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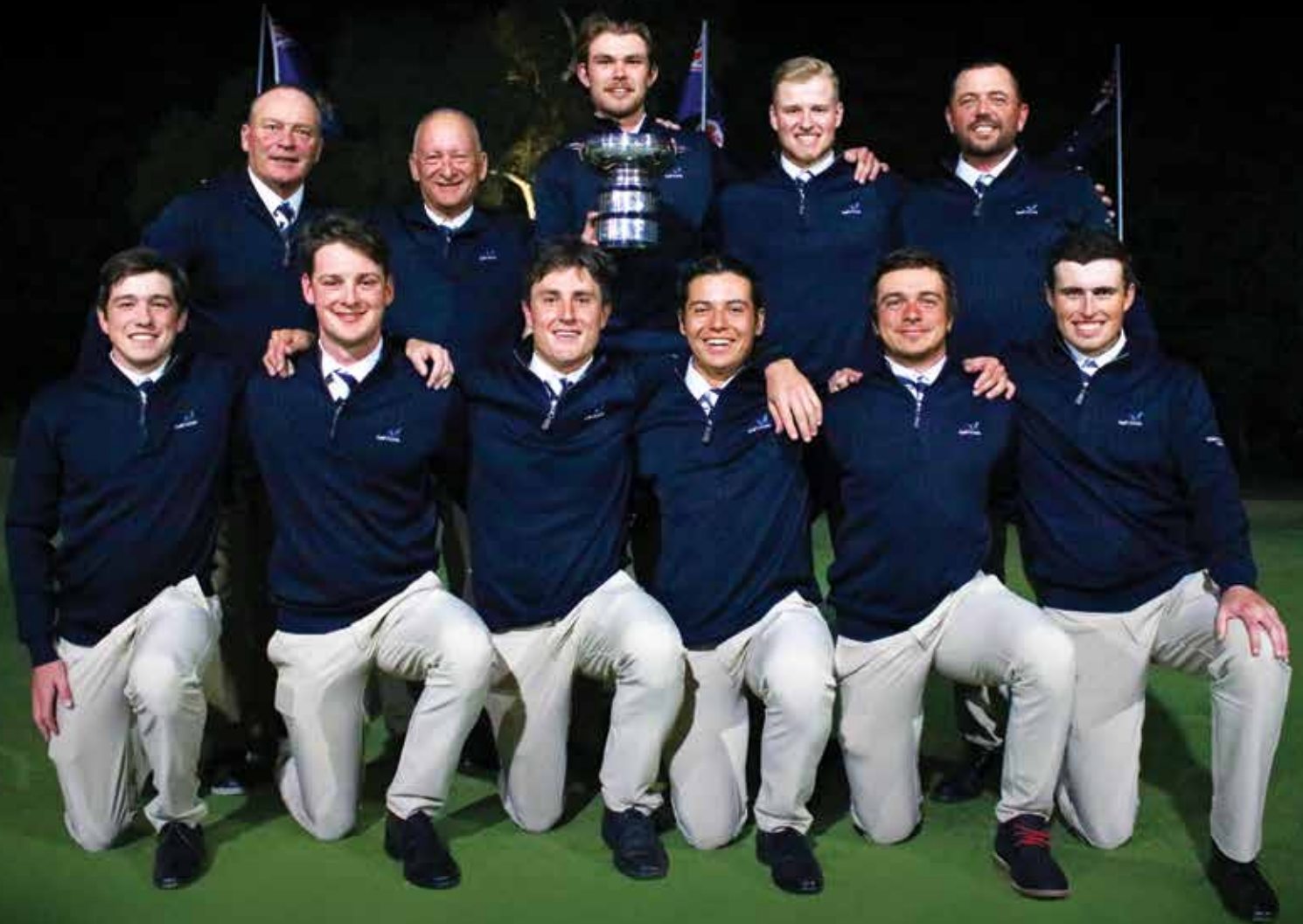
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June/July 2018
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Front cover: The Victorian Men's State Team celebrates its successful title defence at the Interstate Teams Series.
Photo: Justin Falconer

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Team Golf Reveals the Joy of Sharing

To kick off summer for the next two years, Victoria will play host to two of world golf's most engaging and lucrative professional team events.

So successful was the World Cup of Golf in 2016 at Kingston Heath, the PGA Tour has scheduled an encore for this November at Metropolitan.

Fifty-six of the world's best will represent their home countries in pairs, before Team USA and the Internationals duke it out in the 2019 Presidents Cup at Royal Melbourne for the second time in nine years.

Golf fans from around Victoria and across the country will relish the chance to see Jordan Spieth, Jason Day, Marc Leishman and Tiger Woods tackle some of the world's great layouts.

But few will be having more fun than the players themselves and it's easy to see why.

Golf will forever be labelled an individual sport but playing as part of a team is arguably the game's most enjoyable form – at any level.

As Victoria's 119th pennant season wrapped up in May – and the campaigns of many clubs around the country began – it's clear to see that Australia's golfers thrive on playing for more than personal glory.

Every year, the pennant season is easily one of Golf Victoria's most popular events. Providing clubs and their members the opportunity to band together and compete side by side in the same colours is the highlight of the golfing year for many.

Ours is the game for life and to see golfers of all ages enjoying the nuances of team sport long after their football, netball or cricket days are over is what makes playing pennant special for so many.

With the men's Division One and women's Division One and Two pennant titles on the line on a typically

brisk autumn day, it was heartening to see the hordes of members from Commonwealth, Huntingdale, Metropolitan, Royal Melbourne, Yarra Yarra and Kingston Heath caddying for and supporting those battling it out. The same level of interest was apparent two weeks earlier when a raft of divisional finals were played at Kew, The National (Long Island) and Eastwood Golf Clubs. The level of support for these club teams continues to grow among members, families and friends of those competing.

The recent Men's and Women's Interstate Team Series in Adelaide is Australian golf's State of Origin and the responsibility associated with representing the 'Big V' is not lost on our players.

Golf's next generation of stars rightly spend 51 weeks of the year focussed on

As Victoria's 119th pennant season wrapped up in May – and the campaigns of many clubs around the country began – it's clear to see that Australia's golfers thrive on playing for more than personal glory.

themselves – dissecting what needs to improve, what's working well, and how their game can go to the next level.

But the annual Interstate Series lets our young guns team up with those with whom they spend most months of the year for a unique and meaningful week.

Only one change was made to the Victorian men's team that was hunting back-to-back Interstate titles in Adelaide and the longer the week went, the clearer it became that continuity was a considerable advantage.

