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Captain Farrugia a giant of a leader in AFLW competition

By Grant Quarry
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Like many women who took part in the AFLW competition recently, New South Wales phys ed teacher Amanda Farrugia is still pinching herself that she was involved.



“This league is something none of us would have dreamed would be a reality, not even within the next ten years, and yet here it is and we’re so lucky to have the chance to show our skills and play the game we love,” the Greater Western Sydney (GWS) Giants captain says.

With eight teams taking part having taken part this season – four from Melbourne and one each from Sydney, Adelaide, Brisbane and Perth – in an eight game season, without exaggeration, the competition captured the nation’s attention, with huge numbers turning out to watch the country’s best female Australian Rules players at venues and on television.

“I’ve just turned 32, so I’m an elder stateswoman of the team, so I guess I feel lucky in a sense that I got to play at all, but I also feel sad in a sense that while there’s no limits on it, that I’m a little bit older and I would have just loved to be a 21-year-old at the start of her career and have potentially a ten-year career in the pipeline.

“There’s nothing to say though that you can’t play as long as you want to. There’s a girl in our squad and she’s 37 and one of the fittest and most agile in the team.”

Actively promoting AFL for several years now as an ambassador, Farrugia has spearheaded participation in her school in the sport.

“It’s great to hear the stories that girls come and tell me after the weekend about what happened in their games, they might have kicked a goal, it’s just great to hear their excitement about playing footy.”

As a semi-professional, Farrugia says finding balance working fulltime and playing sport has been something of a challenge.

“Obviously it poses its challenges, I’ve got a lot less time at home, a lot less time with family members, but you just need people in your life who are understanding and supportive of what you’re doing. They see a purpose and benefit of it.

“My husband in particular has been extremely supportive.

“... family members house sit and look after the dogs and that kind of thing. It just shares the burden of not being able to spend so much time at home.

“It’s important to have those support systems in place for you to be able to do the whole work full-time and train at night.”



By Grant Quarry

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While the Giants might have had a trophy-less first season, Farrugia says as long as the team is improving they're happy.

"We came a long way this season - we've made inroads in our fitness and our skill level and tying all those things into our structures and working as a team.

"For us it's just about doing well and improving weekly..."

To cap a remarkable women's season, on March 25 the Adelaide Crows defeated the Brisbane Lions in the grand final by six points in an electrifying match before a crowd of 15,000 at Metricon Stadium on the Gold Coast.

Adelaide premiership co-captain Erin Phillips took out the inaugural NAB AFL Women's best and fairest award three days after a brilliant best-on-ground performance in the Crows' win, adding to the AFLPA women's MVP she'd already won.

The 31-year-old was named vice-captain of the All Australian team and was also voted by fans as the winner of the Coates Hire Goal of the Year.

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