

Supporting our future stars

Residents able to play role in athletes' development

AN exciting new group is giving residents of the South West the opportunity to show their support of the South West Academy of Sport and be part of the development of the region's elite athletes of tomorrow.

Friends of SWAS has been established to allow South West people to play a direct role in supporting the work the academy does in training our future sports stars.

Members will receive a SWAS supporters pack and be kept up to date on the progress of athletes in the four partner sports as well as individual scholarship holders.

People can join for as little as a donation of \$50 each year. There is also a \$264 Friends of SWAS package, based on 12 monthly payments of \$22.

South West Academy of Sport chief executive officer Bernice Butlion said Friends of SWAS would play an important role.

"The academy has received tremendous support from the private sector and government, but we are aware that many individuals in the region also want to play a role," Butlion said.

"As a result we have launched Friends of SWAS to give these people the opportunity to be part of an organisation that will play a major role in the development of sporting talent in our region."

International golfing champion Shani Waugh — the first person to come on board as a Friend of SWAS — said she was honoured to play a role in supporting tomorrow's South West champions.

"For many years talented athletes have had to travel to Perth several times a week for training and this puts a lot of strain on families," he said.

"Now that we have the academy,



South West Academy of Sport chief executive officer Bernice Butlion, left, discusses the new Friends of SWAS program with inaugural member — international golfing champion Shani Waugh. PICTURE: DAVID BAILEY

this training is being made available at home."

Waugh said she was right behind the concept of SWAS and how it would help talented athletes in the South West.

Her own experience as a promising golfer growing up in Bunbury had

made her aware of the challenges sportspeople in regional areas faced.

"I am even more aware of the challenges parents face," she said.

"I am impressed with the SWAS concept — for people to be able to stay here and do the training is great.

"At the end of the day, they are country kids and many would not want to move."

The Sanctuary Golf Resort golf teacher, who won three tournaments on the Ladies European Tour and finished an impressive third in the 2002 Women's US Open, said her home town of

Bunbury was the obvious choice after retiring from international tournaments two years ago.

She was now committed to passing on her knowledge in her home town and enjoyed mentoring junior golfers.

To become a Friend of SWAS contact 9795 4504.