Our boys loved spending time together away from the course and when it came time to compete the camaraderie grew even stronger.

A midweek scare in the form of a loss to South Australia threatened to derail the Vics, but our boys rallied to make the final and then wear down their opponents in a high-pressure situation for the second straight year.

This year the women's team had a new look with three debutantes and whilst they did not collect any silverware, they acquitted themselves extremely well in tough conditions all week. The camaraderie amongst the group was there for all to see, which is as much what a team event is about as is winning.

Add the triumph of our women's team in 2017 and Victoria has claimed three of the last four Interstate Series crowns.

At a local level, what sets the Victorian Four-Ball Championship and the Sir Dallas Brooks Trophy apart is what makes these events so popular across Victoria.

Everyone loves choosing their playing partner and teammate and the opportunity to tackle some of Victoria's great courses alongside a partner, sibling, parent, child or friend has proven to be a resounding success.

As golfers trying to improve, we often get caught up in our own swings, thoughts and form.

But perhaps the best way to bring more fun back to the game for more people would be an increase in competitive and social team golf.

Remember, team events are also part of the Game for Life!

THRILLER! BIG V BACK TO BACK



The 2018 victors strike the pose: Standing: (from left): Team Manager Brian Lasky, Darcy Brereton, Zach Murray, Lukas Michel, Team Coach Marty Joyce and Golf Victoria High Performance Manager Ashley Marshall. Squatting: Kyle Michel, Blake Collyer, Will Heffernan. Sitting: Matias Sanchez and Dave Micheluzzi.

For the second year in a row and the fourth time in five years, the Victorian Men's team has won the Interstate Teams Series. **MARTIN BLAKE** says bring on next year.

They went back-to-back with style. Then they drank beer from the championship cup and by the end of the celebrations, with a plane to catch and another event to plan, they talked excitedly about the prospect of the so-called 'three-peat' in Tasmania next year.

The Victorian Men's Interstate team is in the midst of a golden era, one of the most dominant ever in the long and storied history of amateur teams competition in this country.

The triumph at The Grange in Adelaide last month was a second consecutive title and the fourth in five years, the only 'miss' being in Queensland in 2016. Victoria has won the 2014, 2015, 2017 and 2018 titles with brilliant young teams filled with talented golfers, some of whom are already striding on the world stage as professionals.

The men's title made up for a disappointing week for the women's team, which finished fourth in the defence of its 2017 title, missing the injured Montana Strauss and its most in-form player, Stephanie Bunque, who was representing Australia overseas. New South Wales won that title.

The men's victory, captained again by Zach Murray, came hard. Victoria had to

beat Western Australia in the last match of the round-robin series to make the final, and did so by the barest of margins. But finishing on top of the table with five wins and one defeat gave the Victorians top seeding and the knowledge that they would only need to halve the final against Queensland to win the title on countback.

That's exactly as it turned out, a halved 4-4 result in the final secured when the brilliant David Micheluzzi, Cranbourne's favorite son, closed out the number one match against Shae Wools-Cobb of Queensland, on the final hole.

Micheluzzi, now a three-time interstate series champion, was the hero of the victory with an unbeaten seven matches for the week as number one player, a feat only matched by Jed Morgan of Queensland. He took down Western Australia's former US junior champion Min Woo Lee in the round-robin to secure a spot in the final and then Wools-Cobb in the final as well, the Queenslanders conceding the match on the 18th green when he failed to get up-and-down from behind the green.

"Dave just finds a way to do what he needs to do," said Ashley Marshall, Golf Victoria's High Performance Manager. "He's such a gritty player. He can hit the ball a long way, he has a fantastic short game, and just hates losing. That's one of the great characteristics he has. He really was our anchorman. In tight situations, he came through.

"Most of his matches were very close; I think he said he played only five holes

less than the maximum. When the pressure was on and we needed him, he really stood up."

But 22-year-old Micheluzzi, already the 2018 Master of the Amateurs champion and the 2017 Victorian Amateur champion, was not alone in his heroics. Royal Melbourne's teenager Matias Sanchez was brilliant as well, winning six of his seven matches at number three and knocking out Queensland's world number 26 Dylan Perry in the final in an exhilarating match during which Sanchez made six birdies in 15 holes.

Sanchez, 19, the 2017 Australian Amateur champion, goes forward with a reputation as a beast of matchplay competition. "I just love it," he said. "It's great fun. In the end, it's a fairly simple task. You just have to beat one player. When it becomes a bit more obvious what you've got to do, you just do it."

Marshall simply marvelled at Sanchez's improvement in a year. "Last year he was anywhere between number six and number eight, so in the last 12 months he's really proven that he's one of the best players in the country," he said. "And he does love matchplay! It's just something remarkable. He's such a great putter and he shuts people out around the greens."

Victoria sent almost the same team to Adelaide as had won the title in Perth in 2017, the only change being Darcy Brereton's inclusion for Cameron John, who had turned professional. Royal Melbourne's Brereton was a revelation, justifying his selection with two wins from three matches, including a point in the final. Victoria did not have a weak link, from Micheluzzi and Murray and Sanchez all strong at the top, to the likes of Blake Collyer, who won four matches at number five.

Early wins over Northern Territory, Queensland, New South Wales and Tasmania set up the week. Then a shock loss to South Australia in windy conditions left them needing to beat WA in the final round, which they did 4-3, once Micheluzzi dealt with Lee in the anchor match.

The final was epic. Brereton had the number eight match under control early, ultimately beating Dylan Gardiner 4&3, but Queensland secured three points through Louis Dobbelaar (defeated Will Heffernan 3&2), Jed Morgan (defeated Lukas Michel 2&1) and Douglas Klein (defeated Blake Collyer 3&2). Sanchez (won 4&3 over Dylan Perry, closing it with a clutch two-metre putt on the 15th) and Kyle Michel (won 3&2 over Lawry Flynn) secured points for Victoria while at

2017



The 2018 team had just one change from 2017, Darcy Brereton replacing Cameron John who has turned professional.

Victoria's number one Dave Micheluzzi was undefeated for the week.



Matias Sanchez hit Queensland's gun Dylan Perry with a birdie blitz.

number two, Queensland's Charlie Dann bolted to seven-under par to beat Zach Murray and put Queensland in front.

But Victoria knew that a halved contest would be enough. Micheluzzi did the rest and more, missing a short putt to close it out at the 17th before holding firm at the 18th where Wools-Cobb made bogey, giving Victoria the number one match and leaving the final halved at 4-4. It was Victoria's title again. "I think in the end it was a relief," said Marshall. "That men's team kind of rated itself, but you have to get it done."

