VOLLEYBALL
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

# 2027 STEEL ACADEMY
# INFORMATION PACK

STEEL
ACADEMY

# 2027 Steel Academy

*Volleyball WA's flagship athlete development program*

The Steel Academy is Volleyball WA's flagship youth athlete development program for players born from 2010 to 2015. It provides a progressive, athlete-centred training environment that supports athletes from foundational development through to high-performance preparation. The Academy works alongside School, Club, State and National representative volleyball, providing ongoing development for athletes both within and aspiring to those programs.

Building on Volleyball WA's existing pathway programs, the Steel Academy provides year-round training across Foundations, Development and Performance Tiers. The Academy supports athletes at all stages of the WA performance pathway, including those currently representing Western Australia in State Teams. Where appropriate, athletes are also encouraged to develop their skills and experience across both indoor and beach volleyball.

This guide explains the Academy pathway, tier-specific training commitments, athlete expectations, fees and indicative 2027 calendar. Each tier operates across the program year, with planned breaks to accommodate athlete recovery, major competitions and representative commitments.

# The Academy and Team WA

The Steel Academy reflects Volleyball WA's three pillars "Connect, Develop and Compete" which guide the way athletes and coaches learn, support each other and represent the WA volleyball community.



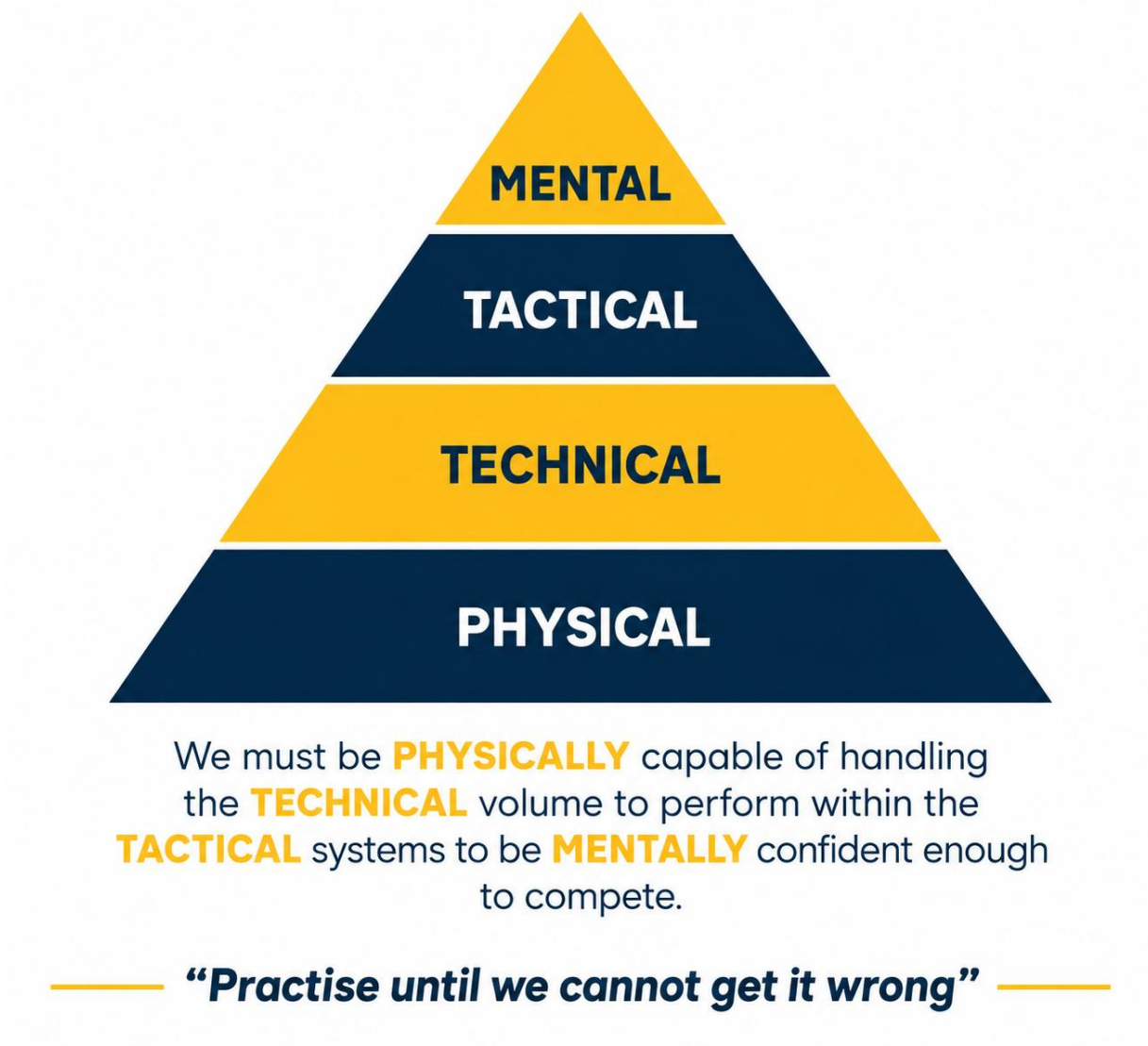
# Program Development Framework

The Steel Academy applies the WA Performance Program Framework across all three tiers, integrating physical, technical, tactical and mental development at a level appropriate to each athlete's readiness.

Physical preparation supports consistent skill execution; technical development provides a platform for tactical decision-making; and mental preparation builds focus, confidence, self-reflection and resilience under pressure.

Athletes progress from recognising game cues and executing repeatable skills to applying those skills with greater consistency, adaptability and decision-making under pressure: "See the cue. Move efficiently. Execute consistently."

The Framework provides the coaching cues and tactical systems that underpin training, with increasing complexity introduced as athletes demonstrate readiness.



# The Steel Academy Pathway

The three-tier structure recognises that athletes develop at different rates. Each tier has a distinct purpose and supports ongoing development, including for athletes already involved in representative volleyball. Placement reflects demonstrated readiness rather than age or team selection alone.




| Tier and places | Primary purpose | Athlete focus |
|---|---|---|
| Foundations<br>32 places per gender | Build foundations for long-term participation, development and success. | Movement foundations, repeatable technical execution in controlled and progressively variable situations, game understanding, confidence and positive training habits. |
