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ACADEMY OF SPORT

GCAS NEWS

AUTUMN 2025 – ISSUE 64

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Preparing pre-elite Gold Coast athletes for their journey to Olympic or higher-performance success through quality inclusive sport and life skill programs.

EDITORIAL

From the Chair from the Executive Director's desk

Welcome to the first newsletter for the year 2025. The Academy is pleased to announce the newest addition to our immediate family. Annaleise Stoyko, who has been serving as the programs manager at the Academy for over three years, welcomed her child, Taysom Jay Hill, who arrived eight weeks early on December 21, 2024. Born just two days after our work concluded, Taysom was eager to enter the world. We extend our heartfelt congratulations to Annaleise and wish her all the best in her journey ahead.

The Academy has commenced the year, launching the boys' Rugby Union program at RACV Royal Pines. This initiative will culminate in a trial match against a similarly aged team from a school in the Rugby scene, providing participants an opportunity to apply the skills they have acquired in practice. Further details on additional sporting programs are included in the sports report within this edition.

The Academy remains steadfast in its primary mission: to prepare pre-elite athletes for their pursuit of high-performance sports. The 'Future Champion Strategy' emphasises that each program not only addresses specific technical skill acquisition and physical development but also nurtures the personal and professional growth of the athlete. To this end, professional presenters have been engaged to facilitate holistic athlete development through a series of educational sessions covering personal development, community engagement, strength and conditioning, recovery, body maintenance, and more.

I recently encountered a phrase that resonated with me, which I believe warrants sharing:

"Too often we confuse talent with ability. Ability consists of the physical and skill aspects. Talent, on the other hand, encompasses the broader spectrum, including character, leadership, and much more. Many possess ability; however, few possess true talent."

This sentiment underscores the significance of cultivating both character and athletic prowess. As a former educator and current coach, I get great satisfaction from witnessing the growth of athletes as they embrace new challenges. Learning and development are ongoing processes, making it essential to maintain an open mind and heed diverse perspectives.

Additionally, opportunities exist for athletes to transition to alternative sports that may align better with their abilities. Observing the achievements of Australia in the most recent Olympics was truly inspiring. With the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games rapidly approaching, anticipation builds surrounding the decisions regarding venues. There has been considerable time elapsed since the initial announcement, marked by numerous changes along the way, and many stakeholders in the sporting community eagerly await substantial progress. We hope that venues will carry with them some much needed legacy for after the Games.

The beginning of the year typically heralds numerous national championships and the selection of state teams. This period represents the culmination of extensive preparation invested in individuals and teams. We invite any parents or athletes reading this newsletter who wish to discuss potential future programs to reach out to us. Australia boasts a myriad of sports opportunities which, while advantageous, can also present challenges in terms of selection.

Discovering a passion for a particular sport and identifying one's area of expertise is indeed special. It is important to persist in this pursuit, and when one finds a sport of interest, commitment is vital to achieving one's full potential. We wish you good fortune, and please know that the Academy is here to provide support and services as needed.

I take great pride in presenting a brief overview of the Academy's achievements in 2024. Annaleise and I are immensely proud of the outcomes of the various sporting programs conducted during this period. We look to sustain and enhance these programs in the upcoming year.

Glynis Nunn OAM Oly

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RECIPE

POTATO AND VEGETABLE FRITTERS

In 2024, the Academy received a small grant from Carisma Potato Farm located in South Australia. They have generously provided a tasty recipe for Potato and Vegetable Fritters. We would like to express our gratitude for their support of our programs in 2024 and share this straightforward recipe.

Ingredients

- 2 large Carisma potatoes
- 1 carrot
- 1 zucchini
- 1 cup brown or red lentils
- 1 small red onion
- 1 garlic clove
- 1 cup flour
- 1 egg
- 1 tbsp chopped parsley
- Salt & black pepper

Method

STEP 1

Grate potatoes, carrot and zucchini. Squeeze out moisture with paper towel.

STEP 2

Dice onion and garlic.