It is a triumph for Marshall and his team as well as the Victorian Institute of Sport's golf program. "I think it says a lot about the VIS golf program where most of our better players end up," said Marshall. "We had other elite programs and three of the players in the team were in that

program as well, which has helped with development in Victoria. Going back, we've just had a lot of good emerging players over the years.

"Part of that is our programs here and our tournament program here. Our courses are good quality where you learn to play on hard, fast greens and that helps. Our pennant competition is strong with the matchplay aspects where people learn to perform under pressure. That all helps."

Victoria's defence of the women's title went less smoothly, not surprising since Strauss pulled out late with a back injury (replaced by Olivia Kline) and the likely number one Bunque was picked to play for Australia at the Queen Sirikit Cup. The team could not cover the losses, finishing with two wins,

one draw and two losses in the five rounds. Alizza Hetherington had to step up to number one and finished with a 2-1-2 record.

The big positive from the women's series was Steffanie Vogel from Cobram-Barooga, in her first time as a state player at either junior or senior level. Vogel won four of her five matches. "She's a grinder," said Marshall. "That's proven. She's hard to beat."

Marshall was mortified by the absence of Bunque, as well as Grace Kim of New South Wales and Rebecca Kay of Queensland, caused by a scheduling issue that he cannot understand. While the losses were spread across the teams, it left a sour taste, and Marshall felt that Golf Australia should have put the competition back by a week to avoid the clash. "I just think the series is compromised a bit when the three best players in the women's field aren't there to represent their states."

But it was still a grand week thanks to the men, who will have most of the same players again next year; the likes of Micheluzzi and Sanchez do not intend turning pro until after that.

Victoria's development systems are in a good place, clearly, as the conquering Micheluzzi said afterward. "I think it's the golden era. And I'd say it can probably go on for another four years," Micheluzzi said. "We've got talent but we couldn't have done it without Golf Victoria and the VIS. We're still producing players which is great, and hopefully it keeps going for the next generation and the next generation after that."

The Victorian Women's State Team battled hard all week. From left: Jess Pickwick, coach Darren Cole, Kono Matsumoto, Alex Hilliard, Alizza Hetherington, Olivia Kline and Steffanie Vogel.



Captain Zach Murray and Manager Ashley Marshall.



Kono Matsumoto is all smiles in any circumstance.

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2018	2017	2015	2014
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BLAKE COLLYER	WILL HEFFERNAN	FRAZER DROOP	BEN ECCLES
WILL HEFFERNAN	CAMERON JOHN	BEN ECCLES	LUCAS HERBERT
KYLE MICHEL	KYLE MICHEL	LUCAS HERBERT	ZACH MURRAY
LUKAS MICHEL	LUKAS MICHEL	DAVID MICHELUZZI	TOM POWER HORAN
DAVID MICHELUZZI	DAVID MICHELUZZI	TOM POWER HORAN	RYAN RUFFELS
ZACH MURRAY	ZACH MURRAY	RYAN RUFFELS	ANDREW SCHONEWILLE
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WAGGING TAIL MAK



Metropolitan headed into the 2018 Men's pennant final on a high with three members returning from a victorious campaign at the Interstate Teams Series and five of their seven players going for a second flag in three years. Kingston Heath was trying to end a Division One drought stretching back to 1939. BRUCE MATTHEWS reports.

It's no surprise that David Micheluzzi had a profound influence on Metropolitan's narrow win against Kingston Heath in Golf Victoria's Division One pennant final at Cranbourne.

After all, Micheluzzi is the current Victorian Amateur champion, Master of the Amateurs titleholder and one of Australia's hottest amateur golfers, ranked in the world's top 20.

He was also still on a high from the previous week when he played number

one for the Victorian State Team, going undefeated and winning the decisive match which handed the Big V a second successive Interstate Series win.

But this time it was the Metropolitan number one player's contribution to team strategies rather than any on-course heroics that helped set up the 4-3 victory in the battle between two of Melbourne's iconic sandbelt clubs.

As a long-time Cranbourne member, Micheluzzi passed on his vast knowledge

ES METRO TOP DOG

*Opposite page:
Metropolitan celebrates
its second flag in three
years after a team effort.*

*Right: Dave Micheluzzi
passed on his local
knowledge ... and his
teammates listened.*

of the 6164m layout to teammates during and after a crucial practice round at the finals venue a week before the season-ending clash with Kingston Heath.

He scribbled down pertinent points gleaned from more than a decade of countless competition and practice rounds at his "home" club and the team management used them as the basis for a detailed guide handed to each of the seven players on the morning of the final.

"David wrote us some course notes. We went through them at a team meeting during the week and then they were properly written up and given to us," Metropolitan captain Lukas Michel said.

Every subtle hint on course management was critical as Metropolitan edged out a rival that had thumped it 5-2 in round three, with only Micheluzzi and Aiden Didone emerging victorious from the carnage that included two 5&4 defeats, another of 4&3 and two with a 3&2 scoreline in a lopsided contest at Kingston Heath.

Didone, who played at number five in the final and beat Kingston Heath's Jake Hughes 4&3, emphasised the value of Micheluzzi's input from the previous Sunday's practice round at Cranbourne.

"He provided a lot of insight; he helped a lot actually by telling us where not to hit it. We came out on the previous Sunday and saw the course. The greens were a little slower than usual, but they firmed up a bit (for the final)," Didone said.



Metropolitan was off to a flyer in the final when club champion Chris John beat Max Charles 4&3 in the number six match before Didone sealed another point with the same winning score by sinking a two-metre birdie putt at the short par-four 15th against Jake Hughes.

"I laid up with a four-iron and just hit a little lob wedge in. I was hitting out of the rough, so it didn't spin," said Didone, a consistent performer all season.

"I played really solid; I only made one bogey and six birdies to be five under. I thought I putted really well and that got me started early. I holed a few long putts and that got me up and going from there."

Didone arrived at Metropolitan at the age of 15 on a scholarship and was also a member of the club's triumphant 2016 Division One team.

"I like the pressure of matchplay. It's a different pressure in the final, obviously,

with a lot more people watching and certainly a lot more pressure rides on every putt," he said.

This young Metropolitan group had six of its seven players still eligible for the Colts competition and the baby of the team, number seven Zach O'Collins, was the next to complement the bottom end of the line-up with a 2&1 win over George Worrall.

