Matty Johns Show has been described as a " smut @-@ free " version of it . Being on the Seven Network , The Matty Johns Show cannot incorporate NRL footage ( the rights to which are currently held by the Nine Network , and put to use on The Footy Show ) . The Matty Johns Show is not sanctioned by the NRL , while The Footy Show is .

The main cast of The Matty Johns Show was initially not invited to the 2010 Dally M Awards night ( an annual ceremony to honour the best NRL players of the year ) , while the cast of The Footy Show was invited . Johns said of the snub , " ... with the politics going around and with the rights coming up , and with Seven being an integral part of the NRL getting the money they are after , it 's a little surprising that Seven weren 't extended an invitation . " Matty Johns and his team were belatedly invited . Johns reacted to the incident by appearing at the awards night in character as Harry Hardman , and attempting to interview Footy Show regulars for his program , in spite of the fact that they were contractually forbidden from appearing on his show .

= = = Comparison with other shows = = =

The Matty Johns Show has also been compared to The Bounce , which was a show based on the Australian Football League ( AFL ) and targeted at those states in which AFL predominates . Johns plays a range of recurring Australian characters , in a style that has drawn comparisons to comic

Paul Hogan , star of The Paul Hogan Show . The variety elements of the show have inspired comparisons with Hey Hey It 's Saturday . The set has been compared to that of Rove Live , a variety show formerly produced at Global Television .

= = Format = =

The show was produced during the 2010 NRL season ( corresponding to winter in the Southern Hemisphere ) . In New South Wales and Queensland , ( in which NRL is the dominant football code ) , The Matty Johns Show was broadcast on Thursdays at 7 @. @ 30 pm , two hours before The Footy Show . In all other states ( in which the Australian Football League predominates ) , The Matty Johns Show may have been broadcast Thursdays at 7 @. @ 30 pm , or broadcast around midnight , after The AFL Footy Show . When broadcast at 7 @. @ 30 pm , the show followed long @-@ running soap opera Home and Away .

It was pre @-@ taped the day of broadcast , and usually ran for 60 minutes ( including commercials ) . Once , the running time was extended in order to provide coverage of important League news ( the Melbourne Storm salary cap scandal ) . The show was recorded at Global Television studios in Eveleigh , Sydney . However , it has recorded one episode in South Bank Parklands , Brisbane . The 2010 Grand Final episode was recorded at the Overseas Passenger Terminal of Sydney Harbour .

= = = Hosts = = =

The show is hosted by Matty Johns and Shane Webcke . In a tongue @-@ in @-@ cheek review , satirical website The Un @-@ Australian describes Johns as " a buffoonish , quintessentially ( sic ) Australian sportsperson spouting blokeisms " , and describes co @-@ host Shane Webcke as " surprisingly articulate " .

Also featured are Jason Stevens and Chloe Maxwell . Stevens is a former prop for the St. George Dragons and Cronulla @-@ Sutherland Sharks rugby teams , known for his Christian faith and clean image . Chloe Maxwell is a model , best known for her appearance in a series of advertisements for Jeans West . She is the wife of rugby player Mat Rogers . Sonia Kruger has also co @-@ hosted .

= = = Guests = = =

The guests on the show are a mix of rugby league identities and entertainment figures . For example , on the 19 August 2010 episode , Sydney Roosters player Anthony Minichiello appeared alongside Hollywood stars Will Ferrell and Mark Wahlberg .

= = = House band = = =

The house band is Aston , a group of six young music students from the Sydney Conservatorium of Music . Their style is to " take contemporary hits and classics and re @-@ arrange them into classical form " , using classical instruments . In April 2010 they posted a classical version of the song " Telephone " by Lady Gaga , released on YouTube . The video caught the attention of blogger Perez Hilton , and became the most watched Australian music video of the year with 700 @, @ 000 views in two weeks . Aston have recorded their first album , and it is expected to be released shortly by Warner Music Australia .

= = = Segments = = =

Controversy Corner is a segment in which Johns and Webcke , along with guest Paul Kent ( a sports writer from Sydney 's Daily Telegraph ) discuss NRL news . They are usually joined by rugby league personalities . Controversy Corner is a revival of a segment originated by Rex Mossop on the Seven Network . Johns hosted a weekly Sunday morning one @-@ hour version of Controversy

Corner during the 2010 NRL finals . Branded as Matty Johns ' Controversy Corner , it ran Sundays from 12 September to 3 October 2010 at 10am . In New South Wales and Queensland it was broadcast on Seven , and in other markets it was broadcast on 7Two . Johns also hosted a short " Daily Telegraph edition " of Controversy Corner in the week before the 2010 NRL Grand Final , featuring Jason Stevens , Paul Kent and Steve " Blocker " Roach . This video was streamed online on the Daily Telegraph website , and transcribed for the print and online versions of the newspaper .

Home When You 're Away is a segment in which two rugby league players from the same team ( usually from a team scheduled to play " away " from their home ground in the next match ) visit the home of one of their supporters . The person whose home is featured then answers questions .

= = = Characters = = =

Don Kirk is a parody of Australian gardening expert Don Burke . He is shown as being accident prone , arrogant and ignorant . Alby Sandals is a parody of Alby Mangels , a Dutch @-@ Australian adventurer and documentary @-@ maker . He travels around visiting rugby @-@ supporting towns with his pet chihuahua , Alan . Sandals usually runs into a battle with the town 's team mascot . Steven the Man Child is portrayed as a 10 @-@ year @-@ old child , who is inexplicably mature for his age , playing rugby league . He has a monobrow and is mute . Harry Hardman is a " garbo " ( rubbish collector ) who vents his frustrations with the game of rugby league . While in character as Hardman , Matty Johns " ambushed " The Footy Show regulars at the 2010 Dally M Awards .

= = Reception = =

= = = First shows = = =

Reviews of the debut show were mixed . Despite this , the first episode of The Matty Johns Show was that day 's most @-@ watched program in Sydney with 396 @,@ 000 viewers , and it collected another 199 @,@ 000 viewers in Brisbane . Of the initial ratings , Johns said in a press statement , " We ? re humbled by the support for our show ... Our aim was to produce a great fun footy show for the whole family and we ? re glad people liked it . " Reporters Amanda Meade from The Australian and Michael Idato from The Sydney Morning Herald suggested after the first episode that the earlier timeslot gives The Matty Johns Show a ratings advantage over The Footy Show . The Daily Telegraph 's Phil Rothfield stated that the first show put " pressure " on Paul Vautin , host of The Footy Show .

Both The Matty Johns Show and The Footy Show had improved ratings the following Thursday , after news broke of the Melbourne Storm salary cap scandal earlier that day .

= = = First series = = =

The show continued to rate well throughout 2010 . In mid @-@ July , an unnamed Seven spokesperson stated , " Matthew has destroyed The Footy Show in Sydney and Brisbane . That 's what counts . " The first series faced stiff competition from the very popular MasterChef Australia , which aired on Network Ten in the same timeslot as The Matty Johns Show . After MasterChef ended , The Matty Johns Show 's ratings rose 25 % over the previous week , which Seven 's head of programming conceded was probably due to the end of MasterChef .