

2022 | FOURTH QUARTER | DECEMBER

SWSA News

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Four new and improved corporate partnerships set to strengthen our athletes sport science program.

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Following a significant review to the Wests Future Stars Program, we catch up with our crop of athletes achieving podium outcomes for South West Sydney

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SWSAS News



Welcome to the Fourth and final Quarter of 2022, and the latest edition of SWSAS News.

In sport, the Fourth Quarter is crunch time. The last opportunity to make a run to win the match, and where often the most action happens. And for our Academy, the fourth quarter of 2022 has indeed been jam packed full of excitement as we build towards a strong and exciting 2023.

2022 has indeed be a strong year for the Academy, with the past few months alone seeing some great steps forward to strengthening the Academy's position within not only the South West Sydney region, but within the NSW sporting high-performance pathways and Regional Academy Network.

Whilst there is always a lot of work to be done, like any team as it enters the fourth quarter, the Academy continues to seek out new ways to look after our athletes and coaching staff and assist them in seeking out their success on and off the field.

This e-Magazine is produced in-house by the South West Sydney Academy of Sport for our South West Sydney community.

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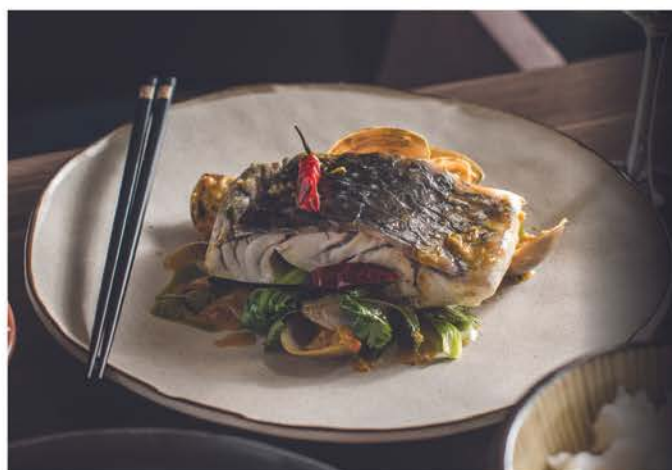


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from the CEO's desk

What a fantastic year your Academy has had, so many athlete and coach success stories to tell. And so many more to come, as athletes and coaches continue to represent in junior and senior NSW and Australian teams.

Congratulations to those who have caught the selectors eye, and to those who are continuing to train hard to accomplish their turn in the sun.

In a past edition, I identified the internal excitement generated by Australia winning the rights to host the Olympic and Paralympic Games in Brisbane, in 2032.

We know that the average age of an Olympian is 25-27 years old, meaning the current age of future athletes that will compete in Brisbane is around the 14-to-16-year age group. This is the average age of our athletes currently training in Academy programs.

This young crop of athletes with the right support, will reach their prime years in time for our next home 'Australian' Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Selectors across the majority of Games sports and other sports, are on the lookout for our next crop of Australian heroes – right now!!

It may not be common knowledge, but the Academy is continually providing requested, and formalised update information to State Sporting Organisations, regarding the ongoing progress of Academy athletes, which in turn is used by these organisations in their selection considerations.

As part of their selection processes, state sporting organisations want to know 'more and more' about individual athletes, than ever before

They are looking firstly for those internal qualities of passion to succeed, and perseverance. If athletes demonstrate these qualities, there are so many willing to help them achieve their dreams.

As the Academy continues to work closer, and integrate pathways with the NSW Institute of Sport, the institute expects the Academy to provide sport education and skill proficient athletes, ready to transition directly into its programs.

This requires continued commitment at all levels, within our Academy.

Locally, these accomplishments cannot be achieved without the support of many individuals and organisations, including our very own coaching and support staff members, and our many valued community partners.

Such as our Academy 'Naming Rights' partner the Campbelltown Catholic Club and Platinum Partner SOUTH32, plus our local Councils and all of our other highly supportive corporate partners, who continued to support us and our goals.

Thank you, one and all.



Gerry Knights
CEO

Image Below: CEO Gerry Knights with the Academy Boys Softball squad at the Athlete Induction session.





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Academy Powers Past 5000

The South West Sydney Academy of Sport held its major Annual Athlete induction at the Western Sydney University, Campbelltown Campus in mid-November, officially signalling the start of its 2022-2023 Sport Program year.

Additional inductions also were held in early December, allowing for a number of sport programs to extend their trial periods to ensure an equal and fair selection process, could take place.

Throughout September and October, over 400 athletes from across the South West Sydney region nominated and/or trialled for a position within the Academy's 2022-2023 sport programs.

From these 400+ athletes, 258 were successful in being offered a scholarship position.

This alone signals a significant increase of 17.5% on the number of Athlete scholarships able to be offered, in the 2021-2022 program.

And in doing so, the Academy has powered through the 5000 mark, having now hosted 5,026 athlete scholarships in its relatively short 25 year history.

Speaking to the athletes at the initial Induction evening, CEO Gerry Knights expressed the excitement and joy in seeing so many athletes a part of the Academy, and wished them the best of success for the upcoming year ahead.

Academy Sport Operations Manager Stephen Craig then led the athletes, parents and coaching staff through the history and background of the Academy, before presenting the Academy Athlete Lifecycle and program frameworks.

The lifecycle and frameworks provides athletes a clear direction on the why, what and how their sport programs will take place, whilst within the Academy. And their proposed progression through their sports high performance pathways.

Following a short break and intriguing round of Academy Trivia, where a few athletes and parents found themselves stumped on some rather curly questions, Craig presented the athletes and parents the policies, procedures and expectations of the Academy, for the year ahead, with the Academy aligning the requirements of athletes around the organisations core values of Commitment, Opportunity, Respect and Integrity.