It was a fine performance by the Albury teenager who relied heavily on Micheluzzi's local nous and an experienced caddie to guide him around the Cranbourne layout.

"Zach hadn't played the course at all; he couldn't get down for the Sunday (practice round). He hadn't even seen the course, so we had our assistant manager (former pennant captain Matt Roberson), who knew the course, on his bag. He obviously guided him around pretty well," Michel said.

DAVE MICHELUZZI



NICK BROWN



LUKAS MICHEL



BLAKE COLLYER



AIDEN DIDONE



CHRIS JOHN



ZACH O'COLLINS



It was only the second match for O'Collins, with regular Adam Tsiamis in the Philippines to represent Australia in the World University Championships.

Despite Metropolitan's dominant start with the bottom three matches in the bag, a title-clinching fourth win was no certainty with Kingston Heath in the lead in the last three contests deep into the back nine.

State Team member Blake Collyer, who sealed the pennant final on Spring Valley's 18th green two years earlier, realised he was lugging the weight of expectations again as he strode to the 16th tee all square with Jack Murdoch in the number four duel.

"It was back and forth all day, a lot of halved holes. So hopefully all the people enjoyed it,"

Collyer edged ahead with a gritty up-and-down from the back bunker for par at 16 but Murdoch was poised to deadlock the match again, surveying a four-metre uphill putt for birdie at the 17th. First, though, Collyer had his birdie attempt from a more difficult 10 metres, downhill with a left-to-right break.

"Halfway out I thought it was looking good, it was tracking in the middle and went in. It was one of those putts where you stand up if it's going to miss and I stayed down the whole time," Collyer said after watching Murdoch's birdie putt to keep the match alive just miss, giving Metropolitan the decisive 2&1 win.

"It's a nice feeling. I knew coming down 16 that it was close and that we had three (wins) in, so I kind of knew my match would be the one. It certainly has been a successful couple of weeks in team matchplay."

Just as relieved when Collyer's ball disappeared into the cup was Metropolitan's skipper and State teammate Michel, who fell behind four-down after six holes and chipped away at the big deficit to eventually succumb 3&2 to Kingston Heath's ultra-steady number three Andre Lautee.

"He birdied a couple of tough holes and I had a couple of bad holes and he was four-up. I got it back to one-down through 13 and 14 and then just lost a couple coming in," Michel said. "He played well, straight out of the gate.

I clawed a few back when he made a couple of mistakes. But he played too well.

"It was good that we already had three (wins) in really early and then everything started getting close. In the end it came down to one match and Blake had to win and he did the job for us. I wasn't captain a couple of years ago when we won and to get it this year has been really good."

Kingston Heath captain Simon Treeby beat Nick Brown 4&2 in the number two match before teammate DJ Loypur, who earned his card on the PGA Tour Series-China this year, downed Micheluzzi by the same score in a seesawing struggle between the respective number one players.

"It's a strange feeling. We only found out (the result) going down our last hole (16th). It was pretty tense, our match, and it's obviously not the way both of us wanted to finish. It would have been nice to be playing for it (title). But that's just the team game, unfortunately," Loypur said.

Micheluzzi took a one-up lead through the turn before Loypur surged, winning four of the next six holes on the back nine and, with the final decided, the home-course player conceded on the 16th green without attempting a birdie putt.

"It was back and forth all day, a lot of halved holes. So hopefully all the people enjoyed it," said Loypur, who prepared to head back to China for his fifth tournament in his rookie year on the pro tour.

So, while Kingston Heath won the three matches at the top of the draw, the other four went Metro's way to deliver the club's second division one flag in three years with Micheluzzi, Michel, Collyer, Brown and Didone members of both winning teams. It was the club's seventh overall in the top division, to go with victories in 1907, 1920, 1922, 1986, 1987 and 2016.

The irony of Metropolitan's lower end dominance was best summed up by rival captain Treeby in his congratulatory speech on Cranbourne's practice putting green during the pennant presentations.

"The bottom end boys have been our strength. We'll be back next year," he said.

DJ LOYPUR



SIMON TREEBY



ANDRE LAUTEE



JACK MURDOCH



JAKE HUGHES



MAX CHARLES



GEORGE WORRALL



KINGSTON HEATH

COMMONWEALTH KING OF THE COLTS

Commonwealth continued to build on its incredible record in pennant, winning its seventh Colts flag in the last nine years.

The team of Caleb Perry, Hamish Huffadine, Max Green, Mitch Crabbe and Peter Vassiliadis beat Royal Melbourne 3-2 at the National's Long Island course, a fortnight earlier than the men's and women's finals.

Perry, who along with Crabbe was a member of last year's winning flag team, sealed the victory with a 4&3 win over Royal number one Callum Strack. Max Green defeated Jack Holland 2&1 and Peter Vassiliadis defeated Benjamin Rozen 5&3, while for Royal Melbourne, Seve Jones defeated Hamish Huffadine 2-up and Thomas Hatt defeated Crabbe 3&1.

In the period since 2010, there have been 27 flags decided in the top divisions of the men's, women's and Colts' metropolitan pennant. Commonwealth has won 14 of them.

YEAR	MEN	WOMEN	COLTS
2010	Waverley	Commonwealth	Commonwealth
2011	Kingswood	Commonwealth	Kingswood
2012	Yarra Yarra	Kingston Heath	Commonwealth
2013	Yarra Yarra	Metropolitan	Commonwealth
2014	Commonwealth	Metropolitan	Commonwealth
2015	Commonwealth	Huntingdale	Commonwealth
2016	Metropolitan	Victoria	Metropolitan
2017	Commonwealth	Commonwealth	Commonwealth
2018	Metropolitan	Commonwealth	Commonwealth



HATS OFF TO GO



The two strongest teams of the 2018 women's pennant season faced off in a final which went down to the wire. KAREN HARDING reports.

A pennant flag, a season, is not determined by one shot or one player – yet as Commonwealth captain Jo Flaherty's drive on the 20th hole of the deciding match of the 2018 Division One women's final rattled into the trees on the left, it seemed it might be.

What a final! Momentum changed several times through the course of it, the two competing clubs Commonwealth and Huntingdale

swapping individual match wins until the final two. Even in these, the likely outcome swung back and forth several times, both tantalising and taunting the large and highly engaged gallery.

In the end, the final was locked at three points each before Flaherty played a shot that will stay with her for the rest of her career, giving her club the vital point, a 4-3 victory over a valiant opponent and successive flags. It also

COMMONWEALTH

*Opposite page:
Commonwealth's
Division One
women's pennant
team capped off
a fine season with
a win for the ages.*

*Right: Jo Flaherty
measures and
delivers for
Commonwealth.*



set up one last important assignment for the 2018 pennant season... but more of that later.

