

# Tennis prodigy to take on the best

BUNBURY'S Louis Asser will be carrying the flag for regional WA when he competes for the State School Boys Under 19 tennis team in Victoria next week.

The only rural player to be selected in the eight-man team, Louis will this Saturday depart for Bendigo — about 150km north of Melbourne — to compete in the Pizzey Cup competition against other Australian states.

The tournament begins this weekend and will pit the nation's best young talent against each other over nine days of strenuous days that will see participants play singles and doubles games for their State in the mornings but also do battle in a singles grand-slam style open in the afternoons.

Louis, 16, said he was honoured to be the State's only country player in the WA team.

"I'm really proud, I've been playing some good tennis and I'm glad that it's paid off," he said.

"I'm really excited, I played two tournaments in Melbourne a year ago and I'm looking forward to going back."

A Bunbury Catholic College student, Louis led his peers to victory in Perth a fortnight ago at the Schools Tennis Classic — the biggest participation tennis tournament in WA.

Despite having previously competed interstate in Adelaide in 2008, Brisbane in 2009 and in Melbourne last year, next week will mark Louis' first official appearance for the WA State team.

He admitted to being a little unsure of exactly what to expect this time around.

"I might know some of the other players from when I went away in 2008, I'm sure they'll be very good," Louis said.

"But other than that I'm not really sure."

A South West Academy of Sport athlete, Louis made the State Schoolboys team after strong performances in the round-robin selection trials last month and has been training more than 10 hours per week in the lead-up to the tournament.

Tennis was this year inducted as one of the Academy's four new partner sports and Louis said his brief time there so far had been particularly beneficial.

"SWAS has been good, they coach tennis but also other stuff like the mental game and nutrition," he said.



Louis Asser takes some time out at the Bunbury Tennis Club this week. He will leave for Victoria on Saturday to compete for Western Australia in the Pizzey Cup. PICTURE: DAVID BAILEY