Athletes were tested by a tough round of Academy Trivia

Athletes and parents were reminded of their expectations across the key areas such as attendance, communication, child safeguarding, social media and athlete uniform and presentation.

The Athlete Induction was preceded by a short education "teaser", where male athletes undertook a short seminar and presentation by 'Ahead of the Game', and female athletes received education in Elite Wellbeing, specific to female athletes.

All in all the evening provided a great introduction to South West Sydney Academy of Sport programs, and the quality and wealth of individual skill development, sports education, strength and conditioning practice, performance opportunities, and athlete health and wellbeing services, that await our many athletes to experience in the year ahead.



Not to be left out, are the incoming crop of fifty coach and support staff, who attended the QUBE Coach Induction session held at Wests League Club in early October.

The Academy's coach and support staff were provided training and education in social media awareness for coaches, presented by well-known social media educator Renae Aravena.

Following on from this well timed education, those present undertook targeted training in the Academy's Sport program framework, followed by updates surrounding the requirements and expectations of not only them, but of the Academy's sport program athletes.

The evening also provided an opportunity to introduce the Academy's 'Coach and Technical Advisory Group', which has been established to ensure world class support and quality outcomes for athletes within the coaches sport programs they are responsible for, and also their own ongoing professional coach development.



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Stars Sprint With Gold Medal Vibes

The South West Sydney Academy of Sport is continuously on the look out for its next crop of super star athletes, and future gold-medallists, and having completed a comprehensive review and restructure of its Future Stars Program, is excited to see the continued and sustained success of its athletes, both present and past throughout sports high performance pathways.

These junior talented pathway programs, conducted in cooperation with the various State Sporting Organisations and local clubs, have helped the South West Sydney region's athletes along their sporting journey to taste success.



Household names like James Tedesco, who recently captained the Australian World Cup winning Kangaroo squad, fellow 'Captain JT' James Todhunter, who captained the World Cup winning Australian Steeler's Men's Softball Team, and Commonwealth Games Netball Gold Medallist Ashleigh Brazill, multi-Olympian Emily Chalker, Commonwealth Games Gold and Olympic Silver medallist sprinter Clinton Hill, and Australian Olympic Softballer Gabbie Plain have all been a part of the Academy during its 25 year history.

In fact, the Academy boasts eight Olympic and Para-Olympic heroes, along with a host of eleven coaches, and over 150 athletes who have gone on to represent Australia, including over 25 in Athletics.

A feat not lost on our Wests Future Stars athlete, Cody Hasler, who earlier this year sprinted his way to secure his ticket to the Australian All-Schools Athletics Championships set to take place in Adelaide earlier in December, after, setting blistering times in both the 100m and 200m 16 Years events.

Hasler, who is in his first year with the Academy recorded a then-personal best of 21.99 seconds in the 200m; backing up from an incredible come from behind 10.99 second run in the 100m. Only 0.3 of a second off the NSW All-schools record set in 2014.

Speaking ahead of the Nationals event, Hasler said, "My goals going into the meet (NSW All Schools) were to run sub 11 and 22 seconds for the 100m and 200m respectively".

Hasler then walked (or should we say sprinted) into Adelaide, where he claimed bronze in the National All-Schools 200m with a time of 21.99 seconds, equalling his PB, before backing up in a blistering pace of 10.84 seconds across the 100m.

A time good enough to reward Hasler not only the Gold medal, but a National All-Schools Championship and title of fastest in the country in his age group.

Hasler indeed happy to report that he had achieved his goals. "I wanted to be a part of the Academy because I felt that it would help me become a better athlete and help me create new friendships, and it has." Said Hasler, who now has his eyes focused on his personal best of 10.63 seconds for the 100m and the Athletics Australia Nationals to be held in Brisbane in 2023.

Back to the NSW All Schools event, and joining Hasler on the podium at the NSW All Schools event was Michael King, who, after missing almost twelve months of competition following an injury in late 2021, claimed bronze in the 17 years 800m in a time of 1 min 55.53 seconds.

Fellow Academy competitors Kaitlin Tattersall (Pictured) and Tiarna Green also competed at the NSW All Schools, with Tattersall recording a 5th in the 15 years Girls 100m and 200m events, less than half a second off the podium, whilst Green narrowly missed the final of the same event by a similar margin.



Both athletes also competing against each other in the long jump, finishing 8th and 13th overall, albeit only 30cm apart.

"Athletics as a sporting discipline is currently a part of our Wests Future Stars Program", said Sport Operations Manager Stephen Craig, "This is a program designed primarily for individual athletes aged 12 – 21 years old, who are in a sporting environment that we do not currently operate a traditional squad program for" he added.

Commenting that most athletes who fit the Future Stars criteria have their own individual coach who takes care of the athlete's individual skill development. "Where the Academy can fit into that development is by providing a squad-based approach to athlete education, such as nutrition, strength and conditioning, and wellbeing support programs, often in an environment that supports the athletes home coach and training program." said Craig.

The Academy's connections and link to the NSW sports high performance pathways and the NSW Institute of Sport programs sets them apart, by providing the experience and opportunity for athletes to continue their training toward athletic success.

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However it is not just sprinters and jumpers who benefit from the Academy's Future Stars program.

"The program, partnered by Wests League Club is not just for Athletics athletes" said Craig, adding that, "any sport that has a State or National Governing body is considered, including such sports like Baton Twirling, Cheerleading, Skateboarding, Snow Skiing, Inline Skating, Kart Racing, Equestrian, Road or Track Cycling, Touch Football and Tennis could be included, along with Para-athletics and para-sports such as Wheelchair Basketball and Wheelchair Rugby".