Of the final, Commonwealth pennant manager Wendy Swift said: "It couldn't get any closer, could it. The fourth point on the 20th hole, it doesn't get any tighter than that." Huntingdale pennant manager Heather Gellatly described it as a classic final. "It was a fantastic battle and there was so little between the two sides."

The story of this final is about grit, experience and a mighty stoush between two clubs with tremendous history in pennant.

Commonwealth went in with four members of its victorious 2017 team – number one and state team member Alex Hilliard, number two Flaherty, Sheradyn Johnson at four and Kai Shipp at six. Their experience, particularly at the top, would prove telling in a contest that had so many ups and downs it was akin to competitive see-saw.

Laura Griffin and Kallista Do were first to the see-saw and each had a turn in the lead on the front nine before turning square.

At number six, Shipp burst from the blocks with a birdie and was two-up after two before Joelynn Do fought back to square after seven. Shipp then regained the lead on the ninth.

Playing number five for Huntingdale, Emily Smith produced a breathtaking front nine – four birdies, an eagle and a bogey for a five-under-par 31 and a six-up lead over rookie Kristi Bilkey.

Commonwealth's Sheradyn Johnson was one-up over Helen Gubbels, but Huntingdale's Lisa Teo was similarly one-up over another debutante in Danika Coyne.

With one match square and both clubs leading in two after nine, it was clear even that far out that the flag would be up for grabs all the way to the last two matches.

Flaherty was able to recover from a double-bogey seven on the first to take a two-hole lead over 13-year-old Jeneath Wong after nine, while Hilliard won the first two holes against 14-year-old Piper Stubbs before the youngster fought back with birdies on five and seven to get back to square in a high quality contest.

Stubbs took the lead for the first time with a birdie on the 11th, Hilliard won 12 with a par, Stubbs put a bunker shot to gimme distance for a win on the 13th, while a win to Hilliard on 14 took it back to all square. It was gripping stuff.

Meanwhile, Shipp won three holes in a row to draw first blood 4&3 for Commonwealth but Smith soon closed out her match for Huntingdale with the same scoreline, despite a game fightback from Bilkey, who could reflect on the fact that from the third

hole to the end of the match on the 15th, she was square with the card, just out-gunned by Smith's brilliance.

The see-saw continued with Kallista Do closing out Griffin 3&2 but Johnson levelling again soon after with a 5&3 win over Gubbels. Two matches each, with three tight games to go.

On the par-four 16th, Huntingdale's more experienced Teo knocked in a two-metre putt for birdie to take the lead after Coyne's birdie putt had shaved the hole. A par on 17 was good enough to close out that contest 2&1, meaning just one more win would suffice for Huntingdale while Commonwealth needed to win both remaining matches.

Flaherty was doing her bit, a birdie on the 15th extending her lead to two holes and with halved pars on 16, she was up dormie two and it looked as if the decider would be Hilliard v. Stubbs.

That match was still locked at square after the par-four 15th but after Hilliard and Stubbs both middled their drives and hit the 16th green in regulation, the putts changed the momentum again. Stubbs put hers to gimme but Hilliard holed hers for birdie and a one-up, two-to-play lead.

On 17, Hilliard again hit the fairway, some 60m short of the flag, while Stubbs found the right rough.

ALEX HILLIARD



JO FLAHERTY



DANIKA COYNE



SHERADYN JOHNSON



KRISTI BILKEY



KAI SHIPP



LAURA GRIFFIN



From there, both awaited her and Hilliard's par delivered a 2&1 point to Commonwealth. Three apiece.

Back at Flaherty and Wong, a massive drive by the Commonwealth captain on 17 worked against her when she was just short of the greenside bunker with no room to stop her approach close. Three putts sent the match down 18, where both players missed the fairway ... and the green. Wong, though, played a superb bunker shot to a metre and saved par and when Flaherty failed to get up and down, the match went to extra time.

As players and spectators marched back to the first, a beaming Gellatly – one of the drivers of women's pennant moving to Sundays – said, "Isn't this great!". She was right. No matter what the result, golf was the winner this day.

On the par-five 19th hole, Wong was in the left rough and laid up just short of the green. Flaherty was 158 metres out in the centre of the fairway and hit a brave and brilliant long iron to six metres for a two-putt birdie, while Wong again made an escape, chipping to just over a metre and making birdie.

And so to the 20th, the see-saw going fast, this time the seeming advantage with Wong after Flaherty severely pulled her tee shot and watched it crash into the trees on the left. Wong found the fairway some 40 metres closer to the green.

It was then the golfing gods smiled on Commonwealth. When Flaherty got to her ball, she saw it had bounced off the timber and onto a bare patch of ground but with a shot to the green. Memories re-surfaced of the dramatic shot played by Commonwealth's Reanna Matthews on the 18th hole of the deciding match in the 2010 final at Keysborough.

With similar country-kid experience and composure, Flaherty simply sized up what needed to be done and got on with it.

"I knew I had to err on the short side with my approach," she said later.

A punched low five-iron from 168 metres ran to about 15 metres. Wong pushed her approach 20 metres right of the flag, on the green but with a tough downhill putt. She then slightly misjudged the slope and came up almost two metres short.

Flaherty had placed herself in a similar position to where she had putted first time round. "I knew how much it was going to break and I just wanted to get the speed right and have it end up below the hole, which is exactly what it did. It worked perfectly."

When Wong's par putt slid by, Flaherty was able to tap in – even though by then the putt looked 10 metres, not one – for the flag to go to Commonwealth.

This is now the fourth time Commonwealth has gone back-to-back since its first win in Division One in 1984 but it was no easy task, despite a fine season record.

"We went in last year (against Victoria) as underdogs but this year we knew everyone was gunning for us all through the season. I think that by far the two teams were the strongest in the competition this season. Huntingdale beat us in the home-and-away when we had Alex out, which was our only loss, so we were confident when we had her back that we had a very strong team, but we were nervous at the same time. You know it's going to come down to the day and who performs well out of the seven," said Swift.

Gellatly was generous in her praise for Commonwealth but already looking forward to next season.

"Commonwealth was just a bit stronger and probably a little more experienced at that level and congratulations to them, they've been the best team the last two years. I couldn't be prouder of our girls. With two young girls at the top who have been on a steep learning curve and who have natural improvement in them, and the team we've got, and a couple of other juniors that will be vying for selection next year, I'm really positive about the future."

