GCAS NEWS

AUTUMN 2026 – ISSUE 68

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GCAS GOLD COAST ACADEMY OF SPORT

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

GOLD COAST ACADEMY OF SPORT

Welcome to a busy 2026.

The beginning of this year has indeed been quite busy; it is hard to believe that we are already in March. In early January, the Academy participated in a significant Equestrian seminar, and since that time, we have launched our Rugby Union program.

We will introduce the new "Unleash Your Potential" program on 30th March, and we are excited to announce the launch of the Carbine Club scholarship program. This initiative offers four (4) athletes the opportunity to receive $2,000 to support their preparation for major competitions. Additionally, we will soon be offering other programs, including a Netball program for juniors under 14 years of age and Speed Clinics in April, coinciding with the beginning of the school holidays.

The Winter Olympics in February have generated significant excitement, during which Australia has achieved remarkable results, marking the best performance in the nation's Olympic history. These results are a testament to the dedication of athletes who choose to reside, travel, and compete internationally for a substantial portion of the year.

I must acknowledge that I was engaged in the recent situation involving Lindsey Vonn, the 41-year-old downhill skier who experienced a disastrous crash during her run. I found it particularly intriguing to observe the number of individuals who questioned the appropriateness of her participation at her age. I thought the public would resonate with her journey, offering their support and congratulating her on her selection to compete.

It took a split second for the crash to happen at the 2026 Winter Olympics in Milan Cortina. This moment forced the decorated skier to confront both physical pain and lingering regrets about how far she should have pushed herself.

Let me take you back - the 41 year old Olympic champion was competing in the women's downhill final in Cortina d'Ampezzo, Italy, when she lost control midway through the course and crashed hard into the safety netting. According to the coverage, Vonn had been clocking competitive split times before catching an edge on an icy section of the course after catching her arm in the flag. She slid several metres before coming to a stop, drawing a collective gasp from spectators and fellow athletes.

She was transported off the mountain on a sled and later evaluated at a local medical facility. The USA Team officials confirmed she sustained a fractured collarbone and multiple bruises. She was released later that evening and is expected to make a full recovery.

Vonn reflected on the moment she said she sensed the run slipping away with the press. She said, "I knew I was pushing the line, that's what you do at the Olympics. But there's a point where instinct tells you to back off, and I didn't."

"My only regret is that I didn't listen to that small voice," she said. "Not because I'm afraid of crashing, that's part of ski racing. But because I've learned over the years that experience matters."

The 2026 Games marked her first Olympic appearance in 16 years. While she did not medal, her return alone was widely seen as a testament to her longevity and determination in a sport known for punishing physical demands. Vonn insists she does not view the crash as a failure. This is a great way to look at her performance – she would never have known what was possible without trying. Too often, athletes walk away before giving performance a last chance. I love the words that she said – "I stood in the start gate at 41 years old and believed I could compete with the best in the world," she said. "That's something I'm proud of."

Anyone in winter sport recognises that downhill skiing remains one of the most dangerous events in the Winter Olympics, with athletes reaching speeds of up to 80 miles per hour. Even minor mistakes can have serious consequences. After watching the event on TV, I would have to agree. Incredible courage!!!

Well done Lindsey. I wish more athletes in other sports had your courage and resilience.

I will leave you with one question. The main thing a person and particularly an athlete needs to consider is:

WHAT IS YOUR WHY?

- Charity
- Community
- Self-growth
- Challenge
- Impact
- Purpose
- Hope
- Performance
- Fulfill a dream

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- Wellington Phoenix Football Team and many more!

Please be advised we do not take community sports field bookings, our field and accompanying facilities are only available to large residential conference clients and/or sporting teams who are on-site as part of a supported accommodation package.

For more information visit racv.com.au/royalpines

The Academy takes great pride in celebrating the year 2026 with the introduction of our inaugural Sports Lunch. This event will feature distinguished guest speakers, including acclaimed AFL coach Chris Fagan, Olympian Phil Smyth, Australian cricket representative Alana King, and international cricketer Greg Ritchie. The luncheon promises to provide an afternoon rich in insightful discussions, meaningful connections, and significant impact.

Don't risk not getting a ticket to see these amazing sportspeople talk about their successes and journeys.

The Signature Sports Lunch

GOLD COAST ACADEMY OF SPORT

hosted by
THE GOLD COAST ACADEMY OF SPORT

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JOIN US FOR THE INAUGURAL GCAS SPORTS LUNCH!