TAKE IT AND RUN

The Academy, in its current Future Stars intake, has warmly welcomed 27 new and returning Wests Future Star Athletes for its 2022-2023 program.

These athletes represent Inline Skating, Para-Swimming, Athletics and Baton Twirling, and Team Sports including: Touch Football, Soccer, Rugby League, Baseball and Hockey AAP.

The Academy services a densely populated area of Sydney which consists of young and enthusiastic athletes who strive toward perfection.

Assisting this year's intake is the appointed for the first time of a squad manager. Highly respected International Triathlon and individual athlete coach Guy Creber joins the program, where he will oversee and assist manage each of the individual athletes programs.

This includes monitoring their progress and performance within their chosen sport, as well as within the Academy program, liaising with the athletes individual coach in areas of load management, strength and conditioning programming, and goal setting.

One of the key initiatives of the program that Creber and the Academy have put in place, is the requirement for athletes to provide at minimum monthly reports on their achievements, results and athlete wellbeing during the previous month.

And if early reports are anything to go by, it has indeed been a vibrant end to 2022 with many athletes competing at State, National and International levels.

Here we include a very small few of the success our Future Stars have experienced in the past few months.

Adam Bates

Adam Bates, a current Baseball Athlete recently dusted off his passport to travel to Arizona, USA through an invite from Major League Baseball.

Adam was one of only seven Australian athletes selected to partake in this team and described the meet as an opportunity to improve his skills and competitiveness.

Bates continued on his hunger for more, as he was selected for the Australian U18 Team to contest the World Baseball and Softball World Cup Qualifiers in New Zealand.

I think we can safely say that there will be no more dust appearing on his passport any time soon.





Renae Edmunds

Our Baton Twirling superstar Renae Edmunds worked her way to the National Championships held on the Gold Coast, QLD in early November.

Whilst enjoying the incredible scenery, sunshine and warmer weather, Edmunds was able to focus on her routine and executed it to perfection.

And we are please to report that a result of her exceptional performance, Edmunds was awarded the opportunity to travel to Liverpool, England as a part of the National team.

Despite many commitments managing tertiary study to become a paramedic, whilst trying to fit in training and competition, Edmunds implemented incredible time management skills to ensure she had still put in place effective goals to become 'unstoppable'.

Renae's focus for the year ahead include wanting to increase her fitness and be more consistent in the gym during the off season, as she prepares herself to travel aboard and represent Australia throughout 2023.

Daniel Lill

Another superstar that has strictly committed to their development is Para-Swimmer Daniel Lill. What a year it was for him, embedding new personal bests in his 50m, 100m, 200m and 400m Freestyle, and 50m Backstroke.

He has proved his need for speed in the pool competing in a total of five Championships during 2022 alone.

Daniel is a quiet achiever and as he served up all of these progressive results, most of his hard work took place behind the scenes with strength and conditioning partner Dynamo Athletic.



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AFL W Shaping to Kick Goals

As the AFLW National competition conducted its highly anticipated Finals series, albeit without a Sydney team competing, the South West Sydney Academy of Sport announced its next group of up and coming AFLW squad athletes.

Following a successful trials process held in late October, the Academy named a squad of 16 young females to undertake a solid six-month program aimed at developing not only their individual AFL match-play skills, but develop themselves as athletes and community citizens off the field as well.

Highly regarded AFLW coach Ben Robinson (*Pictured opposite*) leads the Academy program for a second consecutive year. Alongside Robinson include assistant coaches Adam Sheldon and George Hannaoui, with former Academy athlete Annalysse Stevens joining the squad. Stevens bringing with her a wealth of knowledge from being a part of the 'next level' in the athlete development pathway, having been a part of the GWS Academy program.

We are excited by the year ahead for our The Mac-AFLW program. The Academy has a great young group of athletes coming on board, and a strong coaching staff whose aim is to develop these athletes by experiencing the next step in their AFLW journey.

At the end of the day, our aim is to develop these quality young athletes who will get to experience personal all-round development, at a level above their local team. And either have the chance to go on and be a part of the GWS Giants and AFLW pathways, or head back to their local clubs primed for their competition season.



The Mac-AFLW Squad commenced their training program in mid-November, with a key highlight of their program being the now-annual trip to the Queanbeyan Tigers, in early February. Where the squad will participate in a weekend of training and performance opportunities alongside the Tigers emerging AFLW juniors' program.

The Tigers weekend has been a key highlight of the program over the past two years, and we are excited by the opportunity to extend this year's event to an entire weekend, which will allow the squad more training time alongside the Tigers highly respected regional AFLW program.



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Throughout 2021, the South West Sydney Academy of Sport, with the support of Platinum Partner South32 Illawarra Metallurgical Coal and the Australian Sports Foundation, developed "SWSAS CARES".

Through this initiative, the South West Sydney Academy of Sport aims to provide support to underprivileged athletes within the South West Sydney Academy region, who may be experiencing financial hardship as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In addition, SWSAS CARES has identified the need to further support our Indigenous and Culturally Diverse athletes by utilising funds received to offset the costs of athletes levies and uniform fees so that they can participate within our sport, community and cultural education programs.

Through the Australian Sports Foundation and Play for Purpose, you can now support the Academy by either donating directly to the SWSAS CARES Foundation, or by purchasing raffle tickets to win some amazing prizes.

Both options are fully tax deductible, with funds raised going directly to athletes of the South West Sydney Academy of Sport.