No matter which club came out on top, it would be described as a gritty win and the same might be said of the individual matches too, both pennant managers heaping deserved praise on their respective team members.

Gellatly commended Wong, who played her first international competition in the Callaway Junior Championship in the US aged just six, for the presence she showed. "For young Jeneath to come back the way she did when she was two down was just terrific," she said, while Flaherty said of her opponent, "she's an absolute superstar."

Commonwealth teaching professional Sandy Jamieson said of Flaherty herself, his sometimes under-estimated charge: "I have known for some time that Jo has what it takes to be recognised as one of the top amateur golfers in the state. After today I'm sure she believes in herself as well. I haven't seen a better shot under the gun than her second shot on the 19th.

"Great golfers need a memory bank of successful shots to draw on in pressure situations and today Jo filled her account

with some rippers. I couldn't be happier for her and the team she captained."

Commonwealth now looks forward to two challenges. The first is to match Huntingdale by capturing the elusive three-peat, Huntingdale having done it in 1968-69-70 and again in 1985-86-87, the only club to achieve it since the very early days of women's pennant dominated by Royal Melbourne.

Coincidentally, Royal returns to Division One in 2019, in search of its first flag since 1961. It remains the winningest club in pennant history with a total 23 flags, followed by Huntingdale with 14 – nine since 1980 – and Commonwealth hot on its heels with 13, of which 10 have come in the modern era.

That other important assignment remaining for the Commonwealth women's pennant team? A match against the club's colts team, which also went back-to-back in 2018.

When the women returned to their club to celebrate their win, they audaciously took down the colts' flag to put their own up across the bar. Colts manager Max Scales immediately issued a challenge - women against the colts for The Battle of the Bragging Rights.

As he laid out the terms and conditions, Swift turned to the women's team and said, "Girls, game on, let's go!"

Pointing to a bright future... with 13-year-old Jeneath Wong (pictured with her father) and 14-year-old Piper Stubbs at the top of the order, Huntingdale can look ahead with confidence.



FRIDAY ON THEIR MIND

Just as Commonwealth and Huntingdale showed themselves the two best clubs in Division One women's pennant, the same two clubs fought out the final of Friday Women's Pennant, but this time it was Huntingdale which prevailed, continuing its remarkable domination of the competition.

Huntingdale's 5½-1½ victory at Woodlands was its sixth Division One Friday Women's Pennant title in seven years and third in a row.

The Huntingdale lower order of Maria Clarke, Trinity Francis and Roslyn Farrell

all secured solid wins to set the platform for the flag triumph.

A win to Commonwealth's number four Joanne Elmslie over Huntingdale team captain Chrissy Skinner briefly halted the momentum before further wins to Rong Kwok-Xu and Kerry Henningsen sealed the result. The match between number one players in Commonwealth's Louise Briers and Huntingdale's Heather Gellatly was declared halved by the captains once the overall result had been determined.

PIPER STUBBS



JENEATH WONG



LISA TEO



HELEN GUBBELS



EMILY SMITH



JOELYNN DO



KALLISTA DO



A LONG FORGOTTEN JUNIOR MATCH HIGHLIGHTS NEED FOR... PENNANT CALL TO ARMS

Golf Victoria and the Golf Society of Australia are partners in a Pennant History Project ... and they need your help.

It's 1991, a crisp autumn Sunday morning at Whittlesea Golf Club for the Minor Pennant Division Five clash between Cheltenham and Cranbourne. Brushing the dew off the grass on the first tee are the number five players for their respective clubs: Andrew Getson for Cranbourne and, making his pennant debut for Cheltenham, Geoff Ogilvy.

The kid from the nine-hole club is still a few weeks away from his 14th birthday and so it is not really a surprise that the more experienced Getson, three years his senior, delivers a 4&3 win for Cranbourne ... and Ogilvy joins the 62 per cent of golfers who lose their first pennant match.

A. Getson (Cranbourne) d. G. Ogilvy (Cheltenham) becomes a new entry into the record books – just one of the hundreds of thousands of matchplay contests that have been played by an ever-increasing number of men's, women's and colts' teams since pennant was first played in Victoria by just five clubs in 1899.

And no-one could have predicted what both boys would go on to achieve in golf.

That Ogilvy would play Division One men's pennant with Victoria, make the state team, turn professional and win the US Open in 2006 and the Australian Open in 2010, among a string of big tournament victories, is not the point of this story.

Nor is Getson's ascension through the ranks, to the Commonwealth Division One men's pennant team, the state team, and a professional career, less storied than Ogilvy, but one which would lead in roundabout fashion to his current role as swing coach in the USA for a guy named Phil Mickelson.

No, it's the very fact that there is a record of their match which demonstrates the importance of Golf Victoria's Pennant History Project to collect historical data which has gone missing over the years.

Currently Golf Victoria has a database of Men's and Colts (formerly Minor Pennant) results from between 1989

and 2012, excluding 1994 because at some stage someone borrowed the file book from the VGA from that year and never returned it.

In addition, Riversdale Golf Club member Ian Rowell has collated many pennant results from all the way back to 1899, using old newspapers and Women's Golf Victoria archives. But there are still significant gaps, notably from the early 1980s when newspapers stopped publishing comprehensive pennant results.

In partnership with the Golf Society of Australia, Golf Victoria plans to collate all available results on a database to allow clubs and individuals to access the information for a variety of reasons,

Geoff Ogilvy went on to a mighty pro career, seen here with his 2010 Australian Open trophy. Photo courtesy Golf Australia.



including use in club history books.

The two bodies have applied for a grant with the Victorian Public Records Office to assist in the collection and collation of missing results.

Project managers, Ben Sweeney from Golf Victoria and Murray Cropley from the Golf Society of Australia, have issued a call to arms for clubs and members who have participated in pennant to provide any old results they may have.

"If you have kept a file of your own results or you have, or know of, results that a relative kept of their performances, we would love to hear from you," Sweeney said. "If your club has a record of pennant results, or, indeed, you know the whereabouts of the missing 1994 file, we would appreciate your making these available to us."

Cropley has spent many years documenting men's pennant and has analysed much of the information already available. "Our aim is to eventually make the database searchable via the GV website, but this requires substantial development work and, obviously, a lot of data entry of missing results," he said.

"We are particularly interested in men's results from the 1980s and women's results from 1939-1992. We will copy the information and return the originals to their owners, and then enter the results into our database."