An extraordinary lunch celebrating champions, featuring a stellar guest speaker lineup, live entertainment, **hosted by Glynis Nunn OAM Oly** and **MC'd by Greg Ritchie**. Enjoy a three-course gourmet menu, premium beverages, and take part in exciting raffle and auction items. Your attendance helps raise vital funds to support the Academy in delivering programs for the next generation of Gold Coast sports stars. Don't miss this premier event that showcases greatness and inspires future champions!

GUEST SPEAKERS

Chris Fagan - Brisbane Lions Head Coach

Phil Smyth AM – High-Performance Consultant, Brisbane Lions
Former Australian Boomers Captain

Alana King - Australian Female Cricketer

AUCTION ITEMS

- *State of Origin Jersey Signed Game 2 2016*
- *Collingwood Jersey Signed 2025*
- *Adam Scott Polo and Hat Signed*
- *94.1 FM Advertising Package*
- *Brisbane Lions 2025 Jersey signed*
- *Alan King item signed*
- *Paris Olympics Centre Piece*

& MORE!

MAY | 15th | 12- 3PM

Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre

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$1,600.00 Table of 10

Ticket pricing excludes GST & are available via our website or by invoice upon contacting the Academy.

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GOLD COAST ACADEMY OF SPORT
The Signature Sports Lunch

MAGIC MILLIONS:
GOLD COAST SET FOR NEW LOOK MARCH SALE

GOLD COAST ACADEMY OF SPORT

The best incentive sale in Australasia is set to deliver even more for buyers in 2026 with a quality packed catalogue for the Magic Millions Gold Coast March Yearling Sale.

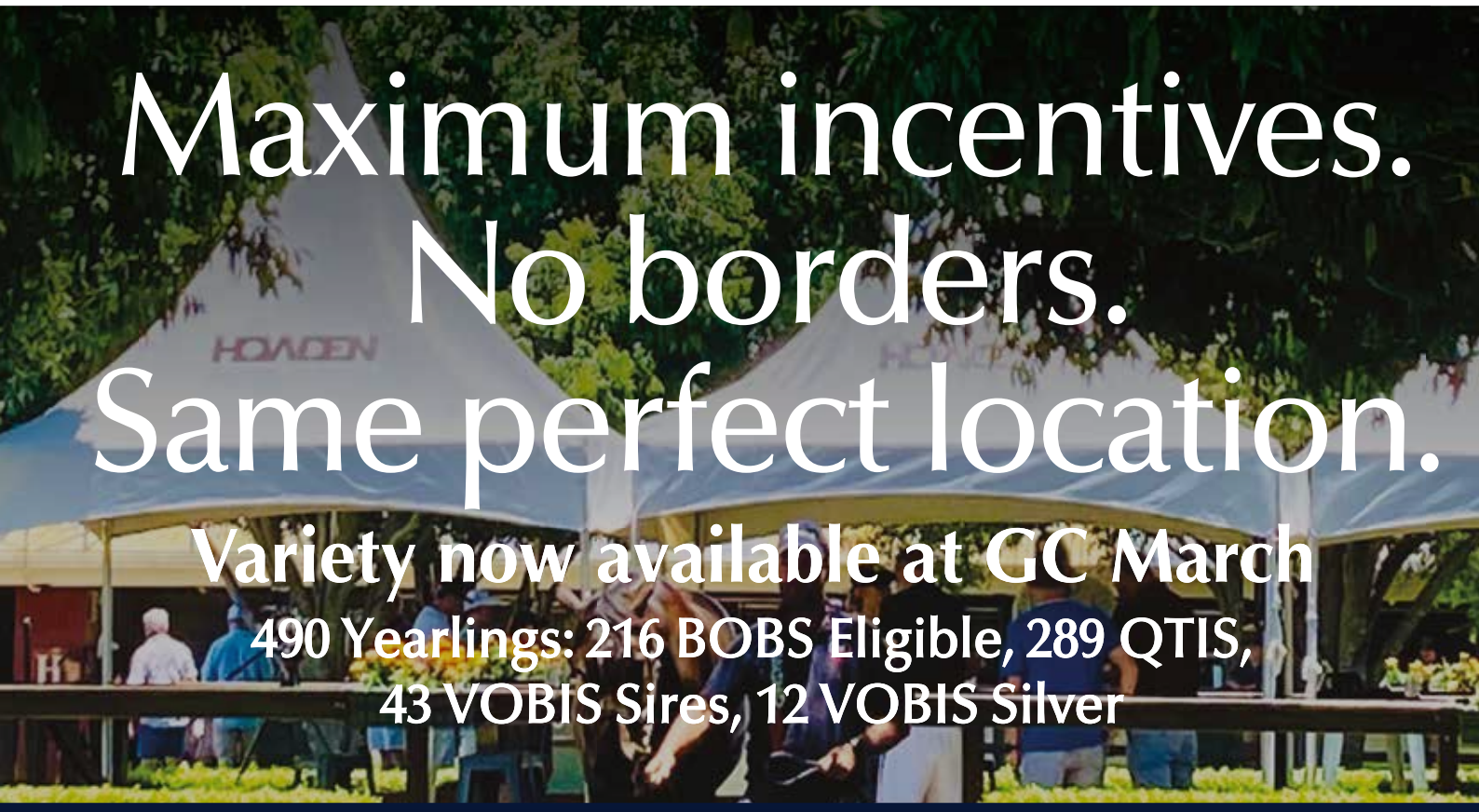
To be held over two days on March 12 and 13 at the famous Magic Millions Sales Complex on the Gold Coast, the catalogue has attracted a quality line up of 490 yearlings. The Gold Coast March Yearling Sale has a proud history of producing high class racehorses and this year the sale is getting a new look.

