



Alex Hagan

# Off to the nationals

THERE was no time for a well-earned break from training for Eaton's Alexandra Hagan and Bunbury's Dave Prosser when they returned home from the recent Youth Olympics.

The two South West Academy of Sport scholarship recipients have become an increasingly familiar sight on the Leschenault Inlet as they ramp up preparations for the 2009 Hydro Tasmania Australian Rowing Championships and Interstate Regatta.

The event, which will be held at

picturesque Lake Barrington from March 2 to 8, attracts the nation's best rowing talents and serves as the first round of selection trials for the 2009 Australian Rowing Team.

Both Prosser and Hagan said they were looking forward to the national championships, which attracted about 1700 competitors last year.

Prosser knows the event well, having competed at the past three national championships.

"The Youth Olympics at Sydney in

January was an international competition and a good gauge to find out where I sit," he said.

"My goal is to get to the 2009 World Rowing Junior Championships which is being held in France this August and the nationals is a step forward in that direction."

Hagan, who went to Austria for the World Rowing Championships last year, said she appreciated the support being offered to her through SWAS.

"It's great to have this kind of sup-

port available to regional athletes," she said.

The duo's club meanwhile, the Bunbury Rowing Club, is preparing to send a squad of 14 rowers to the championships.

Rowers Jayden Edwards, Josh Williams, Rhys Gelmi, Nicole Depiazzi, Dave Prosser, Alex Hagan, Georgia Gibbs, Tamsin Roberts, Justin Olivia, Courtney Farr, Miles Cattach, Jordie Vagg and coaches Jamie Jones and Trevor Wignell will fly the flag for Bunbury next week.

## Premiership star named as patron

THE South West Academy of Sport continues to attract the support of athletes at the top of their game, with Adam Hunter taking up a prominent role at the academy.

The West Coast Eagles premiership player has come on board as patron of the academy's football program and will provide guidance to young talents eager to follow in his footsteps.

Raised in Bunbury, Hunter played for South Bunbury before joining Swan Districts and making his debut with West Coast in 2000.

He said he was looking forward to giving something back to football in the region.

"It's just a tremendous honour to be representing the academy and I will do everything I can to promote football in the area," he said.

"I always keep a keen eye on what's going on in the South West, being that I previously played for South Bunbury, and it will be terrific to get involved with the younger kids to assist them in developing their game.

"When I was coming through the ranks, I found it quite a hard task to break into the metro leagues and I think this particular program will really help the younger talents develop their skills and also give them a greater opportunity to reach WAFL squads and State teams, and perhaps even eventually AFL lists.

"It's a great pathway and it will give these kids that have the desire to become AFL footballers the best poss-

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ible coaching and development they can receive."

