



GOLDEN GUY: Scholarship recipient Matt Baldock in action.

Mighty Matt

HARD work is paying off for top junior surfer Matt Baldock.

He was home at Prevelly this week taking a break from the intensity of the Australian Pro Junior competition circuit.

But the 19-year-old is not one to put his feet up, using his time here coaching surfing and studying.

"I've just started university, I'm doing a surf science course," he said.

"It's really flexible, I can go to the university at Bunbury when I am here and do the rest online.

"I'm trying to get ahead while I am home."

Baldock's next competition on the tour is in Tahiti in March and he said he was looking forward to the experience.

He has maintained his position as the highest ranked Western Australian pro junior male surfer in the under 21 section.

Competition is fierce on the circuit with 180 up-and-coming surfers from Australia and overseas testing their skills.

Four out of the 12 competitions have been held in surf that ranged from no waves at Burleigh Heads to thumping, board-breaking waves at South Stradbroke Island in Queensland.

Competing at an elite level can be costly with Baldock, who is currently without sponsorship, covering many of his expenses, including airfares.

He said his coaching work with Josh Palmateer's Surf Academy helped him to cover some of the costs, with his parents also offering support.

Baldock has also been awarded a scholarship for the second year from the South West Academy of Sport to help fund and develop his surfing career.

"They are really supportive," he said.

"I can put the funds towards helping improve physical and technical skills, like getting a mental coach to help with focus.

"There are a whole lot of people we can use to help us."