For the first time the sale will have a selection of non-QTIS youngsters who will help in adding for depth, variety and appeal for local, interstate and international buyers.

Stock by no fewer than 94 individual stallions are represented this March and the incentive to buy QTIS eligible lots is strong with the exclusive Magic Millions Race Series nomination savings staying in place.

With 268 QTIS fully paid or first payment lots, 216 BOBS eligible, 43 VOBIS Sires and 12 VOBIS Silver and all being eligible to be paid to the Magic Millions Race Series the incentives are second to none.

Locally based leading sires Better Than Ready (56 lots) and Spirit of Boom (26 lots) are the two most represented sires in the catalogue and their stock are sure to be well sought from buyers. To view the catalogue for the 2026 Gold Coast March Yearling Sale online visit the Magic Millions website or download it via the Equineline Catalog App on your iPad.



GOLD COAST MARCH YEARLING SALE | 12-13 MARCH 2026

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Financial help for parents

Round 2 is now open!

Round 2 is now open, and families across Queensland are already using Play On! vouchers to get their children involved in sport. As families start planning their activities for 2026, this round gives parents and caregivers who haven't applied this financial year the chance to secure a voucher for their child. Apply online now.

We'd also like to remind Play On! activity providers to stay on top of processing and redeeming vouchers. Prompt redemption helps clubs get paid faster and ensures the program can continue supporting more Queensland children to get active in the sports they love.

With the new year underway, it's also a great time for sporting organisations to reset, reflect and plan for the year ahead. Clubs and organisations can register their interest for the $30 million Games On! Grassroots Infrastructure Program, which supports the delivery of new and upgraded sport infrastructure across Queensland communities.

Find a funding program

For children

- The Play On! voucher program delivers cost of living relief for Queensland families to help keep kids active, with families able to claim a $200 Play On! sport voucher per child aged between five and 17.
- Emerging Athlete Pathways provides up to $800 for athletes and officials under 18 to attend state, national and international competitions.
- SwimStart vouchers valued up to $150 can be used towards learn to swim lessons with a registered SwimStart provider for eligible children aged zero to 4.

For clubs and organisations

- Register your organisation as a Play On! Activity Provider where Queensland families can use their $200 Play On! sport vouchers.
- Register your organisation's state, national and international events through Emerging Athlete Pathways to ensure your athletes and officials are eligible for support.
- Register to become an approved SwimStart activity provider to deliver eligible swimming activities to eligible children.
- The $30 million Games On! Grassroots Infrastructure Program is helping local Queensland organisations upgrade sporting facilities, get more people active, and build a lasting community legacy ahead of the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

SPORTS REPORT

Wrap Up Report: Academy Program Highlights and Successes

Kicking Off 2026 with High-Impact Programs!

Our Rugby Union Program hit the ground running in January, setting the tone for a 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!

Meanwhile, the Brumbies Emerging Athlete Program (BEAP) continues in collaboration with A.B. Paterson College. This year the grades are combined from years 9 through to 12, with 20 participants. The students are exploring the power of nutrition, learning from leading experts on how to fuel their bodies for peak performance. Their next challenge? Creating a meal plan from which they will finish preparing then so that they can work on helping mum at home.