Donate Directly to SWSAS CARES >>>





Golf Day a Hole in One Success

In true Academy form, a current world pandemic and the day's wet weather conditions could not stop the South West Sydney Academy of Sport Golf Day, from going ahead this time. After being postponed to September, from its usual tee-off time in May.

Despite the delay, Mother Nature still did not have any special consideration for the Academy. And as our golfing 'weather warriors' on course, were getting into the swing of 'life and death' competition, she teased them with a bit of 'wet and dry', on the first nine holes, before congratulating all players for their tenacity on the back nine by providing some, 'be it ever so slight' sunny weather, in time for their final run back to the clubhouse for lunch.

There was plenty of entertainment provided by our Wests Future Star athlete Renae Edmonds and fellow baton twirler Chloe Ryan, who was in Sydney during the same week to compete alongside Edmonds.

Both athletes represent the Evolve Twirling Academy, and used the opportunity to demonstrate their fantastic and somewhat unique skills throughout the day, including teaching the competing golf teams some new club tricks, in the girls preparation for the NSW State Championships.

After a solid 18-holes, it was the Wests connection of the Wests League Club Campbelltown and Wests Tigers NRL team of Martin Bullock, Warren McDonnell, Shannan Gallant, and John Skandalis that showed the greatest resilience in the conditions, taking home the 'overall' win on the day.

Albeit by a meagre 0.3 of a point ahead of the Wollondilly Shire Council team (*pictured above*), who may have been caught up in practicing their new found baton, (or golf club as the case may be) twirling skills, than perhaps focusing on making their final putt.



"It was great to see good friends out on the course such as Club Menangle, Kids of Macarthur Foundation (*above*), and the Campbelltown Golf Club 'Old Boys'; all of whom are regular attendees at our Golf Day" said CEO Gerry Knights.

They were joined by relative newcomers RBI Australia (*pictured below*) and Sharp Extensive I.T, who donated a 65" UHD TV to the raffle, which was won by ATC Insurance Solution's Steven Duong, representing the Irecon Insurance Services team.

Academy Platinum Partner's South32 Illawarra Metallurgical Coal boasted a high representation on the day, with two teams competing in the event, creating an intra-company rivalry, which reached fever pitch on the 14th hole, with Dane Vogel taking the honours with the 'Nearest the Pin' trophy.

Local media identity Eric Kontos took up the leadership challenge of keeping his South West Voice representative team, well focused, to just finish in front of 'The 8 Campbelltown' in the run to the finish line.

The Academy was also able to host a hotly contested Finance and Insurance Industry challenge, with Kelly + Partners taking the win over Irecon Insurance Services.

Whilst The MAC Credit Union showed great consistency to take out the less coveted, 'Try Another Sport' award. Which this year, included four AFL balls, ironically emblazoned with the Academy's 'The Mac' AFL Program logo!

Thank you to Golf Day major partners in Jem Promotion Products and SVSR Mini Crane Hire, and all of our Golf Day hole sponsors, competing teams, and Academy partners for your continued support, in the development of athletes in the South West Sydney region.



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IN THE SPOTLIGHT: VOLUNTEERING LEADS TO WORLD STAGE

Sport is often referred to as the great equaliser, where all who participate enter the field on a "somewhat" equal playing field.

Yet, off the field, it could be said that an even greater equaliser in sport, and one that carries a great personal reward, is in those who choose to volunteer their time to help make it all happen.

Volunteering is where you get to rub shoulders with not only seasoned sport administrators, commentators, and media personalities, but CEO's, business owners, mums, dads and even grandparents; all in support of the same common goal.

Oh, and there is the added bonus, that either during or often after your volunteer shift, you may get to catch a close-up glimpse of some really talented athletes and coaches in action in their chosen field.

Yet opportunities able to volunteer in your chosen sport at a world-class event, in your home town can seem few and far between.

It was therefore a no-brainer for our Academy Basketball Manager Mick Hendricks, who has put his hand up to volunteer at the FIBA Women's Basketball World Cup, held in Sydney



Where Hendricks had the opportunity to see the world's best female basketball athletes up close and personal, undertaking a volunteer role within the Training Venue and Support Team throughout the ten-day tournament back in September.

Joining Hendricks for the ten-day tournament in the volunteer department was our own Academy Sport Operations Manager Stephen Craig, who found himself positioned in the depths of the Sydney Superdome, as a volunteer within the Media Operations team.

The opportunity for both Hendricks and Craig to step outside of their comfort zone and experience the atmosphere and working environment of a world cup left them in no doubt that the opportunity was too good to pass up.





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Strength in Numbers

A key part of the Academy's sport program framework is the field of sport science, strength and conditioning (S&C). Further to this, the Academy has identified a core focus area for the 2022-2023 year to be the education on appropriate technique and language used within the S&C environment.

In what can only be seen as a positive step forward, the Academy is excited to announce the signing of not one, but four strategic corporate partnerships in the S&C space.

Long-term service providers Bounce Back Physio, Dynamo Athletic, Fit Clinic and Movement Essentials have all strengthened their partnerships with the Academy, in a targeted approach to providing athletes a stronger aligned focus within the S&C field.

Each of the Academy's sport programs has been linked to one of the four partners, who will provide practical education within either their local facility, or in the sporting field or court.

These sessions allow athletes to gain an understanding of the why, how, what and when of a sport focused S&C program, as well as providing each program head coach focus points and tips on implementing these strategies into regular skill development program training drills.

A key component, yet probably one of the most exciting elements of each agreement is the provision of a sport-specific S&C program, that each athlete is able to complete at home, through supervised gym visits, or access to the providers own athlete management system (AMS) or App based service.

