

Boyanup woman is female footy coach of the year

Tess Leedham

SOUTH West Female Football co-ordinator Michelle Harris from Boyanup has been adjudged this year's Female Coach of the Year at the 2011 Australian Football Coaches Association State Awards presentation held in Fremantle.

In his presentation WA Football Commission club development and coaching manager Glenn Morley praised Harris' achievements for the 2011 season.

"Harris has continued her coaching pathway in 2011, since becoming one of the first female community coaches in WA to achieve level two status in 2009," he said.

"She has coached the Cardinals 16s youth boys' team to successive grand final appearances in 2010 and 2011, as well as serving as an assistant coach to the South West Sirens squad (youth girls) and South West 14s talent squads.

"Additionally she has recently been added to the list of high quality coaches on the South West Academy of Sport AFL Coaching Panel."

Mr Morley praised Harris for her involvement and described her as an inspiration to female coaches across the state, adding that her development style of coaching has been a key to her success in winning this year's award.

A qualified teacher, Harris has achieved great success in the growth of community and school female football participation.

Last year she received a Department of Sport & Recreation Regional Coach Scholarship which enabled her to attend the AFL National Coaching Conference held in Melbourne in February.

Harris said it had been a wonderful experience, with enormous benefits.

"To be surrounded by AFL coaches and representatives from some of the top teams was awesome," she said.

"Their presentations were informative and inspiring – so much so that I'm planning to attend next year as well."

Harris not only dedicates her time to coaching, but also co-ordinates the Female Football program in the South West region, one that has seen the formation of junior girls, youth girls and open women competitions starting up over the past two years.

Harris is currently putting together next year's pre-season fitness program, plus a plan for the youth girls' competition.

In addition, she has just taken on the position of South West Academy of Sport Development coach and said she was keen to ensure young athletes were given the same opportunities to play high level competition without having to travel to Perth.



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BRILLIANT COACH: Michelle Harris of Boyanup is the 2011 female coach of the year.