STEP 3

Add all ingredients into a large bowl and use hands to combine.

STEP 4

Into a frypan with hot oil, add 1/4 cup amount of mixture and cook on each side until golden. Garnish with chopped parsley.

Tip: You can cook these and freeze them for later.

Freeze with baking paper in between each so they don't stick together and you can take them out one at a time.
To defrost just take out the night before and you can leave them in a cool place or allow to slowly defrost in the fridge.

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SPORTS REPORT

Wrap Up Report: Academy Program Highlights and Successes

GOLD COAST ACADEMY OF SPORT

Kicking off 2025 with High-Impact Programs!

Our Rugby Union Program hit the ground running on January 22, setting the tone for an busy year. Athletes have thrived under the guidance of our expert presenters and professional coaches, sharpening their skills in body maintenance, nutrition, rugby IQ, sports psychology, and skill work. With every session, they're growing stronger—physically and mentally—and we can't wait for what's ahead! The program will finish with a match against a school in the Rugby scene to test their skill development and team work.

Meanwhile, the Brumbies Emerging Athlete Program (BEAP) continues in collaboration with A.B. Paterson College. Year 9 students recently explored the power of nutrition, learning from a leading expert how to fuel their bodies for peak performance. Years 10,11 and 12 revised their nutritional knowledge and will then go on to do meal planning and preparation in the kitchen. Additionally, a presentation on High Performance Habits was delivered to all students from Years 9 to 12. It is anticipated that they will incorporate some of the concepts discussed to support their development of effective habits, both in sports and in their general day to day lives.

Our Sport and Recreation Program is also in full swing! In partnership with Gold Coast Sport and Recreation, a group of athletes kicked off the program with fitness and agility testing , setting their own standards in standing long jump, vertical jump, sit and reach, and 30m sprint to be tested again in a short while. We hope that they will continue to work hard on some athletic events as the state "Special Olympics" approach.

What's Next?

Looking to the near future, we have our Ignite Senior Netball Program and Junior Specialist Netball Program applications open, so if you want to become involved, or know of someone that might gain knowledge from this program, apply now via our website's Open Applications page before the 2nd of April.

Our ninth annual Future Stars Program commences on the 12th of March, followed closely by our engagement with Taekwondo Queensland to be involved with their state training preparation. We will start our educational sessions in partnership with Upper Coomera State College in March and continue through the year.

In previous years we have enlisted the help of Queensland Weightlifting to gauge interest in a specialist program. xpressions of interest are now open, and we encourage those looking to learn how to lift correctly to look at this specialist program.

$1.45 Million

Magic Millions Showjumping

Since 2022 Magic Millions has hosted an elite showjumping event, the Pacific Fair Magic Millions Polo & Showjumping, combining the glitz and glamour of the Gold Coast with Australia's top riders and emerging talent. With this year's total prize pool reaching $1.45 million, competition was fierce and the standard high.

A total of 12 teams took part in the Senior Team Competition at this year's event with the all-female team riding for Arrowfield Stud & Redback Boots claiming victory by a single penalty in a thrilling finish.

The winning team was led by Jamie Winning-Kermond riding Tulara Lady Zirocca. Jamie, who has been involved in each edition of the event since its inauguration, says it's a competition she always looks forward to. "It's always had a great atmosphere and crowd. There are not many opportunities in Australia where we get to ride in front of that number of people. Obviously the prize money and the atmosphere is great, but also the attention to detail for us and the care of the horses has been really good."

Juniors & Off The Track Comp

The Junior Showjumping Competition gave up-and-coming talent the opportunity to gain experience at a world-class event over two rounds of competition. Sienna Holdsworth-Rose riding Coolart Farm Short Torque produced the only double clear to claim victory (0/37.44).

Retired racehorses were showcased in this year's inaugural Queensland Off-The-Track Cup Final, where Makaylah Fenwick and Rainbow Man were the quickest of two double clears (0/43.73) to take first place and claim the winner's share of the $75,000 prize pool for this class.

