

Green and gold honours: The 12th birthday present Lincoln will never forget

NATHAN TAYLOR

When Lincoln McConnell turned 12 in January, he received the ultimate birthday present. No, it wasn't the latest iPad or cool gaming console, it was the news he'd been selected in the Australian U12 Boys futsal team.

Playing in the pool, celebrating his special day with friends and family, his mum received an email saying her son had made the team.

"It was a real surprise when my mum yelled out the news," Lincoln told the *Weekender*.

"I felt good, excited... I didn't expect to make the team because it was my first year competing at the National Club Futsal Championships.

"To be honest, I can't even remember what else I got for my birthday."

The talented South Penrith resident will travel to Malaysia this November, representing Australia and competing against top level futsal teams from all over Asia and the world. While Lincoln has gone on plenty of family holidays around the world, he's never stepped foot in Malaysia.

"I'm looking forward to visiting there and versing good teams and players from around the world," he said.

"One of my friends also made the team, so it will be fun going with him."

The Year 7 St Dominic's student is soccer obsessed and trains and plays the game 12 hours a week. While he's only fairly new to the indoor version of the game, he's been playing outdoor soccer since he was six-years-old.

After beginning his soccer journey with the Jamisontown Giants, Lincoln now plays with one of the biggest clubs in western Sydney, the Blacktown Spartans.

"I don't know why I love soccer so much, I just do. I don't watch much of it on TV, I prefer playing it," Lincoln, who supports Manchester United, said.

"It doesn't impact on my studies too much because I always put school first. I do my homework as soon as I get home or get up early in the morning if I have to finish it off.

"My family has a rule that schoolwork comes first before sport."

While it'll be hard to top Lincoln's 12th birthday in years to come, it'll certainly be one he'll never forget.



Lincoln McConnell at his South Penrith home this week. Photo: Melinda Jane