| Development<br>32 places per gender | Develop capable, adaptable and increasingly independent athletes. | Consistent execution under pressure, adaptability, tactical understanding, physical development and appropriate decisions in competitive play. |
| Performance<br>16 places per gender | Prepare athletes for representative, national and international pathways. | Technical efficiency, tactical versatility and reliable execution under game-realistic pressure, supported by individual planning, physical preparation and resilience. |

## Foundations

Foundations introduces young athletes to a positive, structured training environment and establishes the technical, physical and personal habits that support long-term development.

- Create a positive and engaging first experience within a high-quality Volleyball WA environment.
- Develop fundamental movement patterns and repeatable technical execution, building consistency in controlled and progressively variable situations.
- Introduce basic game understanding, decision-making and teamwork.
- Build confidence, enjoyment and a growth mindset.
- Develop positive training behaviours, coachability and an understanding of athlete responsibility.
- Recognise athletes demonstrating the interest, ability and commitment to pursue Development opportunities.

**Commitment**

- Training: One weekly two-hour session
  - Monday evenings, Kingsway Indoor Stadium, 6:30–8:30 pm (TBC).
- Strength and conditioning: Diamond High Performance provides a basic program focused on developing core strength and stability. Athletes are encouraged to complete this program independently in their own time and incorporate it into their regular weekly training routine.

## Development

Development builds the consistency, adaptability and independence needed to manage more demanding training and competition environments.

- Execute technical skills consistently under pressure and make appropriate decisions in competitive play.
- Develop tactical awareness and adapt to different opponents and game situations.
- Introduce structured physical preparation appropriate to the athlete's stage of development.
- Apply training skills and decisions effectively in competitive environments.
- Develop athlete ownership, preparation, recovery, communication and accountability.

**Commitment**

- Training: One weekly two-hour session
  - Quarters 1 and 4: Monday evenings, Perth Modern. Sessions scheduled within 5:30–9:30 pm (TBC).
  - Quarters 2 and 3: Saturday mornings, venue TBC. Sessions scheduled within 8:00 am–2:00 pm (TBC).
- Strength and conditioning: Athletes are expected to commence or continue a structured strength and conditioning program. Quarterly guidance is provided by Diamond High Performance to support appropriate progression and ongoing physical development.

# Performance Tier

## Performance

Performance is the highest tier of the Steel Academy. It provides a challenging, athlete-centred training environment for athletes currently competing in, or demonstrating readiness for National and other high-performance opportunities.