MAGIC MILLIONS GOLD COAST MARCH YEARLING SALE

will be held on 10 & 11 March at the Bundall sales complex on Racecourse Drive, with yearling inspections daily from Friday 7 March. The event is open to the public and entry is free.

Pictured: Junior Showjumping Comp winner

ALL SPORTS
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Managing Lower Back Pain in Athletes: A Guide for Young Athletes and Their Parents

Lower back pain (LBP) is a common issue among athletes, particularly those engaged in high-impact or repetitive sports. While lower back pain is often associated with older adults or inactive individuals, the causes, management, and implications for young athletes differ significantly. Understanding these differences is crucial for athletes, their parents, and coaches to ensure pain does not interfere with performance or long-term development.

https://www.laspine.com/back-issues-in-y 1

How Lower Back Pain in Athletes is Different

In non-athletic populations, lower back pain is commonly caused by muscle strain, degenerative disk disease, disk herniation, and other spinal conditions. These issues are often related to lifestyle factors such as poor posture, aging, and improper lifting techniques. *(Deyo & Weinstein, 2001).* In contrast, athletes—especially young ones—develop back pain due to sport-specific stressors. These may include repetitive loading, excessive extension (arching) movements, or sudden increases in training volume *(McGill, 2016).*

Sports like gymnastics, cricket fast bowling, and football often involve repeated spinal extension and rotation, which can lead to overuse injuries in the lower back (Purcell, 2018). In athletes, structural issues like stress fractures (spondylolysis) are more common, particularly in the growing spine of young athletes, which is more vulnerable to stress (Sakai et al., 2017). These injuries differ from muscular strains commonly seen in non-athletic populations.

https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10. 1

Recognizing Lower Back Pain in Athletes

Parents and young athletes should be vigilant about the signs of lower back pain that require attention. Athletes may report stiffness in the morning, pain during or after activity, or discomfort with specific movements like bending backward. Pain that persists for more than a few days, worsens with sport, or is accompanied by tingling or numbness should prompt a professional assessment *(Purcell, 2018).*

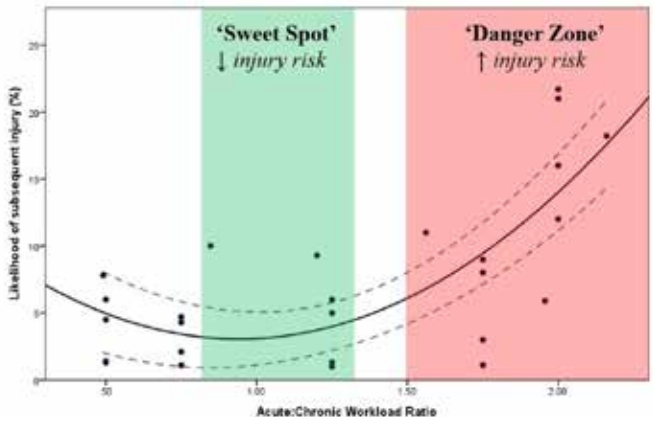
Management Strategies for Athletes

1. **Early Intervention:**
   Ignoring back pain or trying to “push through it” can lead to more serious injuries. Early assessment by a physiotherapist experienced in sports injuries can identify the underlying cause and prevent complications (McGill, 2016).
2. **Relative Rest:**
   Unlike complete rest, which is often recommended for non-athletes, young athletes benefit from relative rest. This means reducing high-impact or aggravating activities while maintaining low-impact exercises such as swimming or cycling to maintain fitness without further stressing the spine *(Bonazza et al., 2017).*
3. **Strengthening and Core Stability:**
   Research consistently highlights the importance of core stability and hip strength in managing and preventing lower back pain in athletes (Huxel Bliven & Anderson, 2013). Strengthening exercises focusing on the deep core muscles, glutes, and lower back can help stabilize the spine and improve performance. Planks, bridges, and dead bugs are often recommended.

https://www.motushp.com/2024/08/19/lumba 1

4. **Technique Adjustment:**
   Athletes often need to modify their technique to reduce the load on their lower back. Cricket bowlers, for example, may need coaching to refine their delivery technique, while gymnasts may work on their take-off and landing mechanics *(Sakai et al., 2017)*.
5. **Load Management:**
   A sudden increase in training volume is a common trigger for lower back pain in young athletes. Parents and coaches should ensure gradual progression, allowing time for the body to adapt to increasing demands *(Purcell, 2018)*. A 10% increase in training load per week is often cited as a safe guideline (Gabbett, 2016).

