

# SPORTS STAR OF THE YEAR

More than 20 of the South West's standout athletes for 2009 received nominations for the South Western Times AJ (Tood) Buswell Sport Star of the Year Award. The final 12 have now been selected, with the winner to be announced at a civic reception on February 24. Sports editor Ben Papalia takes a closer look at the 12 finalists for the 2009 Sports Star of the Year award...

## Anthony Morabito

Born and bred in Harvey, the talented footballer is tipped to become one of the South West's most successful AFL footballers after being picked up by the Fremantle Dockers in last year's AFL national draft. Morabito was snapped up at pick four - the highest ever achieved by a former South West footballer. Morabito was also the inaugural winner of The West Australian's WAFL Rising Star award.



## Chris Gulvin

The Bunbury sharpshooter hit the bulls-eye throughout his 2009 campaign. After impressing selectors at the 2008 Australian Nationals, Gulvin was last year selected to represent Australia at the US National Bore Rifle Championships in Ohio - the only representative from country WA in the squad. Gulvin helped Australia finish second overall in the US championships. In October, Gulvin competed in the WA State titles for the target rifle championships, finishing third in the open division while also setting three new junior State records. He capped off his strong season by claiming seven golds at the National Air Rifle titles in Perth. Recently, Gulvin was awarded a Smarner than Smoking Country Sports Scholarship award for shooting.



## Lauren Reynolds

The Bunbury BMX champion capped off her sensational season on the track by being named the South West Academy of Sport's best athletes for 2009 after impressive results. In January Reynolds finished first in the UCI's opening BMX rounds in the Junior Elite class before taking first place honours at the ProBike BMX round in Adelaide in February. Reynolds continued her impressive ProBike series form by finishing first in the Canberra rounds in March in the junior elite women's category. She finished the overall No.1 in the UCI Oceania ranking and achieved third overall in the UCI World Ranking for junior women. She continued her good form with top 10 finishes in the world championships and national championships, and was ranked seventh overall for the Supercross World Cup series. She was also voted Australian BMX Cyclist of the Year for junior women.



## Amy Fortescue

At only 17 years of age and a trophy cabinet already packed with gold medals, Amy Fortescue's future certainly looks bright. The Gelorup taekwondo star proved she is potential Olympic material last season with a host of stellar performances. Amy won double gold in 2009 and in October she won silver at the Australian Taekwondo Open and national championships, earning her selection for a special taekwondo Australia development squad. At another national competition Amy also won gold. She also took home silver in State competition this year. Amy, who is also a South West Academy of Sport scholarship holder, won last year's Myles Junior Sports Star Award.



## Brad Blake

The Late Model Sedan speedway champion is a three-time winner of the South Western Times AJ (Tood) Buswell Sports Star of the Year award and has cleaned up on the speedway circuit again in 2009. Blake claimed the WA State Titles in January in Manjimup and came third in the Gold Cup. Although finishing a close second in the Nationals in March, he went on to win the Thunderhill 30 and the NSW titles in March. His impressive season also saw him win the Topless Nationals, Rumble by the River and the Wild West series. In September he raced the American World 100, missing the final cut by one. He was also awarded the Pro-Dirt championship for 2009 after finishing top of the speedway points table.



## Lyn Ventris

Bunbury's walking champion continued to push the boundaries in 2009. In March, Ventris won both the State Open 10km and 5000m track walk championships in Perth, while also finishing first in the State Masters 5000m and 3000m track walk championships. She continued her blistering form by winning the Australian Masters 10km road walk in April and the 5000m track walk. Ventris didn't stop there, winning the Lake Burley Griffin 10-mile road walk and the masters section of the Athletics Australia 20km road walk. At the World Masters Athletics championships in Finland, Ventris won the 5000m track walk, the 10km road walk, the 20km road walk and helped Australia win gold in the team 20km road walk. She capped off her summer performances by being named the Australian Masters Race Walker of the Year.



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## Murray Hansen

Dalyellup pacing trainer Murray Hansen blitzed WA's trotting industry in season 2009 with talented three-year-old Truckers Ruffnut. Under Hansen's astute guidance Truckers Ruffnut won 13 races including some WA pacing gems. In February he demolished his rivals in the \$23,500 South Western Times Battle Of Bunbury at Donaldson Park before winning the \$40,000 Sales Classic Final for three-year-olds at Gloucester Park two weeks later. In May, the Hansen-trained filly broke through to win the \$100,000 State Sires final for three-year-olds at Gloucester Park. The jewel in the crown came in August with Truckers Ruffnut winning the prestigious Victorian Breeders Crown Series Consolation final in Melbourne against some of the nation's best.



## Jason Lea

Bunbury kickboxer Jason Lea continued his impressive fighting reputation with a dominant 2009 campaign in the ring. Despite spending the majority of 2008 away from the sport, Lea reignited his passion in 2009, training in Thailand in early January before winning his first major event against former European champion Parviz Iskenderov in Perth by TKO in the third round. In May Lea fought Queensland Taylor Harvey for the prestigious WBC Super Welterweight Australian Title, defeating him on points to win his second ever national crown. Although Lea's training and fighting schedule was postponed mid-year due to swine flu, he bounced back to win WA's Muay Thai Perth Cup over WBC Middleweight Australian Champion Marco Tentori in November.



## Peter Giadresco

Peter Giadresco's stables and training techniques continue to produce the winners and his 2009 racing season was again impressive. The jewel in the crown came when his two-year-old filly Gold Rocks won the \$500,000 Group Two Karakatta Plate at Ascot in March. The thoroughbred trainer continued his good form locally as well by winning his 12th consecutive Trainer of the Year award at the Bunbury Turf Club. He also racked up numerous individual winners at Ascot and at Belmont.



## Murray Goodwin

Murray Goodwin put in another stellar season with Sussex County Cricket Club. He spearheaded the county club to the English Twenty/20 title for them to contest the World Series, played a major part in the county reaching the grand final of the NatWest 50-over competition and then winning the Pro-40 competition as well. In both series he was the second-highest runs scorer. He capped off a solid First Class season with a massive 344 not out against Somerset off 351 balls, the highest individual first class score in the world last year. He was one of only two players to have passed the 300 mark in First Class cricket last season. On his return to Bunbury, Goodwin helped steer Colts Cricket Club from last on the Bunbury and Districts Cricket Association points table to fifth with five successive wins.



## Sharon Jarvis

It was another year of success for Dornybrock equestrian rider Sharon Jarvis, which culminated in her triumphs at the International Para-Equestrian competition in Victoria in December. Jarvis blitzed her events to secure three individual gold medals while also helping the Australian side win the team competition. She won three consecutive golds with scores of 71.76 per cent in the team test, 73.36 per cent in the individual championship test and 76.85 per cent in the freestyle test. Her impressive freestyle score also won her a medal for the highest overall score for competed in the championships. In September she also won her a medal for the highest National Para-Equestrian dressage in Sydney, winning three gold medals. Recently she has been named WA's Para-Equestrian rider of the year.



## Alex Hagan

The talented rower continues to develop and excel in her sport. Hagan started season 2009 by finishing fifth at the Youth Olympics in the pair scull before making an exceptional assault on the Australian Nationals in Tasmania in late March. Hagan blitzed the nationals by winning gold in the under-19 single and double sculls and gold in the under-19 quad scull. She was also part of the eight-woman team which rowed to gold in the under-23 boat, won silver in the State women's eight and won bronze in the Queens Cup event. Hagan continued her impressive season by gaining selections for the Junior World Championships in France in August where she won a silver medal in the quad scull four. Recently she has been awarded a scholarship in the Australian Institute of Sport in Canberra.