Tremendous advances have been made in the storage and access of modern results with this year's pennant finals able to be followed progressively on the Golf Victoria website through Golfbox. It is anticipated that other statistical data, such as sand saves, driving accuracy and putting stats will in future be added and used as a teaching and developmental reference.

The history project will enable, for example, the outstanding pennant record of Marc Leishman, with 65.78% wins in his six seasons of pennant at the turn of the millennium, to be compared with the records of some of the great pennant players of other eras like Kevin Hartley, Harry Williams and Bill Edgar and today's best amateurs like Dave Micheluzzi and Matias Sanchez.

Similarly, the recent record of Su Oh can be lined up with Mona MacLeod, Sandra McCaw, Louise Briers and today's players like Stephanie Bunque and Alex Hilliard.

Ironically, the pennant records of Geoff Ogilvy and Andrew Getson are currently incomplete because both were playing in the missing season of 1994.

Once the system is set up, the model can be extended to enable country clubs and VGL clubs to record their own records and statistical data.

If you can help track down missing results, contact Ben Sweeney at ben.sweeney@golfvic.org.au or telephone (03) 8545 6216.

And if you have that missing file, a blue lever-arch file book borrowed from the old VGA office, please hand it back!

The years have clouded the detail, but Andrew Getson remembers the day he played Geoff Ogilvy at Whittlesea in what was the first pennant season for both in long and colourful careers in golf.

Speaking from his hotel room near the TPC at Sawgrass in Florida, the day before the Players Championship in May, Getson said he couldn't remember the scoreline but recalled it was over before the 18th hole. "The 18th was a par-three and I know we didn't play that one. You can write I won 8&7 if you like, because I think it was the only time I ever beat him!"

In fact, the score was 4&3, the first of many times the two would play, both in tournament competition and in social and practice rounds, particularly when they found themselves as young Aussies trying to make their way in the US.

Just talking about it brings more detailed recollection and Getson offers that he did beat Ogilvy one other time, in a Division One match when he had moved from Cranbourne to Commonwealth and Ogilvy had switched from Cheltenham to Victoria.



PHIL'S AUSSIE SWING GURU

"That was on the Peninsula North course and I think I beat him 2&1. But he has had me the rest of his career. We played a lot of golf over the years and I could never beat him."

While close in their younger days, the inevitable different directions and commitments have seen them drift apart with the passing years. But they still cross paths on the US Tour, where Ogilvy is playing his last full-time season as a US resident before returning home to live and Getson is touring a lot of the year as the swing coach for Phil Mickelson and

other tour players including 2017 Players Championship winner Si Woo Kim and two-time PGA Tour winner Kevin Streelman.

Getson's appointment by Mickelson has elevated him to a position he couldn't have imagined when he considered heading home, tail between his legs, after an unsuccessful stint on the then Nationwide secondary tour back in 2006 – the year, coincidentally, of Ogilvy's US Open win.

Getson was introduced to golf by his father, a 'weekend warrior' at Cranbourne,

Pennant was a great time in my life, playing some great courses. I look back on it as one of the core things I have ever done in golf.



Commonwealth club champion Andrew Getson. Photo courtesy Commonwealth GC.

and he came under the care of then club pro Peter McKillop. "Peter had a great little junior program and he took a shine to me. I used to live at Cranbourne on school holidays. I love Cranbourne, great golf course."

After a couple of years at Cranbourne, Getson moved to Commonwealth because it was so close to his home. There he won the club championship, won selection to the state team, and played number one in pennant, honing his game for the ultimate dream of turning pro.

"With junior pennant at Cranbourne and six or seven years at Commonwealth, I probably played over ten years," Getson recalled. "Pennant was a great time in my life, playing some great courses. I look back on it as one of the core things I have ever done in golf."

When he turned professional, he played in Asia first until Ogilvy and another contemporary Steve Allan encouraged him to try the US. "I played a bit on the mini tours and got a card on the Nationwide Tour ... but I just didn't play that well.

"I was going to head home but I had an opportunity to start teaching. A guy in Phoenix thought I had a knack for teaching and said, 'why don't you stay for a year?'"

That was at Grayhawk Golf Club in Scottsdale, Arizona, where the year has turned into a decade plus. "I loved it," Getson recalled. "I got a lot of top junior players and college kids, kids that have won the US Amateur."

A few of his pupils turned pro but club-based teaching was his bread and butter and Getson was happily sailing under the radar until three years ago when Phil Mickelson

was looking for a guru to replace Butch Harmon and reignite his career.

"In 2015 the phone rang and Phil Mickelson called. That was a shock for me and an honour for me."

Getson is unwilling to go into detail about his relationship with Mickelson but the American, who played his college golf in Arizona, has been a member of Grayhawk since its inception in the early '90s.

He had struggled in recent years with form and fitness but 2018, at 47, has seen a return to something like his mercurial form of old. He won the WGC Mexico Championship, becoming the oldest winner of a WGC event.

Getson spends about 30 weeks a year on the road with Mickelson, Kim and Streelman and continues to teach the rest of the time at Grayhawk. It's been a couple of years since he has had time to get back home but he has one particular goal for his return.

"I'm hoping to come back for the Presidents Cup at the end of next year and hopefully some of the players I am teaching will be playing," he said. "That would be a great thrill for me."

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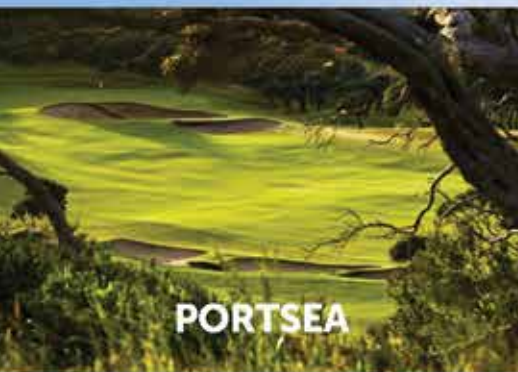
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LUCAS BOUND FOR CARNOUSTIE

Young Victorian pro Lucas Herbert has had a stunning six months, chalking up six top-10 finishes, including three on the European Tour, and climbing more than 500 spots on the world rankings. As the 22-year-old prepares for his first British Open, he tells CHARLES HAPPELL he can hardly wait.

Having qualified earlier this year for the British Open at Carnoustie in July, Lucas Herbert wasted no time getting to know the iconic and devilishly difficult Scottish links.

