Birth of an Origin leg

When Ryan Hoffman was named as one of the NSW Origin team, he was ecstatic but admits he had been distracted for the few days leading up to the announcement.

Why, you ask? What could distract a player from one of the greatest honours of his career? His first born was due any day.

Ryan’s wife Mel was due to give birth on May 31, which meant Ryan would’ve been in Origin camp.

He knew the birth might clash with Origin but put it out of his mind.

He was focused on the baby and didn’t want to get ahead of himself before the teams were even announced.

As the due date drew closer, the baby was quite big, which meant Ryan and Melissa opted for a caesarean and the birth date was brought forward. Zach was born on May 22 at 4.5kg, happy and healthy.

It meant that Ryan, who was called to be a part of the Blues on the 26th, would be able to play Origin.

Everything worked out perfectly!

Ryan had six days with his wife and baby before he had to head into camp.

He credits coach Laurie Daley as being an absolute legend.

“Laurie had us all planned to go into camp on the Monday, but that was the same day Melissa and the baby were leaving hospital,” Ryan tells me.

“He let me spend an extra day with my wife and baby and I got to go into camp on the Tuesday, a day later. ”

“T never thought I was a guarantee to get picked, so I didn’t think about it. Origin didn’t even come into my mind a few days before the birth. It was obviously in our minds around planning the caesarean, but some things can’t be planned and Zach coming early worked out well.

“The days before the birth, my focus was on the baby and wife and there was no way in hell I was going to miss the birth, especially not for the first baby! Not only was it important for me, but I had to be there for my wife.”

Ryan and Melissa had planned to have a baby and he tells me it took longer than they thought.

“As a teenager, you have it drummed into your head to be careful and use protection and then when you want a baby, you realise it doesn’t work that way. You need a lot of ducks in a row to make a baby and that was something me and my wife weren’t expecting.”

This is Ryan’s sixth Origin.

Ryan tells me it is hard being away when Zach is only two weeks old. He got a couple of days’ break and flew back home to Melbourne to see his wife and child. But he says it’s back to work.  "I have had some family time. Now I’m in camp, it’s rugby league time. I have my job to do, I got the honour to do it, now it’s time to focus on Origin.”

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Ryan Hoffman with his new baby boy Zach, an experience to top playing State of Origin