



NICOLE GRAVES TO RETURN AS HEAD COACH IN 2018



April 4, 2018

For immediate release:

As Aussie Sparks prepares to announce their 2018 tour to the USA and Canada, Nicole Graves of Perth is poised to return as head coach. A certified AFL player agent and first woman to achieve AFL Level 3 coaching accreditation, Graves is all about making a difference to young athletes, "I am committed to female players reaching their goals...whether to play AFLW or make their senior club team."

In October, Aussie Sparks will gather in Perth for training camp before embarking on a high performance development tour that will carry them to Chicago and Milwaukee to train at the Chicago Bulls Academy and take part in USAFL Nationals in Racine. From there the squad will travel to Seattle before wrapping up the tour in Vancouver, Canada.

With Graves, the Sparks will again get one of the most successful women's coaches in the WAFL, as well as a former defensive coach for the Western Bulldogs women's team. Amongst her biggest advocates is Greater Western Sydney AFLW player and Aussie Sparks mentor coach Jacinda Barclay, "Nicole is a veteran coach who has mastered the ability of endearing directness to get results...I was a benefactor of Gravesy's pure passion for the game and her drive to create better athletes in young women of the game. I can't recommend her highly enough."

Past Aussie Sparks players share the same perspective on Graves. Says Shae-Lee Murphy of Melbourne, "I gained so much more than just knowledge, skills and experience with Coach Graves- She was approachable, honest, and taught us not only how to be elite footballers, but elite people as well." According to Amelia Causley Todd of Sydney, "Gravesy puts an amazing amount of effort into footy and coaching, truly an inspirational person to be around!"

In recent years, Graves has been the general manager of Swan Districts Football Club in Perth, while also coaching them to premierships in 2013 and 2014, as well as further grand final appearances in 2010 and 2015. Beyond that she has led numerous Swans football trips to connect with and train Indigenous athletes in rural Western Australia. Before leading the inaugural Aussie Sparks women's team across California in 2017, Nicole led an Australian International Rules women's team to Ireland in 2006.

From that, she recognises the impact of such an international high performance development experience, for both herself and the players she coaches. "Aussie Sparks has provided me another opportunity to develop my coaching," says Graves, "but also allows me to share experience from both in my playing career and as a coach, to players from across Australia that are motivated to improve and develop. I love being part of Aussie Sparks and I'm sure the next generation of players about to embark on their first tour will too!"

[END]

Nicole Graves – Game Development/Coaching Bio

Full Time Employment Positions Held in Football:

- General Manager – Swan Districts Football Club
- District Manager, Swan Districts WAFC
- Female Football Development Manager, AFL Victoria

Education:

- Masters in Business Major: Sport - Victoria University
- Post Graduate Diploma Business - Victoria University
- Graduate Diploma in Indigenous Studies - Curtin University (2nd year)
- Professional Certificate – AFL Player Agent

Coaching Highlights:

- 2017 Head Coach Swan Districts Football Club (WAWFL) – Female Football Programs (League Coach)
- 2016 Swan Districts Football Club (WAFL) – League Assistant Coach (Mens)
- 2015 Defensive Coach – Western Bulldogs Women’s AFL (under head Coach Craig Starcevich)
- Head Coach Swan Districts Women’s Football League team - 2013 & 2014 Premiers, 2010 & 2015 Grand Finalists
- 2014 Head coach WAWFL All-stars team
- 2013 WA North West State 16’s (male team) Forwards coach
- 2012 Senior Assistant coach Mt Lawley - WAAFL A Grade men’s
- AIS AFL Women’s Academy team – Head Coach 2010 & 2012
- Head Coach WA Female Football Talent Academy 2008/2009 & 2009/10
- Western Australian State Women’s Team Head Coach 2007, 2009 & 2011
- All Australian Assistant Coach – AFL Women’s 2007 to 2011
- Member West Australian Football League (WAFL) Coach Academy 2007
- Australian Coach Women’s International Rules Team, Ireland 2006

Coaching Accreditation Education & Awards:

- AFL level 3 Coach Accreditation 2009 – First female to complete course
- Completed the AFL Kicking Course 2008 (Gold Coast)
- AFL Talent ID course 2013
- 2014 Swans District – Senior Coach of the year
- 2007 East Fremantle District – Female Coach of the year
- Attended to the 2005, 2008 & 2009 AFL National Coaching Conferences
- Presented & Managed Level One Coach Accreditation & Education Programs for Swans District WA in 2007/2008.
- Mentor Level 2 Coaches and Accreditation processors in Swans District 2007 to 2009

Coach Philosophy:

- To develop the individual player - ensuring each understands and delivers their role each week.
- To develop the playing group - ensuring they understand and deliver the game plan throughout season.
- Ensure two-way trust and respect between player and coach, so they can own their role in the group, creating personal buy into our plan – ensuring they get the best from themselves and support the development and success of the team (Club) both on and off the field.
- To ensure that I continue to develop and deliver best practise coaching to the female football pathway so that the female game is a better product for the fan.