Figure 1. The Acute:Chronic Workload Ratio and Injury Risk in Athletes.[1]



https://gabbettperformance.com.au/do-loa 1

Long-Term Considerations

If managed correctly, young athletes experiencing lower back pain are not necessarily at risk of chronic issues. However, ignoring the problem or returning to sport prematurely can increase the likelihood of recurring pain and long-term limitations *(McGill, 2016)*. An individualized rehabilitation plan, guided by a sports physiotherapist, ensures that the athlete returns to competition safely and with a lower risk of re-injury.

Conclusion

Lower back pain in young athletes requires a different approach compared to inactive individuals. Prompt assessment, load management, and strengthening exercises can help athletes recover quickly and reduce the risk of future injuries. Parents and athletes should work closely with healthcare professionals to ensure pain does not hinder athletic development.

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Her Medical

Proudly Supporting Gold Coast Athletes

GOLD COAST ACADEMY OF SPORT

Her Medical are delighted to announce our continued support of the Gold Coast Academy of Sport in 2025. It has been an absolute pleasure witnessing the remarkable achievements of the academy's athletes throughout 2024, and we eagerly anticipate the promising ventures that lie ahead in the coming year.

As a clinic dedicated to women's health, we take immense pride in being a resource for young women as they navigate through the challenges of puberty and sports. Our commitment to supporting these athletes remains and we are excited to extend our care with the addition of two new doctors and our current medical staff. Situated at 30 Yacht Street, just off Ferry Parade, it is easy to find.

To all the talented athletes at the Gold Coast Academy of Sport, we extend our heartfelt wishes for a phenomenally successful 2025. May this year be filled with triumphs, growth, and memorable accomplishments as you continue to pursue your dreams on and off the field.

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We can also look after travel requirements for individuals and small groups. This might be for friends, family or supporters attending an event, or simply a couple of mates heading to a sporting event as spectators. Whatever your travel needs, we would love the chance to prepare a competitive quote for you.

Leigh / Jessica / Tania

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Local Sporting Champions

Intro to Young Athletes Travel Subsidy

It is widely recognised that families consistently seek support to enable athletes to participate in state and national championships. Therefore, I would like to provide information regarding available travel subsidies for young athletes throughout the year. If you are not already aware of these opportunities, I encourage you to investigate your eligibility. As we welcome a new year, please consider the various options that may be available to you.

Local Sporting Champions

The Local Sporting Champions program provides financial assistance for coaches, officials and competitors aged 12-18 participating in state, national or international championships.

If successful, applicants will receive $500-$750 towards the cost of attending their championships.

- Base Grant: **$500**
- Applicants travelling 800km - 1999km to their nominated championships: + $100
- Applicants travelling internationally or greater than 2000km to their nominated championships: + **$200**
- Applicants residing in a rural electorate: + **$50**

Young Athletes Travel Subsidy

The Young Athletes Travel Subsidy is available to help athletes travel to major championships. The travel subsidy aims to foster the development of young athletes and support elite athlete pathways by providing financial assistance to help alleviate the costs associated with attending championship events.

The travel subsidy supports attendance at specific state, national and international events. Subsidies are provided retrospectively under a tiered funding model, with applicants eligible once every 2 calendar years at each tier. Officials (such as coaches, referees and scorers) attending eligible events can also apply for assistance if they meet the eligibility criteria.

The travel subsidy will allow up to a maximum of $1200 in financial assistance over the 3 event tiers, once every 2 calendar years. Eligible athletes and officials can apply for 1 event per tier once every second calendar year.

