



## Group Training Australia

The Largest Employer Network of Apprentices and Trainees



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# MEDIA RELEASE

## APPRENTICES LEAD THE CHARGE IN AFL GRAND FINAL

A program to promote trades training amongst elite sportspeople will see a total of four apprentices involved in this weekend's AFL Grand Final between Hawthorn and Geelong.

After less than 12 months in operation, the 'Sporting Trade Skills' program operated by group training organisation, AFL SportsReady, has attracted top athletes from sports including AFL, NRL, cricket, soccer and netball.

"To have players from the top two teams participating in the program demonstrates that you can be the best in the game while still concentrating on studying and obtaining skills for the future", said Group Training Australia CEO, Jim Barron.

The program aims to prepare elite athletes for life after sport by assisting them to participate in an apprenticeship during their sporting career.

Geelong players David Wojcinski, Paul Chapman, and Cameron Ling are scheduled to play in this weekend's AFL Grand Final. They all began a Certificate III in General Construction (carpentry-framework, formwork, finishing) along with fellow squad members Matthew Egan and Trent West in early 2008.

Jarryd Roughead, one of Hawthorn's leading goal kickers, will also play in this weekend's big game. Jarryd and fellow Hawk, Beau Dowler, commenced a Certificate III in Horticulture (landscaping), also in 2008.

Mr Barron said the program is giving the athletes the opportunity to prepare themselves for their career after sport.

"The career of a professional sportsperson can often be limited due to injury, form or lack of opportunities.

"A trade apprenticeship can provide a valuable career option and can bring peace of mind to those worried about their future after sport".

AFL SportsReady General Manager, Commercial Operations, Chris Naish, said the flexibility offered by the program, aimed at fitting in both study and sporting commitments, has proved popular for athletes that are keen to prepare themselves for their post-sport career.

“Eighteen athletes have signed onto the program in 2008, with expressions of interest shown from another 50 athletes wanting to commence the program.

“The traditional trades that have been of most interest for the athletes are carpentry, plumbing, electrical, engineering, horticulture and landscaping, along with cabinet making and bricklaying.

“The structure of the program assists athletes in making the transition into the workplace by placing the athlete with suitable host employers and providing mentoring”.

Group Training Australia represents the largest employer network of apprentices and trainees in Australia, employing over 40,000 apprentice and trainees.

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