Whilst some sports have chosen to implement this program in the traditional offseason / summer holiday period, additional sports have opted to include their home program within the traditional representative season of April to July, in an effort to assist athletes maintain their peak performance when they need it most.

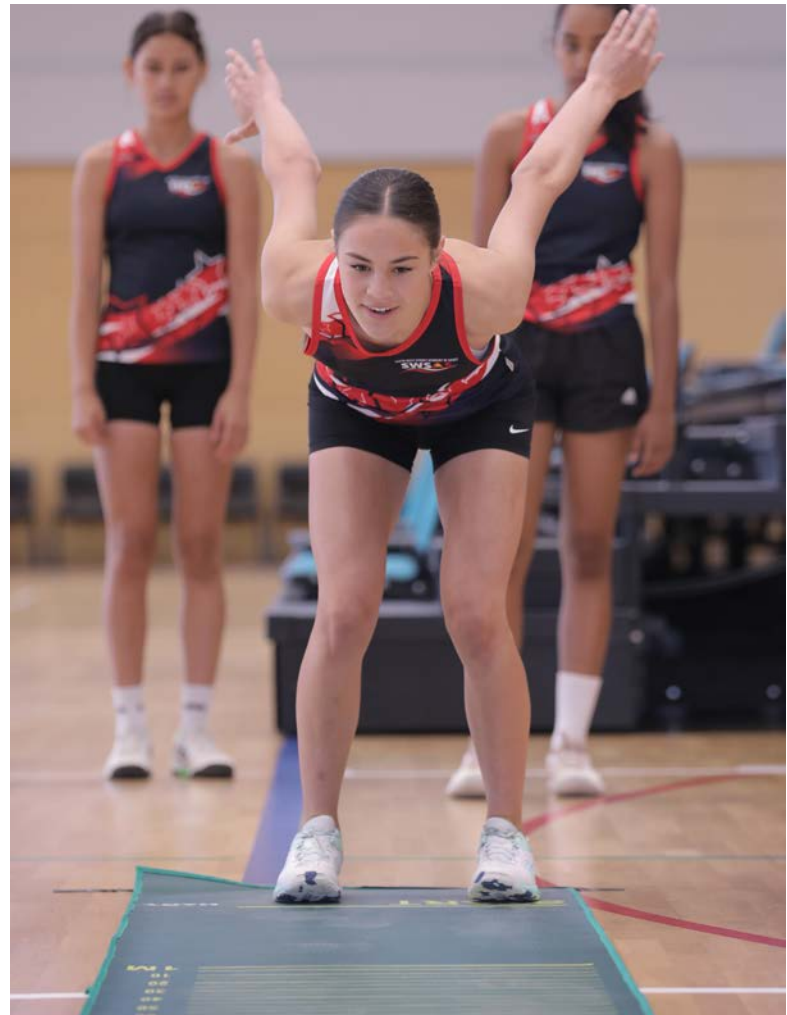
Whilst each program may be linked to a specific provider, the Academy S&C partners also exist as a network, with each provider agreeing to assist athletes from within any program who wishes to attend their facility to complete their supervised program.

As each facility, whilst diverse in their key area of operations, has the ability to provide the desired S&C program supervision in the targeted areas, this opportunity provides the Academy athletes the chance to attend the provider facility that best suits their needs, and close by within their local area.

The Academy also facilitates up to three fitness testing sessions within each sport programs calendar, where athletes undertake standardised testing, including height, arm-span, vertical jump, broad jump, throw strength, speed, acceleration and agility testing.

The data from these testing dates are then provided to each of the Academy's S&C partners to assist them in the creation of the sport specific programs provided to the Academy squads, as well as identifying the focus areas for athlete education across the year.

A valued extension to the education provided, each partner remains a service provider for all Academy athletes to utilise as needed, with all offering varying levels of discount and support services to athletes who attend and identify themselves as a member of the South West Sydney Academy of Sport.



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ALUMNI HOCKEY ATHLETE COMES FULL CIRCLE

Experiencing success on the field, whether whilst an Academy athlete, or more commonly in the months and years after athletes graduate, is always exciting to see. As is when one of our Alumni athletes comes back 'home' to inspire and lead the next generation of athletes, as a coach within their own right.

Whilst many pursue a career as an athlete, the Academy prides itself on developing our community citizens, and future business leaders.

Here our new Sport Programs Manager, Alley Hanagan, who is no stranger to either the sporting arena, nor the business journey speaks about what it's like to come full circle within the Academy lifecycle.

This is a full circle moment for me. I did not think when I started in the South West Sydney Academy of Sport as a Hockey squad member in 2011 at the age of thirteen, I would, eleven years later, be lucky enough to have the opportunity to return as its Sports Program Manager.

I was truly little and always the youngest in all my teams. You will see me powering through the fitness testing in the picture below!



I started my journey with hockey at the age of five. My parents signed me up for Hockey because my pre-school best friend's family played. Neither my parents, nor I, had any idea the journey that decision was about to take us on.

The Academy was my first experience of what it meant to be an athlete. I still remember fondly, the pride I had when I was selected for the Academy, and each time I put on the Academy uniform.



Whilst little in stature, I always prided myself on my hard work and determination to succeed. They were two of my biggest assets.

My fellow squad mates and the Academy coaching team prepared, guided, and influenced my positive Hockey career moments.

"Hard work and determination were my biggest assets"

Because of the Academy, I was provided opportunities to shine in front of National selectors and the wider Hockey community.

As what could be described as being a bit of a late bloomer, my National hockey representation did not begin until I was seventeen.