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 testing on our new VALD equipment, setting their own standards in Countermovement Jump, Abalakov Jump, sit and reach, and 30m sprint. The boys will be tested again in a short while as they continue to work and train hard! These athletes are working towards the National titles in Melbourne later in the year.

What's Next?

Looking to the near future, we have our Upper Coomera College's Future Stars Program and St Joseph's College IMPACT program commencing with our first educational sessions! This will be our first year collaborating with St Joseph's, which we are really looking forward to.

Our newly rebranded Unleash Your Potential Program launches on 30th of March, designed to empower athletes to grow, develop, and perform at their best, both on and off the field. This refreshed program delivers a holistic approach to performance, combining skill development, mindset training, leadership growth, and personal accountability. Athletes will gain the tools, confidence, and resilience needed to elevate their game while building habits that support long-term success. The next chapter starts here. Are you ready to unleash your potential?

Our Junior Netball Program launches on 8th of May, designed for aspiring athletes ready to elevate their performance and take the next step in their netball journey. This high-development program focuses on advanced skill refinement, game strategy, positional awareness, strength and conditioning foundations, and building the mindset required for competitive play. Athletes will train in a structured, challenging environment that promotes discipline, teamwork, and high-performance standards.

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Youth Pre-Season Prep: Set Yourself Up for a Strong, Injury-Resistant Season

Pre-season is your opportunity.

It's where you build the engine, strengthen the frame, and prepare your body for the demands of competition. The athletes who use pre-season wisely don't just perform better — they miss fewer games and recover faster.

Research consistently shows that athletes who gradually build strength, fitness, and workload before the competitive season have lower injury rates and have better performance outcomes compared to those who jump straight back into full sport intensity.

Here's how to do it properly.

1. Start to build or rebuild your base FIRST

Before focusing on speed, tactics, or competition drills, you need a solid physical foundation.

What to do:

- Full-body strength training
- Aerobic conditioning
- Movement quality and control
- Gradual exposure to sport-specific running or drills

Strength training is especially important for youth athletes. Studies show it:

- Reduces injury risk
- Improves sprint speed and jumping ability
- Supports long-term athletic development
- Is safe when supervised and appropriately progressed

Focus on **good technique and progressive overload**. Chat to your coach to get a suitable plan for you.

Key Principles:

- Avoid stacking multiple intense sessions back-to-back.
- Include at least 1–2 full rest days per week.
- Increase total training load gradually (no more than ~10% per week as a general guide).
- Hard days should be followed by easier days.

2. Understand Load, Stress & Fatigue

Your body doesn't just respond to training — it responds to other stress, too.

That includes:

- School pressure
- Exams
- Sleep
- Social stress
- Other sports
- Gym sessions
- Matches

If stress goes up but recovery doesn't, injury risk increases.

Watch for:

- Ongoing soreness that doesn't improve
- Feeling unusually tired
- Reduced motivation
- Poor sleep
- Performance dropping despite hard work

Fatigue is normal but persisting exhaustion is not and should be addressed.

Continued Over...

3. Sleep Is Your Superpower

Young athletes need **8–10 hours of sleep per night.**

Sleep:

- Improves reaction time
- Boosts recovery
- Supports muscle repair
- Reduces injury risk
- Enhances decision-making

No supplement replaces sleep.

4. Strength Is Not Just for "Big Athletes"

Strong muscles, tendons and ligaments protect joints.

Research in youth athletes shows structured strength programs significantly reduce:

- ACL injuries
- Ankle sprains
- Overuse injuries

5. Progress Gradually

The biggest mistake athletes make in pre-season?
Doing too much too soon.

If you had time off:

- Start easier; with plenty left in the tank
- Build up over 3–4 weeks
- Introduce high-speed running gradually
- Avoid sudden spikes in sprint or game intensity

Your tissues (muscles, tendons, ligaments) adapt more slowly than your motivation.
Be patient!

6. Train Smart

The goal of pre-season isn't to feel destroyed.

It's to feel prepared and have some exposure to the demands of the upcoming sport.

Ask yourself each week:

- Am I recovering well?
- Am I improving gradually?
- Am I getting some exposure to the tasks I will need to perform regularly during the season?
- Am I balancing training with school and life?

If yes — you're on the right track!

