

# Sports Academy is set to kick off

THE South West Academy of Sport will be officially launched next Friday, July 4, with the inaugural intake of sports to be announced following more than 12 months of hard work.

A total of 10 applicants have been narrowed down to six, with the final four sports to be named at Friday's launch.

With submissions received from basketball, football, soccer, netball, roller skating, hockey, surf lifesaving, rowing, cricket and tennis, academy directors have been faced with some

tough decisions when making the final cut from 10 sports to four.

For those that miss out, another 40-50 individual scholarships will be awarded at a later date to accommodate a wide range of athletes.

South West Academy of Sport board chairman Don Punch said it was heartening to see the planning stages of such an exciting project head towards the finish line.

"Regional Western Australia has a strong history of producing quality athletes," he said.

"The academy is an outstanding project which will provide increased opportunity for young talents to rise through the ranks and become State, national or international champions."

The main objective of the academy will be to offer up-and-coming athletes from around the South West the chance to enter elite training closer to home, reducing the upheaval of relocation to Perth to participate in high performance programs and realise their potential.

Four sports will operate at the academy in its first year of operation on

the advice of former WA Institute of Sport director Wally Foreman, who played a major role in helping the concept come to fruition.

Project officer Tom Busher said that limiting the inaugural intake to four sports would also make the program more manageable in its first year.

"As the academy grows more sports will be inducted into its program, similar to the WA Institute of Sport," Busher said.

Key sponsors will also be recognised at Friday's launch.