Much of my early Hockey career included local representative teams, the Academy, and junior NSW state squads.

I was fortunate enough to have the opportunity to not only play for NSW, but when the opportunity presented itself for me to captain the NSW team, I was ready.



The Academy continues to help develop athletes both 'on and off 'the field.

I genuinely believe the core values the Academy embodies, are what guides most of our athletes to be successful, in so many parts of their lives.

I hope my story resonates with some of you, and inspires others to keep chasing your dream, your journey is only just beginning.

And remember this,

It is NEVER to late to excel.

I look forward to watching our athletes and coaching staff continue to progress throughout their journey within the Academy.

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Young Stars Ignite the Coaching Path

In an environment where it is often the athletes achieving all of the praise and recognition, the South West Sydney Academy of Sport is excited by the accolades achieved by its young up and coming coach and technical support staff members. With several members of these highly resolute mentors experiencing outstanding personal successes, in their chosen fields.

One such individual is the Academy's Bingara Gorge netball program umpiring mentor Sarah McNamara (pictured), who was recently named in the Netball Australia 2023 Talent and Development Squad, for her own umpiring prowess.

The program has a large focus on developing elite umpires. A task that McNamara has taken on herself. Whilst still a young umpire in her own right, McNamara leads the coaching and mentoring of the Academy's netball umpire program.

Another young Academy coach who has experienced success on the big stage recently, is incoming basketball assistant Coach Brittany Anderson (*Pictured opposite*) who represented the Australian Pearls at the Virtus Oceania Asia Games in Brisbane, in early November.

Anderson was a member of the Gold-medal winning 3x3 Women's Basketball team, adding to a National Championship Silver Medal with NSW, earlier in the year.

"I am definitely looking forward to coming on board as an assistant coach and sharing my experiences. It will be great to see the improvement of athletes throughout the program," said Anderson, who no doubt will be mobbed by the athletes keen to get a look at her Gold Medal.

The Academy is proud of our coach and support staff members, who average a youthful 35-years of age.

Whilst also recognising that through a large influx of younger coaches, and former athletes wishing to be a part of the Academy coach program, its average age is set to drop significantly, over coming years.

The Academy definitely does not solely focus on athlete development, its coach development through its coach education partner QUBE, and the Regional Academy of Sport coach development network, has most definitely helped drive the interest.

The NSW Regional Academy (of Sport) collective continues to develop and present an outstanding series of online coach education workshops, incorporating the best coaches from across Australia and Internationally representing a wide variety of sporting codes, to our Regional Academy coaches.

Which in turn has helped build on our own Academy specific coach development focus, and assist each of them in realising, and meeting their own career goals.

We are extremely fortunate in the fact that our head coaches are themselves great mentors, not only of our athletes, but to the assistant and apprentice coaches supporting them. They are coaching for the right reasons, and that is the ongoing development of our region's athletes and themselves.



A fact recently demonstrated by all five of the Academy's Bingara Gorge netball coaching staff members participation in the recent specific 'Coach-to-Coach' workshop with NSW Swifts Head Coach Briony Akle. Which provided Academy coaching staff members a great opportunity to share ideas, tactics, and stories ahead of their 2022-2023 Academy program commencement.

The Academy plans to expand its coach development program even further, by providing a range of community-targeted coach development and education sessions throughout 2023, alongside its own sport and coach development programs.





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**Proudly Partnering the
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Indigenous Athlete Program**



Illawarra Hawks Tim Coenraad was on hand to help the Academy launch its Indigenous Athlete Program

Hawk on Hand to launch Indigenous Athlete Program

The South West Sydney Academy of Sport, through the support and partnership of UAA, Steadfast and the Western Sydney University, conducted its inaugural Indigenous Talent Identification Day in early September.

The event marked the official launch of the Academy's Indigenous Athlete Program, which exists to not only identify the wealth of Indigenous Athlete talent within the region and provide those athletes opportunities within current Academy sport or extension programs, but to support athletes already in Academy sport programs to remain connected to culture.

Just over 80 athletes who call the Dharawal nation home attended the Day, representing an incredible 15 First Nations.

Athletes were put through their paces in sport clinics and trials across AFL, Basketball, Netball and Futsal.

The Academy were very fortunate to have the support of Illawarra Hawks Tim Coenraad, who not only conducted the basketball clinic alongside Academy Head Coach Jeff Cooper, but spoke to the athletes about the value in representing their culture, and performing at a high level. Lending his hand to help the Academy officially launch the Indigenous Athlete Program.

Former Australian National Futsal Team Coach Rob Varela was also on hand to assist with the day, as was incoming Wests Future Star squad manager, and International Triathlon coach Guy Creber. Both left rather impressed by the level of talent within the region.

Academy AFLW Coach Ben Robinson rounded out the coaching panel for the day, providing his expertise in not only AFL, but assisting those who showed a passion and talent for Rugby League in the differences, and similarities of kicking between the two codes.

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As a part of the talent identification process, athletes undertook fitness testing and functional movement screening by the Western Sydney University sport science team.

A huge thank you must be extended to the schools and athletes who not only participated, but also provided great feedback on not only the event itself, but in suggesting the format of the Academy's Indigenous Athlete Program.

