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Benson Holt can’t get enough of his Aussie rules footy.

After making his debut as a representative player last year, the NDIS participant was looking forward to what the 2023 season will bring.

Following a big preseason, Benson, 16, who lives with Williams syndrome - a rare genetic disorder which affects around one in 20,000 people, was looking forward to putting the boots on once again.

Playing for his beloved Temora Kangaroos, who he has represented throughout his childhood and teen years after starting out in Auskick aged 5, Benson’s mum Louise said the club was more like a family.

'The Temora club have been great and very inclusive.

'Benson’s the only child with special needs who plays for the club, and they’ve been so supportive of him,' Louise said.

Maximising that support through the NDIS, Benson uses his plan to access physiotherapy, which helps him to maintain his mobility, strength and endurance in an active sport like Aussie rules.

After winning the Kangaroos Goal of the Year in 2017 in the Junior Division (under 11s, 13s and 15s), Benson’s built on that development by being selected to represent AFL NSW/ACT in the Toyota AFL National Inclusion Carnival last year.

An annual representative event that showcases the abilities of footballers with an intellectual disability, Benson travelled to the Barossa Valley, South Australia to play for the Rams.

Although injury and illness left the Rams a few players short, Benson and the team didn’t let that dull their spirits and still gave it their all.

Benson played nine out of 10 games during the carnival and even though he was exhausted by the end, he would do it again in a heartbeat and is hoping to be selected to play again this year.

'We were struggling to get players in our team because one player got knocked down and one had an asthma attack,' Benson said.

'It was hard, but we got there in the end.

'I was really tired - I slept for an hour and a half on the way home.

'My favourite part was making new friends and then talking to them.

'I keep in touch with two blokes called Chip and Sam and will hopefully get to see them this year if we all get selected for the carnival again.'

Participating in the carnival was recommended by an old schoolteacher, with both Pat (Benson's dad) and Louise grateful for the support Benson received from his school, footy club, the Temora township and NDIS partner, Intereach.

There to cheer Benson on, Louise said the team was an inspiration to watch.

'They (team) played excellent and held it together, and although they didn't really win anything, they never gave up which was really nice and everyone had a great time,' Louise said.

'Benson made some great friends and it wasn't just great friends from NSW, it was friends from all the other states and I think that was the important part too.

'It wasn't just local, everybody got along so well with each other.

'He keeps in contact with someone from Canberra and they call each other regularly which is nice.'

Outside of football, Benson loves the farming life and spends a lot of time on the family's property.

Focused on growing his capacity in developing a future in the country life, Benson has completed work experience with a local agriculture business while undergoing his schooling.

Whatever his future may hold on and off the field, Louise said knowing Benson would be supported provided peace of mind in what proves to be a big journey ahead.

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