

Miller Has To Miss County Action

Contributed by John Walsh
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ROBERT Miller won't be able to help Cumbria's push to win promotion to the County Championship.

Although the Bothel teenager was happy to represent his home county in this season's Shield competition, he has been advised to prepare himself for the Under-20's World Cup this summer.

The Shield starts next month with three matches on successive Saturdays but Miller, who has had a busy season with Tynedale, Newcastle Falcons and England Under-20's will take a break.

Cumbria team manager Mark Richardson said: "He's still involved in the Falcons first team squad and I think there's a general feeling that he should have a break ahead of the Under-20's World Cup apart from preparing with the England squad.

"He wanted to play for us, which we were pleased about, but we fully understand the decision which has been made by the powers that be.

"Grant Beasley and his brother Gavin Beasley have decided to play for Northumberland this time. They are playing in the north-east with Tynedale and the Falcons and are studying over there so it was probably an easy decision once they had been asked."

But Cumbria have put together what looks like a very competitive squad for the three Shield matches – intriguingly the opening one is against Northumberland, coached by former Aspatria and Cumbria coach Tommy Borthwick.

Coach Malcolm Brown said: "We're really pleased that a lot of the Kendal boys have put themselves forward this time. They have had a terrific season, winning the North One title and go into the championship full of confidence."

Eight Kendal players have been included in the Cumbria squad of 27 announced this week by Richardson.

Dan Bowman, one of four Fylde players, will captain the side – as he did last season – and two other players who perform outside the county are Sean Hannah (Hull) and Craig Smithson (West Park St. Helens).

The opening game is against Borthwick's Northumberland at Kendal on May 3 which is followed by two away games against North Midlands at Stourbridge on May 10 and at Darlington on May 17 against Durham.

"We really do need to get off to a winning start to kick-start the campaign right away, as we follow-up with two away fixtures," said Richardson.

The squad is:

Backs – Paul Newton, Martin Armstrong (both Penrith); James Gough, Dan Stephens, John Ladell (all Kendal); Mike Scott,. Lee Askew (Aspatria); Liam Nicholls (Carlisle); Lewis Boyd (Fylde); Sean Hannah (Hull).

Forwards – Billy Coxon, Richard Harryman, Gareth Gore, Gary Holmes, Mike Wilson (all Kendal); Andrew Irving, Alan Holmes, Dan Bowman, captain (all Fylde); Ben Lanighan (Workington); Stephen Stamper, Joe Graham (both Carlisle); Rob Dawson, David Preston (both Penrith); Matthew Atkinson, Robert Marrs (both Wigton); Gary Hodgson (Aspatria); Craig Smithson (West Park St. Helens).