



Former South West Football League great Mark Skehan has replaced Dylan Harper as the SWAS's head football coach.

Skehan to nurture young footballers

SOUTH West Academy of Sport football players now have former league coach Mark Skehan to help them rise through the ranks.

Skehan has been appointed as the academy's head football coach, replacing Dylan Harper who is pursuing a career in another field.

He joins SWAS after spending the past two years establishing the Clontarf South West Football Academy in Bunbury and seeing students such as Neville Jetta drafted into the AFL.

Skehan said he was excited about his new position, which involves over-

seeing talent development pathways for some of the region's most promising athletes.

"I'm looking forward to working with the existing squads, maintaining the quality of the program and also beginning to identify the next intake of players," he said.

"The academy is offering an excellent program that gives athletes access to a level of expertise they would not ordinarily get."

Academy chief executive Bernice Butlion welcomed Skehan to the SWAS team, saying he brought a wealth of experience to his new role.

"Mark has great knowledge of both football and education and will be an asset to the academy," she said.

"He has been a teacher in the South West including at Bunbury and Australind high schools and has been involved in football as a coach and a player.

"He coached Harvey-Brunswick-Leschenault and Bunbury football clubs and as a player, made his mark at Carey Park, Harvey-Brunswick-Leschenault and Bunbury, and also in the WAFL. He has also been a State country fitness coach.

"He'll bring a lot to the academy."

London Games in sights of BMX sensation

THE training and event schedule of local BMX star Lauren Reynolds is becoming increasingly demanding as she ramps up preparations in the lead-up to the next Olympic Games.

For much of this year, the South West Academy of Sport scholarship holder and world silver medallist has been based in Queensland where she is part of Cycling Australia's BMX high-performance program elite development squad.

But her desire to secure a number one world ranking and a place at the 2012 Olympic Games in London is set to lead the Clifton Park teenager around Australia and the globe.

"London is the ultimate goal but in the meantime there are so many things I want to achieve," Reynolds said.

The talented 17 year old is currently taking part in the 2009 BMX National Championships in Perth, a qualifying event for the UCI BMX World Championships in Adelaide in July.

Between the national and world championships, Reynolds will fly to Denmark for the UCI BMX Supercross World Cup 2009 being held in Copenhagen on May 8 and 9.

She will also compete in supercross events later this year in France, Spain, South Africa and the United States.

Reynolds said she was fortunate to be pursuing a career in BMX.

"I'd like to take this opportunity to acknowledge my appreciation of the South West Academy of Sport which has been supporting my career through a scholarship," she said.



Bunbury BMX sensation Lauren Reynolds will greatly benefit from the SWAS system as she aims for the London Olympics.

Academy roadshow to inform shires on program

THE South West Academy of Sport board has hit the road in an effort to educate the region's sporting fraternity on its program.

"Taking the program down to a regional level is important to us," academy chief executive officer Bernice Butlion said.

The board, which held a meeting in Collie last week, travels to Margaret River and Man-

jimup this June and August to help inform all South West shires about what the academy is running, and how any local athletes can benefit from the setup.

"This is not just a Bunbury program — the academy is a regional program and appeals to the entire community," Butlion said.

"These meetings give sporting clubs and

interested families a chance to ask the SWAS board questions, while giving us an opportunity to educate people about the program as a whole.

"We aim to visit all 12 local shires next year."

Butlion added that it was important for the sporting community to share and understand the common goal.

swas south west academy of sport

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