- Provide individualised training in a performance-focused environment.
- Develop high-level technical efficiency, tactical versatility and reliable execution under game-realistic pressure.
- Integrate physical preparation, recovery, nutrition, wellbeing and performance behaviours.
- Use athlete monitoring, feedback and performance analysis to guide individual development.
- Support athletes to perform consistently within State, national and other high-level environments.
- Support continued development towards National Pathway programs, Perth Steel and future senior opportunities.

**Commitment**

- Indoor training: One weekly two-hour session
  - Quarters 1 and 4: Monday evenings, Perth Modern. Sessions scheduled within 5:30–9:30 pm (TBC).
  - Quarters 2 and 3: Saturday mornings, Venue TBC. Sessions scheduled within 8:00 am–2:00 pm (TBC).
- Beach training: One weekly 90-minute session in Quarters 1 and 4.
  - Wednesday mornings, Inner City Beach, 6:00–7:30 am (TBC).
- Compulsory strength and conditioning: Two sessions per week with Diamond High Performance.
- Additional support: Nutrition, tactical and mental preparation workshops throughout the year, supported by regular contact with the Volleyball WA Performance Pathways Coach.

## Progression Through the Academy

Athletes are invited to the tier that best matches their current development. The following indicators guide decisions about readiness to progress.

| From | Readiness for progression | Progression |
|---|---|---|
| Foundations | Repeatable technical execution and consistent movement foundations in controlled and progressively variable situations, with positive training habits, engagement and potential. | Development Academy |
| Development | Consistent technical execution under pressure, adaptability and appropriate decisions in competitive situations, with increasing physical and mental readiness and commitment to structured training and competition. | Performance Academy |
| Performance | High-level technical efficiency, tactical versatility and reliable execution under game-realistic pressure, with demonstrated readiness for further pathway opportunities. | Continued State Team involvement, Perth Steel & National Program opportunities |

Progression is informed by coach assessment, individual development and the availability of positions. It may occur during or at the end of a Quarter and is never automatic or guaranteed. Coaches provide ongoing feedback, and athletes and families will be advised of any recommended changes to tier placement.

The Academy operates alongside WA Youth and Junior State Teams, National Development and Performance Programs and Youth and Junior National Teams. These are connected parts of the pathway rather than separate alternatives to Steel Academy training.

Athletes selected for WA State Teams are encouraged to remain engaged in the Steel Academy where eligible, as an important part of their ongoing development and preparation for representative competition. Individual circumstances and training commitments will be considered in consultation with Volleyball WA.

Academy participation and State or National team selection are separate decisions; participation does not guarantee representative selection.

# Athlete Development and Community Connections

## Athlete Development Principles

The Academy prioritises sustainable, long-term athlete development over short-term results. The following principles guide coaching, athlete support and program decisions.

**Athlete-centred:** Development decisions consider the individual needs, wellbeing, stage of development and long-term potential of each athlete.

**Long-term development:** The focus is on building strong technical, tactical, physical and personal foundations that support sustained progression over time.

**Dual-discipline opportunity:** Where appropriate, athletes are encouraged to develop across both indoor and beach volleyball, reflecting Volleyball WA's broader performance pathway.

**Transparent expectations:** Athletes and families receive clear guidance on development priorities and available pathway opportunities.

**Competition as development:** Competition is used purposefully to test skills, apply learning and expose athletes to increasingly challenging performance environments.

**Ownership and accountability:** As athletes progress, they are encouraged to take greater responsibility for their preparation, learning, performance and ongoing development.

**Pathway connection:** Academy training supports both current representative athletes and those working towards future high-performance opportunities.

## Role Within Volleyball WA

Within Volleyball WA's Performance Pathway, the Academy provides consistent development for emerging and current representative athletes. Its role is to:

- Provide a consistent year-round development environment for motivated young athletes.
- Connect athletes with quality coaching and appropriate performance support.
- Apply shared development principles and coaching language across the three Academy tiers and other Volleyball WA performance programs.
- Support talent identification, ongoing State Team athlete development and progression into National pathways.

## Working Alongside Clubs and Schools

The Steel Academy complements, not replaces the development opportunities provided through affiliated Clubs, Schools and State Team programs. These environments remain essential parts of an athlete's training and competition. The Academy adds a consistent, broader development focus through technical refinement, tactical development and physical preparation. Volleyball WA will work with Clubs, Schools and Representative Coaches where practical to coordinate commitments, and athletes are encouraged to remain active in those environments.