- State or state school event - $200
- National or national school event - $400
- International event - $600.

Emerging Athlete Pathway program

Check if you are eligible - The Emerging Athlete Pathways (EAP) program supports eligible young athletes, coaches and officials aged 10-18 years to progress on a development pathway by providing financial assistance to help alleviate the costs associated with attending state, national and international events.

Who is eligible?

Applicants eligible to apply for support are those who:

- have been selected as an athlete, coach, or official at an eligible State, National or International event
- have their selection/attendance confirmed by the relevant event selector or event organiser for their event
- are current resident of Queensland
- have not already been approved (or have submitted an application that is pending approval) under this program for attendance at 2 events (to either compete, coach or officiate) with event start dates within the same financial year
- are at least 10 years of age but under 19 years of age at the start of the event
- are required to travel at least 125km (one-way) from their home to the event location.

Events must be a Queensland State Championship, Queensland State School Championship, Australian National Championship, Australian National School Championship, or International Championship to be eligible. The full list of events is available on the website so please check.

Detailed eligibility information is also available.

Applications

Applications can be made from time of selection up until 6 months after the event start date. Applications must be made using the appropriate State, National or International application form.

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ELITE EDGE PERFORMANCE

Do you ever feel like you're drowning in your own thoughts and emotions when you're competing? Like you're so caught up in your head that you can't focus on your performance?

Or maybe you're so afraid of making a mistake that you end up playing it safe and not reaching your full potential? Or perhaps you're so focused on the outcome of the competition that you forget to enjoy the process?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, then you're not alone. Many athletes struggle with these same issues. But there is a way to overcome them. It's called Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT).

ACT is a type of therapy that helps people to accept their thoughts and emotions without judgment. It also helps people to identify their values and to take action that is in line with those values.

In the context of sports psychology, ACT can be used to help athletes to:

- Accept their thoughts and emotions without judgment.
- Identify their values.
- Take action that is in line with their values.
- Focus on the present moment.
- Let go of the need to control the outcome.
- Enjoy the process of competing.

If you know you are capable of more in your sport, there is support available!

Kurt Young is a local Sport and Exercise Psychologist who has worked extensively with elite athletes from multiple sports and has had the privilege of supporting multiple Olympic Gold Medallists.

Contact Kurt Young at youngkurtis7@gmail.com or visit www.eliteedgeperformance.com.au to learn more.

Location: 11/2098 Gold Coast Highway, Miami.

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RECIPE

GOLD COAST ACADEMY OF SPORT

MUFFIN TIN CARISMA POTATO QUICHES

Ingredients

- 6 large Carisma Potatoes
- 1/2 cup grated cheese such as mozzarella, swiss or cheddar
- 1/4 cup parmesan cheese, grated
- handful of spinach
- 8 to 10 cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1/4 cup spring onion, sliced
- 1/4 cup cream
- 2 eggs
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/4 teaspoon nutmeg (optional)
- Salt and pepper

Method

STEP 1

Preheat the oven to 200°C. Microwave the potatoes for 10-15 minutes, depending on their size, until tender. Line each slot of a muffin tray with baking paper. Slice the cooked potatoes in half and place them into the muffin tray. Using the bottom of a heavy glass, gently press each potato half to flatten and spread it, forming a base that covers the sides of the tin.

STEP 2

Drizzle olive oil over the top of the potatoes and season with sea salt and freshly ground black pepper. Bake for 30 to 35 minutes or until golden brown.

STEP 3

While the potatoes are baking, whisk the eggs in a bowl, then add garlic powder, nutmeg, and cream.

STEP 4

Remove the potato base from the oven and add spinach, tomatoes, and green onions. Pour egg mixture over the top. Top with cheese.

Bake for 20 minutes or until set. Serve hot or cold.

Tip: You can cook these and freeze them for later.

Freeze with baking paper in between each so they don't stick together and you can take them out one at a time. To defrost just take out the night before and you can leave them in a cool place or allow to slowly defrost in the fridge.

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