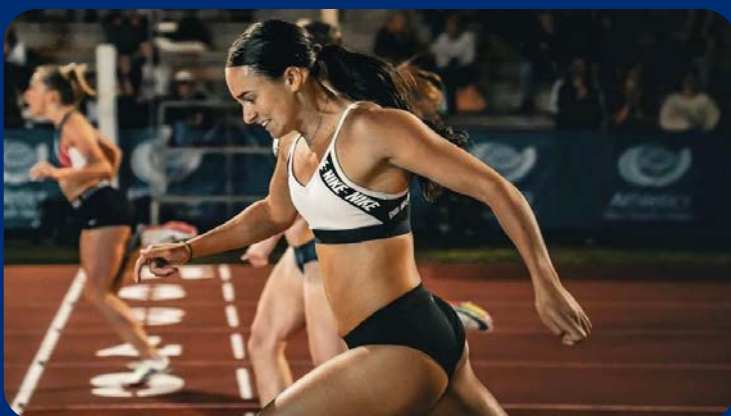


Following on from the Talent Identification Day, sixteen athletes were offered scholarships to be a part of the Indigenous Athlete Program, with an additional eight athletes joining the program who had been selected through the Academy sport program nomination and trial process.

The Academy has also been able to announce the appointment of 400m hurdler and alumni Academy athlete Brodee Mate (*pictured below*) as the Indigenous Athlete Program Coordinator.

Brodee, who herself is a proud Indigenous woman, and grew up in the Dharawal region, is looking forward to the opportunity to inspire the next generation of Indigenous athletes.

The Indigenous Athlete Program gets underway formally in January 2023, with a cultural experience planned, along with the athletes embarking on the opportunity to design an Indigenous-themed polo shirt for the Academy, and it's Indigenous Athlete Program.



'Come and Try' Clinics

for athletes aged 12-14 years

SOUTHERN DISTRICTS

WHEN : Sunday 26 February, 10AM-12PM

WHERE : Southern Districts Softball Association,
Warwick Farm

MACARTHUR

WHEN : Sunday 26 March, 10AM-12PM

WHERE : Macarthur Softball Association,
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Softball Hits Home Run with Local Focus

The 2022-2023 RBI Australia Softball Squad hosted a successful 'Come and Try' day at the Campbelltown Softball Grounds in late November, with the squad able to take fifteen young athletes through their paces.

With the clinics targeted at the Associations local softball athletes aged 12-14 years of age, the Academy squad mirrored what would be a typical training session. Including skill development in throwing, catching, fielding, hitting and pitching across the two-hour clinic.

From all accounts the clinic was an absolute BLAST! The squad having already lined up further clinics to take place at the Macarthur and Southern Districts Associations in the new year.

The RBI Australia Academy Softball Squad displayed true leadership in teaching the budding young athletes. And with those in attendance eligible for future Academy representation, It was yet another encouraging sign as Softball continues to regain traction in the community.



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ACADEMY FLYS HIGH WITH HAWKS

With thanks to NBL side the Illawarra Hawks, the Academy's basketball squad was able to experience an evening in the life of a professional NBL athlete, for the second consecutive year. This time featuring in the Hawks "Sixth Man Zone" during their clash with Melbourne United at the start of December.

After travelling down from Campbelltown by charter bus, the squad found themselves all but courtside, seated at the Hawks end baseline for the game.

Despite a tough season for the Hawks, the presence of the Academy athletes helped them get across the line, one of the key jobs as their "Sixth Man" is to try and put the opposition off their game by waving balloons and "big heads" whilst they shoot free throws.

We are proud to report that the squad did an incredible job in spooking United down the stretch, with the Illawarra Hawks doing the rest to walk away with the win.

The Academy squad also featured on the national ESPN coverage of the game (*pictured below*). The Academy extends its thanks to the Illawarra Hawks and their partner Titanium Traffic Management who provided the tickets for the Academy athletes to attend.



Members of the squad Sam Timbs, Emily Paulic, Mia Farrell and Bella Marshall were able to meet NBL legend and 3x3 Asian Champion Lucas Walker during the game



Sharp E.I.T representative Steve Psaila who attended the game on behalf of the program partner, with Sophie Connor, Jade Dabrowski and Emily Paulic

Jade Dabrowski

MARK OF A CHAMPION

Giving 100% every time you go out to play in a game is part and parcel of wanting to be a successful athlete, yet always doing it with a huge smile on your face is often seen as a true Mark of a Champion.

We recently caught up with third-year UAA | Sharp Extensive I.T Basketball program athlete Jade Dabrowski, as she competed alongside her fellow squad mates at the 3x3 Hustle State Qualifiers held in Wollongong in early December.

Jade, you having been playing Basketball for just over three years, and are in your third year with the Academy program. Who has been your most significant influence to date?

Definitely my parents. Even though sometimes they may not want to drive me around, they are always looking for new opportunities for me, and are always supportive of what I do, paying for levies and always being there for me.

Heading into your third year with the Academy program, what have you been able to experience so far that stands out for you?

Being in the Academy has given me new opportunities to grow. I have made new friends, as well as been able to travel and visit new places. The Academy program has definitely been very supportive of me and helping me through my journey, and teaching me new things to add to my game as well.





Who do you admire and look up to in Basketball, and what do you hope to achieve from being involved in the sport?

I really admire Kobe Bryant. He is proof that you can achieve anything if you put your mind to it.

My major sporting goal is to get a basketball scholarship for an American School.

So apart from representing the Academy in the Regional Academy Games, and the 3x3 Hustle tournament, what have been your highlights in Basketball so far?

Playing for Wollondilly in the Barrengarry competition and having to play overtime against Illawarra to make the finals. Oh, and making five 3's in my local club game. That was pretty special.

Very rarely are you not seen with a smile on your face (even when a team mate accidentally broke your cheekbone), tell us Jade, what keeps you smiling and aiming for success?

Oh yeah, well that (cheekbone) was an accident.. We are still friends.

My definition of success is to be happy, healthy and wealthy.

