

Striking out on year of revenge

GEORGE GOODWIN

THE flyers are out, the lists are being filled and the South West Strikers are ready to hit.

That's the message from elite hockey secretary Sue Neaves and men's coach Dave McGeoch.

"Invitations have been sent out to all hockey players in the South West to join us on our first training run and social on March 21," Neaves said.

Fixtures are yet to be received from Hockey West for their competitions, including the Classic League which get under way on April 10.

"We are getting in early this year," Neaves said.

"We are now over the shock of losing Classic League promotion-relegation play-offs after nearly 15 years of State League hockey and have set matters in place for a concerted push for the South West Strikers to get back into the major league.

"Several senior players who were loath to play in the tough Classic League out of their comfort zones but have pledged their services in the slower second division.

"We are setting in place a three to five year rebuilding plan which starts now."

With Australia one of the world hockey heavyweights and the AIS based in Perth, most of the country's elite players are in the WA State league making it one of the toughest club competition in the world.

Men's coach McGeoch has already received a list of 21 interested players including a solid commitment from Marist strong man Chris Neaves, a part timer these past two seasons.

"Last year we lacked a strong striker and so drew about nine matches in



South West Strikers coach Dave McGeoch is preparing his troops for the 2010 season.

the Willow bridge Cup, finishing in the middle of the league where a couple of wins would have pushed us into the finals," he said.

Also included in the 'elite' category are South West Sports Academy coaches Matt Mellor and Lawrie Tylor.

Both former star players and coaches of the Strikers, the two have pledged to work closely on a blueprint

for the future with the Strikers and their young list.

"A women's coach is yet to be finalised," Neaves said.

"Although with Jodie Goss and Anita Scott from SWAS to help we have the best."

Both Scott and Goss are highly decorated former Classic League stars who have pledged their services to getting South West hockey back on track.

With multi-million dollar stadiums and facilities throughout the region the South West has a great start.

The men's provisional list includes almost every player who represented the Strikers last year including the outstanding David O'Brien, his brothers Keegan and Sean, Matt Anderson, Chris Neaves and goalie Tim Bray.

"It is a basic squad based on last year but if rumours are true there could

be several significant additions," McGeoch said.

The present list is: Tim Bray, Keegan O'Brien, Sean O'Brien, David O'Brien, Matt Anderson, Sean Beckett, Phil Moore, Matt Shepherd, Chris Neaves, Cory Letts, Nayton Columba, Brynley Jenkins, Jamie Williamson, Matt Mellor, Geoff Neaves, Damon Harling, Matt Bycroft, Cory Old and Ben Johnson.