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# QUARTER BY QUARTER



Best foot forward: St Norbert College student Sean McCracken is off to Spain. Picture: Iain Gillespie

## TEEN'S NEXT STOP, SPAIN

IT'S one thing to travel almost 100km to and from school every day – but quite another to fly to the Costa Del Sol in Spain for soccer practice.

Year 12 student Sean McCracken, who commutes 47km each way from his home in Rockingham to attend St Norbert College in Queens Park, has been selected for a six-month stint at FC Malaga City, an elite international football academy in Almunecar for 16-18 year-olds.

The goalkeeper's ball-handling, positioning and knowledge of the



game impressed talent scouts at the UK Football Trials in Brisbane, who wanted McCracken to pack his bags immediately for the Spanish south coast.

"The academy is excited to have him on board and actually wanted him now, but we said no as we wanted Sean to finish school first," dad Ian McCracken said. "They said he is technically very gifted."

The keeper didn't embrace the sport when he started with Armadale at age seven, but persevered and now thrives on "being in the zone", training five days a week and playing for Subiaco AFC and West Perth Bears Futsal Club.

His goalkeeping coach David Whalley's advice to "go with a

positive head space and enjoy the game" helped McCracken improve his game.

Next January he will be living in a hotel with a 30-player squad, training twice a day and playing for FC Malaga City on Saturdays.

He lists his career highlights so far as "being named the best player in the Inglewood under 13s and representing WA in the 2017 Futsal Championships".

When asked how many saves he's notched up, he answers: "In the thousands. It's just part of the routine."

## KELLY BEST ON GROUND

THE AFL should take a bow over its decision to name an all-Australian music line up for this year's grand final.

Paul Kelly will be the headline act and will surely perform the anthemic 1986 hit *Leaps and Bounds*, in which he sings of being "high on the hill, looking over the bridge to the MCG".

Will he play *Darling it Hurts* if the Eagles make the GF?

He will be supported by Dean Lewis, Tones and I, country music legend John Williamson — who will perform *Waltzing Matilda* — and Mike Brady, who will lead a 100,000-strong voice with *Up There Cazaly*. Pop star Conrad Sewell will sing the national anthem.

Pity the NRL has offered its stage to US band OneRepublic. Australian grand finals, whether they be AFL, NRL or the A-League, should always showcase local talent.



What a cuppa: Hannah Green

## WA GOLFER HAILS MARY

IT'S a long way from Beaufort Street, but a coffee shop in Portland, Oregon, has played a big part in Hannah Green's latest international success.

Mt Lawley golfer Green climbed to 20th in the world after winning the Portland Classic last weekend, following her maiden major victory at the PGA Championship in June.

The 22-year-old paid tribute to a coffee shop run by Aussies in Portland, based on the Proud Mary Cafe in Melbourne, which she said became her second home throughout the event.

"I enjoy Portland. It's a city that resembles Perth, where I live, and I just found Proud Mary close to home," she said.

## HARRY SET TO RETIRE

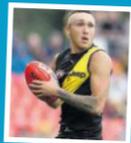
ONE of Geraldton's greatest exports, Harry Taylor, is expected to hang up his boots.

A veteran of 259 games with the Cats, the 33-year-old is reportedly coming to terms with the fact his body won't carry him through another AFL campaign.

He should be pleased with two premierships (so far), in 2009 and 2011, and two All-Australian blazers.

### MOST READ ONLINE THIS WEEK

1 West Coast linked with Richmond young gun Shai Bolton, right.



2 Tim Kelly denies Eagles trade rumours.

3 Geelong want picks, not players, in Tim Kelly trade.

4 Fan at Eagles win over Essendon faces backlash for deliberate drink spill.

5 Rebecca Judd skipping Brownlow Medal ceremony to be with expecting sister Kate.

perthnow.com.au

## FERGIE IN WAUGH OF WORDS

FORMER Australian Test captain Steve Waugh and current coach Justin Langer were treated to lunch with soccer legend Sir Alex Ferguson in Manchester this week.

Moved by the occasion and wanting the world to know, Waugh shared the love on Instagram, right.

The only problem was he got the former Manchester United manager's name wrong.

"Pre Test lunch with Sir Allan Ferguson and Justin Langer, inspirational".

Waugh then corrected



what we assume was predictive text gone wrong. "What an absolute privilege to have lunch with Sir Alex Ferguson. So many life lessons and words of

wisdom from such a humble man full of spirit and generosity. A day Lang and I will always remember! #manchesterunited #siralex #winning #truthworks."

## SURPRISE FLOAT FIND

UK horse trainer Hugo Palmer got a nasty surprise on his way back from a race meeting in Europe.

Returning to Newmarket from Baden-Baden in Germany, Palmer's group stopped at Calais, France, to ensure their filly, Heavenly Holly, was comfortable. Instead, they found two migrants hiding in the float in the hope of a free trip and new life in England.

"It's a warning to everyone travelling back from France, but you have to feel sorry for people to be so desperate to be climbing into the back of a horsebox and whatever else. It's terrible and you really have to feel for them," Palmer said. The migrants were detained by French police.