

McGinnity pushes through

The West Coast Eagles were in a unique position during the trade period last year and were for the first time in several years able to participate in the pre-season draft, securing Claremont midfielder Pat McGinnity with the club's first and only pick.

Missing out on the draft in November, McGinnity would have been happy to have been selected by any club and could hardly believe his luck when he received the news that he was heading to West Coast, which obviously ruled out relocation.

"After missing out on the first draft, I just wanted to get picked up anywhere. When we found out it was the Eagles, I was stoked. My family was really surprised that I got to stay home because if I was going to go it was more than likely I was going to go over east.

"So far it's all going pretty well. As soon as I got to the club I had to have a minor knee operation, so I didn't get straight into training which was pretty hard because all the other young blokes were getting to know everyone and I was sort of sitting at the side doing a little bit, but now I am back at full training. It's hard and a lot more intense than I'm used to, but it's really good.

"I always found pre-season at Claremont pretty hard, and now at West Coast because of the scheduling I'm on, which is training every day plus the weights, your body's always sore. That's what I've found to be the most challenging thing so far."

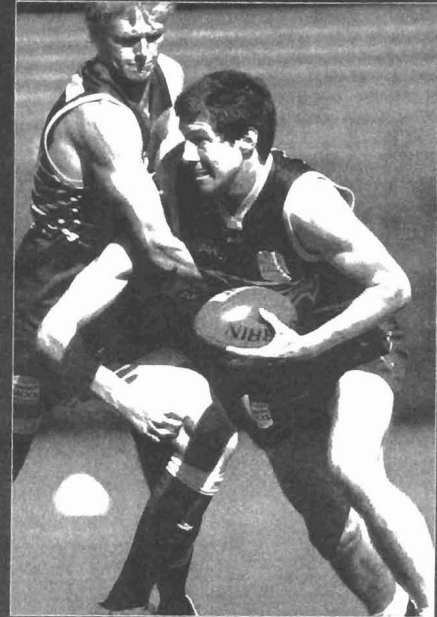
But the gun midfielder is willing to make the most of the opportunity and knows he is in the right place to improve his footy.

"The coaching structure is so spread out and really specific, like if you're playing one role in the team, this coach will look after you and if you play a different role, you'll be looked after by another coach. Everyone helps you out.

"And my teammates are good too, I've gone over to a couple of blokes' houses for dinner and stuff like that. Everyone just gets around you and welcomes you in."

Like each of his fellow new recruits, McGinnity will focus on certain aspects of his game and his physical development over the season in hopes of earning a spot in the 22 before the end of the year.

"I've set myself little goals to get to the bigger goal at the end. Basically I just want to get my body right for now, get the confidence back



and be training as well as I can. Then I'll push on and towards the end of the season, try and maybe get a guernsey on."



Trevor Woodhouse
Recruiting Manager

"Pat is an extremely hard-working, competitive player and will leave no stone unturned in his development. His speed is a feature, and he reads the play very well."

Stevenson thrives on football environment

Developing midfielder Lewis Stevenson was taken with West Coast's first pick in the rookie draft at number 12 and the gun from Claremont is already showing a lot of promise, throwing himself into all aspects of life as a professional footballer.

"It's all pretty full-on, but it's been really good. It's so much more professional than the environments I've been in before and it's a really big step up, but I'm enjoying it," he explains.

"The intensity of training is so much more than what you're used to, and although we are pulled out of drills, you still get really tired anyway, but I'm coping with it.

"I had to get used to playing another level up from school in the WAFL and then you have to get used to stepping up again coming here, so you kind of know that you've just got to keep going with it."

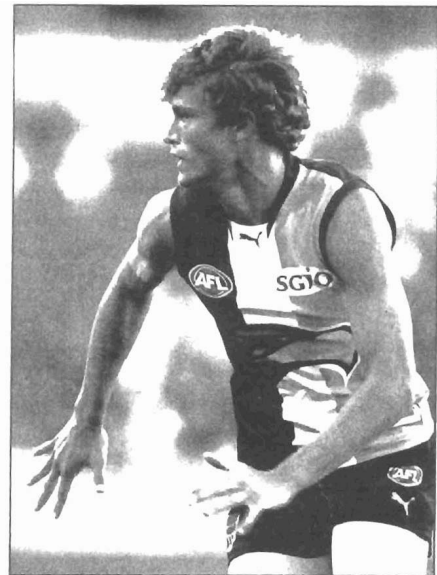
Growing up as a West Coast supporter, Stevenson admitted he held few expectations ahead of the draft, but was thrilled when he learnt he would be training with some of his childhood heroes.

"My parents and I were watching the draft on the internet and mum and dad just started shouting, they were just overjoyed really, just ecstatic.

"And it's been really good. The environment is just such a good one to be in if you're trying to improve your footy.

"The coaching staff are great, they're always trying to help you out, and my teammates are all a great bunch of blokes."

A member of Claremont's runner-up team in the WAFL colts competition, Stevenson agrees the experience was vital in assisting with the adjustment to AFL football and has influenced his aims for the coming year.



"I just want to really improve my strength and the physical side of my game, but one of my goals for this year is to play league footy for Claremont. Just to play consistent footy really, to try and improve myself."



Trevor Woodhouse
Recruiting Manager

"Lewis still needs a fair bit of physical development, but he is progressing well. He is a good athlete, is well balanced and has very slick skills."