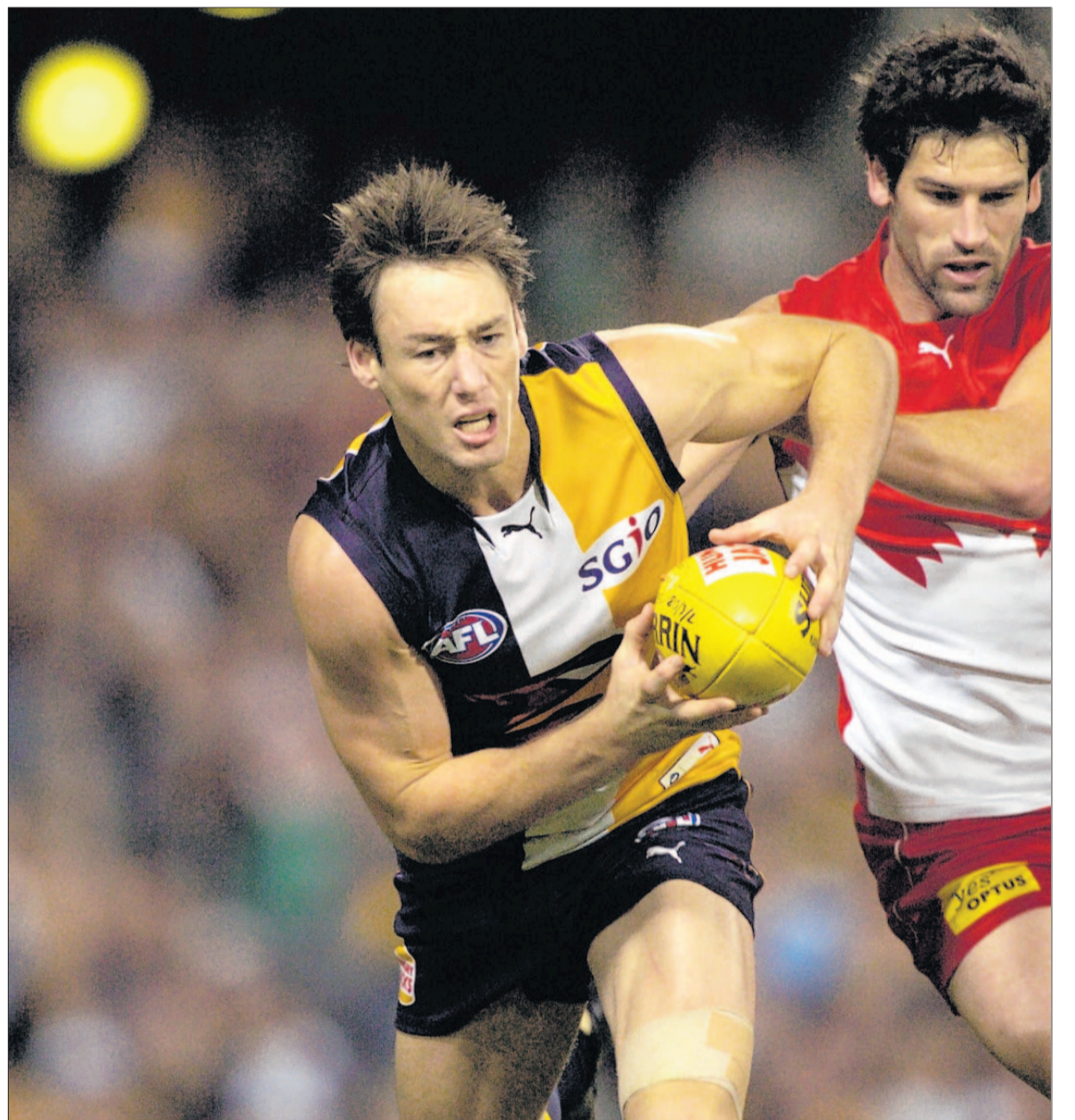
West Coast player services coordinator Ian Miller said Hunter embraced everything about the region and would make an excellent role model.

"He loves going back home to Bunbury when he can and I think they could not get a better choice for an ambassador," he said.

"He's certainly passionate about his football and has been a high achiever both on and off the field and will continue to do so over the years.

"He's terrific with young kids. Over all of the years, his involvement for West Coast with the community camps, football clinics and those sort of activities has been top notch.

"He is always the one who is dominant with his involvement and I think that the passion he possesses certainly shines through onto his football."



West Coast Eagles player Adam Hunter has been named patron for the SWAS football program.

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## Inaugural scholarship holders are inducted

The South West Academy of Sport can add another chapter to its short history after inducting the inaugural recipients of its individual scholarship program.

The 10 athletes were officially welcomed into the academy at a function at the South West Sports Centre on Saturday, February 21.

Scholarship winners were pres-

ented with certificates by Member for Forrest Nola Marino and representatives from Worsley Alumina and Cristal Global. They also received sports bags thanks to The Athlete's Foot.

The function also proved a good opportunity to celebrate the achievements of its athletes.

"The scholarships were made

available to young South West athletes excelling in sport — and these athletes are certainly excelling," said SWAS chief executive Bernice Butlion.

Scholarship holders recognised included Matthew Bladock, Laura Macaulay and Creed McTaggart, Margaret River (Surfing), Lauren Reynolds, Australind (BMX),

Phoebe Tucker, Capel (Dressage and Equestrian), Sam Whiteman, Bunbury (Cricket), Rowan Brown, Dunsborough (Mountain Bike and Road), Amy Fortescue, Gelorup (Taekwondo), Dave Prosser, Bunbury (Rowing) and Alexandra Hagan, Eaton (Rowing).

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