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## Your World on Monday



Spotted getting the party started at Icef Berlin this year was Rupert Braun of Isis Language Centres in the UK, who certainly wowed this agent with his dance moves.

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# AGENTS

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# English and sports in Australia

Professional sports training for novices or experts in their field teamed with high quality language lessons. This combination is becoming popular in Australia with clients who can afford to pay for English tuition with a twist.

Offering more than just a “taster” of sporting activities, dedicated English and sports programmes in Australia often team English language tuition with targeted sports tuition for students – usually offered by a professional sports coach or centre in collaboration with the language school.

As a result, sports enthusiasts as well as keen students enrol on these programmes, looking for a holiday with a difference. David Hurford at Port Douglas English Language Centre in Port Douglas, QLD, states, “We believe English and sport will continue to be on the rise as it is a value-added activity. The concept of an active holiday where both body and mind are engaged in a meaningful way appeals to many.” Michael O’Grady at Byron Bay English Language School in Byron Bay, NSW, located near a popular surf beach, adds, “Our students like to move their bodies after five hours in a chair!”

Some schools report that when they first started offering such courses they had to wait for the concept of such targeted, active learning to catch on. Jenny Byatt, Director of Studies at West Coast International College of English in Bunbury, WA, offers an English language and scuba diving course that offers students the chance to gain their Open Water Diver certification. In her case, she relates that in the first year of operation at the school, she received no enrolments, but there was definite interest from Japan and Switzerland.

At Global Village (GV) Noosa, however, 10 years on from the launch of their language and sports programmes and Chris Lawlor, Head of Youth Programs & Study Tours, relates that “English in Action programmes are extremely popular with upwards of 500 students per year enrolling on one or more of our programmes.” GV Noosa teams English with surfing, tennis, kitesurfing, golf and scuba diving. “Surfing is currently our most popular, however, since [this course was] introduced both our tennis and kitesurfing [courses] have received increasing interest,” she says.

The price tag for language and specific sports instruction can be higher than for general English language tuition and so markets such as Japan and Switzerland, which have high spending power, are typical on these programmes, while Taiwan is also mentioned by one school. Lawlor relates, “Our adult programmes are very popular in the Brazilian, Japanese and Swiss markets, while our underage programmes are strong in French and Japanese markets with a healthy intake from Russia, Brazil and Spain.”

Patsy McLachlan from Burleigh Heads Language Centre in Gold Coast, QLD, agrees that Japanese, as well as Europeans, are most likely to enrol. Shawn Skinner from Cairns Language Centre in Cairns, QLD, reports the same experience although he adds, “We are seeing an increasing number of Korean students.”

As well as independent adult clients, younger students are a growing market for English and sports programmes, reports O’Grady. “We are seeing more teenage students wanting this combination,” he says. At St Paul’s School in Brisbane, QLD, programmes are only available for students at the school, aged between 12 and 18 years old. Sports tuition is fitted in around the school timetable and Registrar, Michelle Davies, reports that targeted sports programmes were originally introduced to meet demand from clients at the peak of their particular sporting field.

“The only reason students undertake sports English programmes is due to the need for them to be able to communicate more in English whilst being interviewed with respect to their sports,” she explains. “We currently have a student from Slovakia doing swimming [training] and a student from Germany undertaking golf.” Davies notes that the school has access to high-level coaches, including swimming coaches who train to Olympic level.

The expertise of the sports element of any programme is also critical and paves the way for good feedback from students and agents. Lawlor says, “We have added [variations of] programmes as we have formed partnerships with – what we feel are – the best quality sporting schools and institutions on the Sunshine Coast.”

## Selection of programmes available

Location	Name of school	Min. age of students	Min. hrs. English tuition	Min. hrs. sports practice	Activities offered
Brisbane, QLD	St Paul’s School	12	25	v	g,sw
Byron Bay, NSW	Byron Bay English Lang. School	14	15	10	d,s,vo
Bunbury, WA	West Coast Int. College of English	18	15	v	sc
Cairns, QLD	Cairns Language Centre	12 or 16	16	v	f,sc,vo,w,ws
Gold Coast, QLD	Aicol	6	18	9	vo
Gold Coast, QLD	Browns English Language School	16	15	4	g,s,sc,t
Gold Coast, QLD	Burleigh Heads Language Centre	18	20	10	bb,s,sc
Noosa, QLD	Global Village Noosa	12	15	7	g,ks,s,sc,t
Port Douglas, QLD	Port Douglas English Lang. Centre	18	15	6	g,sc
Surfers Paradise, QLD	Human International Academy	n	–	v	g,hr,s,sc
Toowoomba, QLD	University of Southern Queensland	14	15	10	g,t
Sydney, NSW	Sydney English Academy	18	15	6	s,sc

PHOTOGRAPH: BROWNS ENGLISH LANGUAGE SCHOOL

bb body boarding d diving f football g golf hr horse riding ks kite surfing s surfing sc scuba diving t tennis v varies vo volleyball w wakeboarding ws water skiing