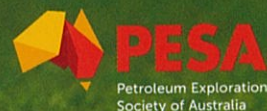


# PESA

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## ISSUE No.150:

YEAR IN REVIEW

**Inflection  
point for the  
industry**

SPORTS & SCIENCE

**Geos kick  
majors in sport  
and studies**

STOCK STARS

**Empire strikes  
back on a  
soaring ASX**





## JAY KICKED MAJORS IN PRO SPORT AND STUDIES

*Jay enjoys a light moment at work with colleagues*

 DALE GRANGER

JAY van Berlo is a rare breed among AFL footballers, standing tall as a player who was not only able to study for his degree while juggling the demands of playing professional football with the Fremantle Dockers, but also got his degree in geophysics during his career.

Van Berlo, now aged 29 and DownUnder GeoSolutions' Business Development Manager for Australia and New Zealand, still plays footy, albeit as a semi-professional for Western Australian Football League Club, West Perth.

He has fond memories of the 32 games he played for the Dockers as a full-time employee of the club from 2009-12.

Van Berlo enjoyed the rare distinction of making his debut in the Western Derby against the West Coast Eagles in 2009 and played on David Wirrpanda – keeping the gun Eagle honest while still managing to kick two goals for the Dockers. Jay's first game for the Dockers was one for the highlights reel, but he still rates the 2010 ANZAC round clash with the Western Bulldogs as his best AFL performance. He kicked four goals as a crescendo to singing the team song in the dressing room.

Jay may have been delisted from the Dockers aged just 24 in 2012, but at that stage he had already laid the foundation for a career outside football and was well on his way to achieving the rare feat of attaining academic excellence from the launchpad of professional sport environment.

He thanks his brother Nathan, captain of the Adelaide Crows and the West Coast Eagles stoppage midfielder, for inspiring his study geophysics and credits the delayed timing of his recruitment as vital to the eventual outcome.



"Our parents loved our sport, but always emphasised and encouraged our studies," Van Berlo said. "Initially I studied engineering at UWA, but I was not enjoying it and it was on Nathan's recommendation that I switched to geophysics at Curtin University.

"I think in a way I was fortunate that I did not get drafted as an 18-year-old. This meant that by the time I was picked up by the Dockers two-years later, I already had two-years of studying under the belt.

"Initially I had to put footy on hold and reduce my study load to one unit a semester, due to the demands of being an AFL player. I was fortunate in that Freo encouraged my studies and set aside one day a week for their players to develop something for themselves outside of the game – either by studying or picking up a tradie skill or doing some kind of an internship.

"For me it was a no brainer and although I could only take small bites while playing AFL, the studies provided something to keep me busy and take my mind off footy. This created pressure when it came to getting my assignments in and passing exams, but it also meant that by the end of 2012 I only had four units to complete to finish my degree.

"At times it was tough. Especially on away games when you couldn't take your studies with you, but it was manageable and comforting to me knowing that I was setting myself up for a transition once out of football."

Commenting on life post-footy, Jay said AFL careers generally lasted only a few years and only the players who had enjoyed stellar careers were able to find work as coaches, commentators and analysts. The majority of his former teammates are now post their time in AFL, and have since followed various life paths.

"Most of us need to find our career path in other areas when the football is over, and it was great to have a near completed degree to step up from".

Jay is still time poor these days due to the rigours of working a full-time job and playing WAFL footy, with sport commanding a six-day commitment during the week with four training sessions in the evenings after work, matches on Saturday and recovery sessions on Sunday. Pre-season training starts in November and runs to March,



leaving October and November as the only gap in the calendar to take a break.

"Fortunately, my wife Natalie also enjoys the camaraderie and friendships that come with being a part of a football club," he says.

Jay says lessons from top flight sport can be adapted to the office environment.

"Teamwork for me is second nature, although of course the workplace is more civilised, as you don't have colleagues running around yelling at one another and you don't wake up with any bumps and bruises on a Monday morning. But both environments need strong leaders to lead the way forward with everyone having a role to play to make sure you succeed. In this respect there is no difference between the office and the sports team.

"Another element we have to take on as players is constructive feedback from

coaches. You have to take it on the chin and get on with it without taking things personally. As a result, I think I've developed a thicker skin than most, and take advice in the workplace well."

At DUG Jay said he enjoyed the task of working together with exploration companies and the DUG team to deliver high-quality processed seismic data and help provide solutions to his clients geological challenges.

"I get a real kick out of being involved in the process of helping our clients achieve their goals. I feel lucky to work with such a dedicated team at DUG as well as interact with driven and like-minded individuals in the industry." ▀



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