

# Academy honour for young star

MANJIMUP teenager Riley Hutchinson's dreams of playing high level AFL could become a reality for the 15-year-old after he was awarded the 2009 Australian Rules Football Athlete of the Year at the South West Academy of Sport's annual awards last Friday night.

Riley, who plays for Deanmill Football Club, has been part of the football division of the South West Academy of Sport for the past year.

The win came as a big surprise for the rising star who has been playing football since he was about four years old.

"I was pretty shocked, I was not expecting to win," Riley said.

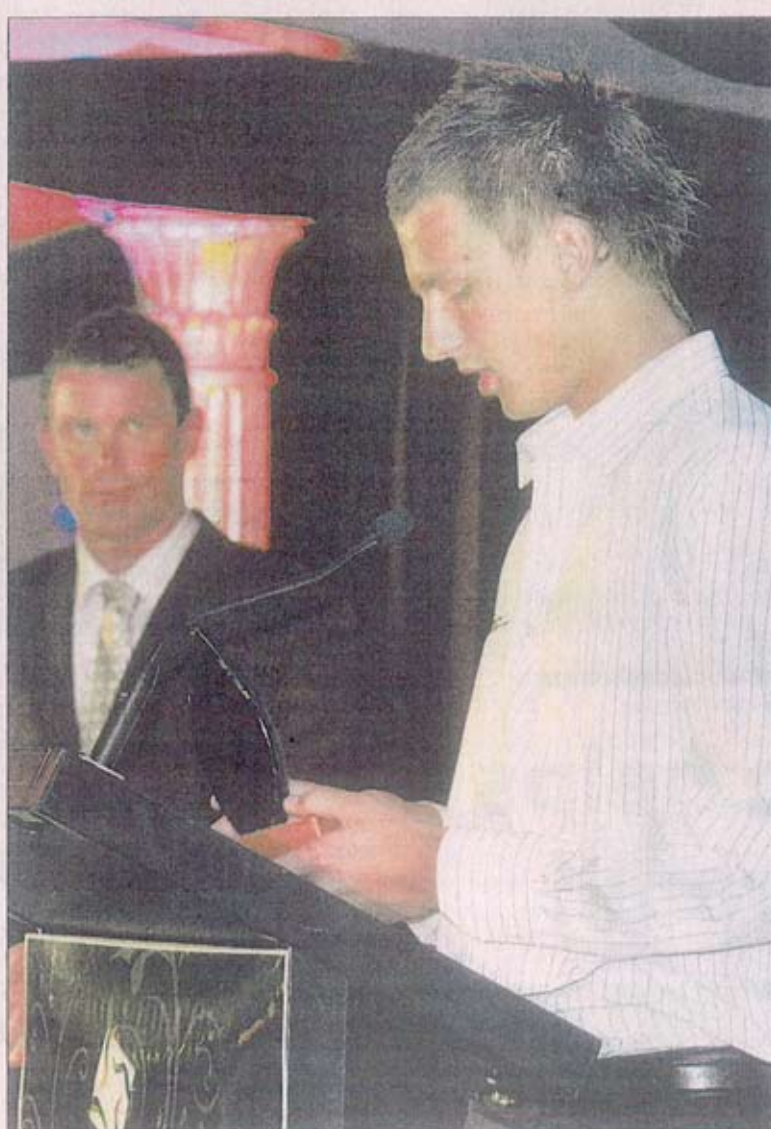
South West Academy of Sport chief executive officer Bernice Butlion said it was wonderful that someone like Riley could come from far away and do so well.

"Even though you live so far away you can still excel in sport," Ms Butlion said.

"He's a great role model to others, we hope the other athletes aspire to be a Riley Hutchinson," she said.

Ms Butlion said Riley had shown strong commitment and dedication to football and had a good chance of being drafted in the future.

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Manjimup local Riley Hutchinson, who was shocked to win the 2009 Australian Rules Football Athlete of the Year award in Bunbury last Friday night, has already caught the eye of talent spotters.

## Big playing future tipped

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"Wherever he goes he will do well, he has a fantastic pathway," Ms Butlion said.

At the awards evening, Riley was commended for being selected to play for Western Australia in the State Schoolboy Championships held in Maroochydore, Queensland.

He was also commended for his versatility as a player, hard running and physical presence as well as being highly regarded by his coaches after representing East Perth in the Western Australia Football League Championships held in October.

Lower South West development squad coach Wayne Barnden said that from the beginning of his time in the academy, Riley had shown his ability by having the highest vertical leap in the squad and coming second with the quickest 20m sprint time.

Mr Barnden said Riley definitely had a future playing professional AFL football and had already caught the eye of a couple of talent spotters.

Ex West Coast Eagles player Michael Braun, who is the East Perth Football Club colts coach, was interested in Riley, Mr Barnden said.

"He's pretty impressed with what Riley's been doing."