Final Takeaways

- ✓ Build a solid before chasing max performance
- ✓ Increase load gradually
- ✓ Schedule rest days
- ✓ Sleep 8–10 hours
- ✓ Watch total stress, not just training

Pre-season sets the tone for your entire year.

Train well and recover properly.

Your future self (mid-season) will thank you!

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F: 07 5665 8994

A: GC North Medical Hub, Level 1, Shop 72/ 502 Hope Island Road, Helensvale 4212

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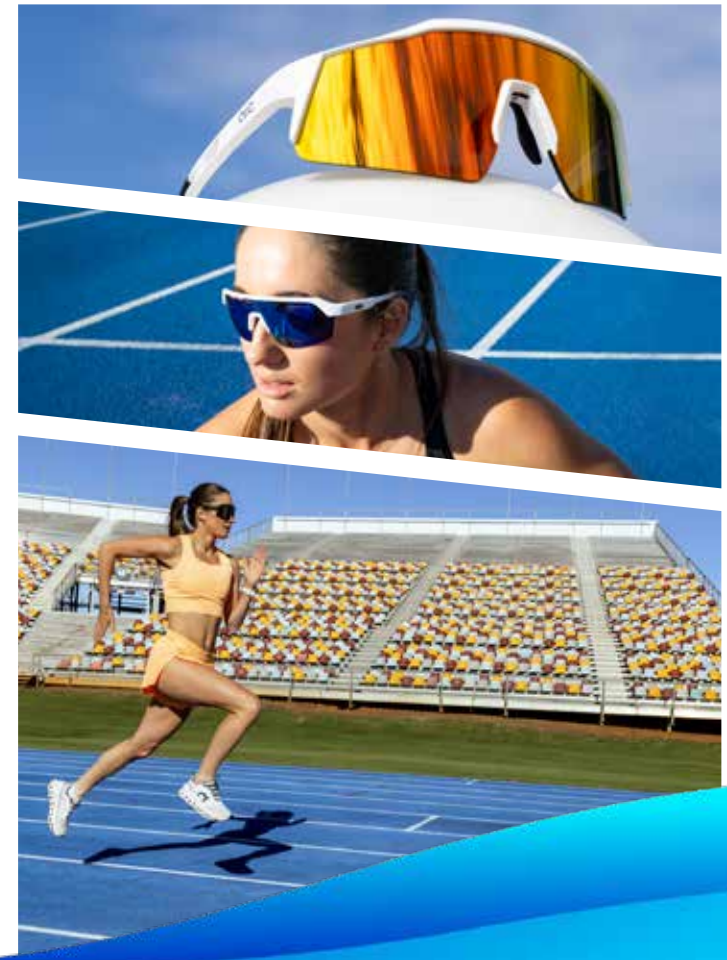

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RECIPE

GOLD COAST ACADEMY OF SPORT

SWEET AND SOUR CHICKEN

(serves 4-6)

Prepartion time: 10 minutes | Cooking time: 20 minutes

Ingredients

- 100g dried thin egg noodles
- spray canola or olive oil
- 400g chicken tenderloins, chopped
- 440g can pineapple pieces or half a medium pineapple
- 2 teaspoons minced garlic
- 2 teaspoons minced ginger
- 250g button mushrooms, quartered
- 500g frozen stir-fry vegetable medley (optional)
- 1 tablespoon cornflour
- 1 tablespoon soy sauce
- 3 tablespoons tomato sauce
- 2 tablespoons vinegar
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar

Analysis	Serves 4	Serves 6
Energy (kj)	2550	1700
Carb (g)	96	64
Prot (g)	41	28
Fat (g)	5	4
Iron		

Method

Cook the noodles in a large pan of boiling water for 5 minutes or until tender. Drain well and set aside. Spray a nonstick wok or frying pan with oil and heat. Cook chicken in 2 or 3 batches over high heat for 2-3 minutes or until browned. Remove from the pan and set aside. Drain pineapple and reserve the juice. Add garlic and ginger to the pan and stirfry for 30 seconds. Add the mushrooms (And vegetables if desired) and stirfry for 3 minutes or until tender. Put cornflour into a small bowl and gradually add 60ml (1/4 cup) reserved juice, stirring until smooth. Add pineapple, remaining juice, sauces, vinegar and sugar to the pan and bring to the boil. Stir in cornflour mixture and simmer for 2-3 minutes or until the sauce has thickened slightly, Return the chicken to the pan with the noodles and toss until heated through. Garnish with green leafy herbs

This recipe has been taken from AIS Survival From the Fittest.

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