Athletes and families should inform coaches of injuries, rehabilitation guidance or significant changes in training load. Appropriate modifications can be discussed with the Performance Pathways Coach and relevant support professionals, taking representative commitments and individual circumstances into account.

# Selection Expectations and Program Fees

## Selection and Athlete Review

Athletes enter through a trial, invitation or identification by Volleyball WA. Initial tier placement considers technical ability, physical development, game understanding, training behaviours, commitment and future potential.

Placement is reviewed throughout the year using the progression principles outlined on page 8. Reviews may result in continued placement, a change of tier or individual development feedback.

## Attendance and Engagement Expectations

Athletes are expected to attend regularly, communicate planned absences and engage positively with coaches and teammates. As they develop, they are encouraged to take greater responsibility for preparation, learning and recovery.

An athlete's attendance, engagement and commitment to the program may be considered when determining their continued placement within the Academy. School, Club, State and National training and competition commitments, injury and agreed individual arrangements will be considered where clashes arise. Families should communicate relevant conflicts as early as possible.

## Program Fees

Fees reflect the annual coaching, training and support available within each tier. The table shows the full-year fee and the four quarterly instalments.

| Tier | Annual fee | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Foundations | $1,760 | $290 | $540 | $440 | $490 |
| Development | $1,760 | $290 | $540 | $440 | $490 |
| Performance | $2,640 | $590 | $630 | $540 | $880 |

*Fees include GST

All participating athletes are required to have a current VWA Membership.

Fees are payable at the beginning of each Quarter. Instalments vary to reflect planned program delivery across the year, including scheduled breaks; fees are not calculated on a per-session basis. All amounts shown include GST.

Performance fees include additional training and support, including the scheduled indoor and beach components and Diamond High Performance strength and conditioning.

VWA Membership, additional Academy uniforms, external strength and conditioning providers and optional events are not included in program fees and may incur additional costs. Diamond High Performance services included within each tier are covered by the published fee.

# Program Commitment and Cancellations

The Academy operates as an ongoing training environment alongside Club, School and Representative programs, including State Teams. Scheduling aims to minimise conflicts where possible; however, some overlap may occur. Athletes should communicate known clashes early.

Because the Academy is planned and resourced as an annual program, refunds or credits are not generally offered for individual sessions missed due to other commitments or personal availability. Injuries and exceptional circumstances will be considered individually.

Athletes wishing to withdraw must provide written notice at least two weeks before the next Quarter begins. If notice is not provided, the next Quarter fee may remain payable.

# Program Schedule

The following dates are indicative program commitment periods, not necessarily the first and last training dates for each tier.

| Quarter | Program commitment period |
|---|---|
| Quarter 1 | 1 February – 10 March 2027 |
| Quarter 2 | 5 April – 5 July 2027 |
| Quarter 3 | 17 July – 18 September 2027 |
| Quarter 4 | 11 October – 15 December 2027 |

Foundations: Monday evenings throughout the program year.

Development and Performance indoor: Monday evenings in Quarters 1 and 4; Saturday mornings in Quarters 2 and 3.

Performance beach: Wednesday mornings in Quarters 1 and 4.

Training is scheduled around the planned breaks listed below.

VWA will confirm each tier’s session dates, times, venues and session counts. No sessions will be held on public holidays; changes or cancellations will be communicated to athletes and families.

## Planned Program Breaks

Regular Academy training is paused or reduced at planned points to support recovery and accommodate major competition and State Team commitments.

| Break period | Reason / arrangement |
|---|---|
| 11 March - 4 April | Regular Academy programming paused around major national beach events and the Easter period. |
| 6 July - 16 July | A short mid-year break. |
| 19 September - 10 October | Regular Academy programming paused around major national indoor events. |
| From 16 December | End-of-year program break following completion of the 2027 Academy program. |

The dates above are indicative. VWA may adjust venues, training dates or planned breaks because of competition schedules, representative commitments, venue availability or other operational needs. Athletes and families will receive as much notice as reasonably possible.

# Additional Steel Academy Events and Member Benefits

Current Steel Academy athletes receive a 20% discount on additional Academy workshops and camps offered to the wider community, including specialist skills sessions, position-specific training and holiday camps.

The discount applies for the duration of an athlete's Academy enrolment and does not change the published annual program fees.

# VWA Contact

For more information about the Steel Academy, please contact:

Sean Andrews
Performance Pathways Coach
08 9228 8522
performance@volleyballwa.com.au