The best piece of advice I've been given is Don't hold grudges, instead learn from your past and continue to move forward.

Whilst Basketball seems to be a big part of your life, what would you be doing if you were not playing sport?

I love food, or playing music. (I have been told I can make a good Subway sandwich too)

But mostly I enjoy getting to know my teachers at school, and making those life long bonds with my friends, or travelling.

Thank you Jade, we cannot wait to continue to see what's next in your Academy experience.





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It Was a M.A.D Day!

The Academy hosted its Media and Athlete Development (MAD) day at Thomas Hassall Anglican College in early December, featuring a full day of education and media skills training for athletes within its incoming 2022-2023 sport programs.

Featuring lectures and workshops across sport and gender specific fields, the Academy was able to utilise three classrooms, kitchen and stadium facilities of the College, which proved to be the ideal venue for the "all-in" Academy event.

The day got underway with a high-profiled media panel, featuring Sky News TV producer Monica Lapore (*pictured*), local The District Reporter journalist and editor Lee Abrahams, and renowned sports photo journalist Luke Fuda.

The panel discussing with the athletes what the media are looking for when they are after a story, and how athletes can present themselves to the media.

The key response from all on the panel were to not be scared of the media, not to be afraid to tell your story, and to let the Academy staff know of your achievements so they can help the athletes get in contact with their local media outlets.

Following on from the media panel, athletes then split into various break out sessions, which included a follow up presentation to male athletes from Ahead of the Game, who first met the athletes at the initial athlete induction, where they focused on athlete resilience and mental strategies.

The female athletes were treated to another return visitor in Lisa McCrohon, who continued her presentation, again from induction, on elite female wellbeing and strategies to assist success.



After a short break for morning tea, athletes participated in fitness testing, before squad separated into sport specific education sessions throughout the afternoon.

A huge thank you to Basketball squad manager Sue Paulic and Academy Camps Manager Deb Banks who looked after the preparation and handling of both morning tea and lunch for all participating athletes - by no means a small task!

A key highlight of the day was a presentation from highly esteemed social media awareness presenter Renee Aravena. With a background in working with the NRL Integrity unit, and featuring in the social media training at several NRL clubs, including the Penrith Panthers, Aravena comes as No stranger to the Academy scene.

Having presented at many Regional Academy squad sessions across the Academies network. Aravena (pictured below) spoke to both the male and female athletes in separate presentations on Social Media and Self Image awareness.

Aravena introduces a unique presentation to athletes to bring the awareness to athletes of the elite athletes who feature prominently in the good, bad or ugly social media online.

Aravena then presents the athletes with examples of their own, publicly available, thus able to be seen by anyone, social media profiles.



This is done in a closed environment to not only bring awareness to athlete on what is actually on their PUBLIC profile, and the self image and personal brand that they may be displaying, even unintentionally. And how this could be seen by a potential sponsor or future employer.

Aravena highlights through various examples throughout the presentation the need to be aware not only of what you are posting, or your social media privacy settings, but the need to be aware of who you are following, thus associating yourself with, but even more importantly, who is following you on social media.

Further information on the Academy's Social Media policy can be found on the Academy's website at swsas.org.au/policies.



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- Whilst supporting the development of young, local men and women into valued community leaders.

We have an opportunity for you to partner with us, and assist athletes realise their sporting potential. Opportunities exist for Corporate and Sport Pathway Partners, through to small businesses interested in sponsoring the costs for an individual athlete. Whatever your budget, the Academy can provide a partnership with benefits suited just for you.

Your partnership will also be a direct investment into a better tomorrow.

The South West Sydney Academy of Sport is a not-for-profit community based organisation, which relies heavily on the financial and social support of its outstanding corporate partners, in providing these much needed development opportunities.

The Academy in return invests a large amount of its time back into its local sporting community, increasing the reach of our corporate partners throughout the region.

Become a part of securing the culture of Youth, Sport and Excellence within your Community today.

Act now, please contact the Academy Office for further information and allow the development of your personalised partnership package, today.



Summer Smoothie



Ingredients

- 1 Frozen Banana
- 1/2 Frozen Mango
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 250mL
Cow/Oat/Soy/Almond Milk
- 1 tbs Yoghurt
- Blender
- Cup

Method

1. Freeze a Banana and half a Mango with the skin off
2. Once frozen, place the Banana and Mango into the blender along with your Vanilla Extract, Honey and Milk of choice
3. Blend until there are no large chunks of fruit
4. Pour into a cup and stir in your yoghurt
5. Enjoy!



**4 hours
prep**



**2 minutes
to cook**



**Makes
1 serve**

The Last Play

Wow! What a bumper 2022 the Academy has had. Planning is already well underway and we are looking forward to an even bigger 2023 year.

Thank you again to our partners, supporters, parents, athletes, coach and support staff for your continued and valued contributions to ensuring your Academy continues to operate at the high level we do. We cannot do it without you!

We are proud to call this region our home.

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Camp Dates for the Diary:

Academy Office Closed

Thursday 22 December -
Monday 9 January 2023.

Indigenous Athlete Program

Saturday 21 January 2023
Cultural Experience Day (Dharawal)

AFLW Canberra Camp

Weekend 4-5 February 2023

Hockey Lithgow Camp

Weekend 4-5 February 2023

Basketball Gosford Camp

Weekend 18-19 February 2023

Golf Port Kembla Camp

Weekend 18-19 February 2023

Regional Academy Games

Wagga Wagga
(selected sports and athletes)
Friday 21 - Sunday 23 April 2023.

26th Annual Athlete Graduation and Sport Awards Dinner

The Cube Convention Centre
Friday 28 July 2023

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