The young Victorian, who has won rave reviews in his short time as a professional, earned his ticket to golf's oldest major with a sparkling performance at the Singapore Open in January, where he finished eighth behind winner Sergio Garcia – good enough for one of the four qualifying berths on offer.

On a trip to the UK in May, after a club-fitting session at Wentworth, Herbert and his coach Dominic Azzopardi made the trip up to east Scotland to reacquaint himself with Carnoustie.

He had played the course previously during the 2015 British Amateur championship and even though he did not qualify for the matchplay section of the tournament, retained strong memories of the Angus links and its many idiosyncrasies.

The prevailing wind from the south-west was blowing when he visited, giving him a good feel for the course as it'll be set up in the third week of July, and the strategies he'll need to employ.

But in talking to a few people at the club during his stay, Herbert felt that the course was going to be set up in a way that was much fairer on the field than the nightmare experience of 1999, when the rough was knee-high and fairways not much wider than an average backyard.

As many will remember, Paul Lawrie finished with a six-over-par aggregate score then took advantage of Jean Van de Velde's catastrophic collapse on the 72nd hole to eventually win the championship in a three-man playoff. The nickname 'Carnasty' was born and the club has been trying to live down that fearsome reputation ever since.

"I gather they don't want to make it as hard as they did in 1999, so the landing areas will be a bit wider and the rough not as long," Herbert said. "So I imagine, depending on the weather, a score somewhere around even par might be in the mix."

The Bendigo native walked around the links, which first hosted an Open in 1931 and has been the championship venue six times since, with Azzopardi and a local caddie whose CV included the Dunhill Links and British Senior Open, where he carried Mike Harwood's bag. "I tried to drill him on every hole for every bit of information I could," Herbert said.

He said the links suited his eye and placed a premium on long-iron play – which suits him just fine.

"The strength of my game is my driving and long irons off the tee," he said. "And I feel there'll be a stack of long irons off the tee, so that should play to my strengths; I feel like I'll have a bit of an advantage over the field."

Herbert won his way to Carnoustie after a heart-stopping finale in Singapore. He finished in a tie for eighth alongside





Bendigo's Lucas Herbert is making his way on the pro circuit with a string of top-10 performances.

Gavin Green, Miguel Tabuena and Berry Henson at six under – but Green had already sealed his place after topping the 2017 Asian Tour Order of Merit. So Herbert had to watch through parted fingers as Henson had a birdie putt on the final green to snatch the fourth qualifying spot. Fortunately for the Australian, it fell short, enabling him to secure the final place courtesy of his higher world ranking, ahead of both Henson and Tabuena.

The sequence of events had him beaming with delight. "I'm so excited to be heading to The Open – a dream come true," the 22-year-old said. "It's been a big summer, but now I've got an even bigger winter ahead – I'm pumped."

Jason Day, Adam Scott, Marc Leishman, Matt Jones, Cameron Davis and Brett Rumford are the other Aussies already locked in for The Open. The 1991 winner Ian Baker-Finch is also exempt as an Open Champion aged 60 or under but he has not taken his place in the field since withdrawing in 1997.

Herbert announced himself as a player with a rosy future after his massive summer at home, where he finished second in the NSW Open in November then, the following week, led the Australian Open by two shots going in to the back nine on Sunday before

being overrun by the impressive Davis. He ended up coming sixth.

His three weeks after that were no less impressive: a tie for seventh at the Australian PGA, tie for eighth in Singapore then a third-placed finish at the World Super 6 in Perth. Suddenly, the prizemoney was, if not pouring in, then arriving in a steady trickle. "From the money I made at the end of last year, I went and bought a TV and I went and bought a couch and I was like, 'man, I earned that. I practised hard and I earned that'. You feel really good about it."

The roller-coaster ride that is professional golf took him through a dip, as he missed the cut in two European Tour events, the Oman Open in February and China Open in May, the latter with rounds of 75 and 79.

But then he bounced back in stunning fashion at the Rocco Forte Sicilian Open in mid-May, shooting a final-round 63 to finish just one stroke out of a playoff. Playing the tournament on invite, Herbert began Sunday in ninth position but birdied eight of 15 holes from the fourth, including three of the last four, to vault up the leaderboard – and announce himself to the world's second biggest tour as a star in the making.

His third-place cheque for \$88,700 (€56,000) supplemented his European

Tour earnings of \$106,000 from finishing third in Perth and the \$41,200 for his seventh placing at the Australian PGA Championship. And his world ranking improved to 143, having been 708 following the Queensland Open last October.

The Sicily tournament also opened more opportunities for Herbert, who will have played six tournaments in the two months leading up to The Open, either in Europe or Canada before arriving in Carnoustie on the Friday before the Open, to resume his education at the links which has had among its Open winners Tom Watson, Ben Hogan, Gary Player and Henry Cotton.

"I remember watching Pdraig Harrington winning The Open (in 2007) after the play-off and Sergio just missing that putt on the final green. Those were my first memories of watching The Open," he said.

Then an even bigger step. Herbert won his US Open qualifying tournament by three shots to earn a place at Shinnecock Hills in New York in June. That experience will be invaluable when he arrives in Carnoustie on the Friday before the Open, to resume his education at the links which has had among its Open winners Tom Watson, Ben Hogan, Gary Player and Henry Cotton.



A SUPER CONTRIBUTION

In May, the Australian Golf Course Superintendents' Association held Thank Your Superintendent Week to acknowledge the responsibility and pressure of looking after a golf course. MIKE CLAYTON pays his own tribute to a super bunch.

When I started playing golf, the men who looked after golf courses were known as curators. It has always been a 24-hour, seven days a week job, an often thankless one and always open to, mostly uninformed, scrutiny and criticism.

Merv Humphries was the man at Eastern in 1969 and one night, just after I had started caddying but before I was old enough to join, he caught me sneaking in a few holes before dark. He could have been angry and kicked me off but instead it was a more than kindly, 'just stay out of the road of the members and you will be fine.'

Claude Crockford was the doyen from decades of caring for Royal Melbourne and few anywhere in the world did it better, even if he was an extremist when it came to the speed of the greens in the many big events where he was charged with arranging the golf course.

At some point, the curators became greenkeepers and now all are universally

known as superintendents. Presumably it's all a part of the Americanisation of the language of golf, and not something we should be blindingly following. A two on a par five is an albatross and not a double eagle, the place for practice is a practice fairway, not a range, and it's a pin position as opposed to the infernal American television affectation, 'hole location'.

Either way, they are now superintendents and it's a job with a thousand bosses, most of whom could grow grass at least as well and who want, with unceasing certainty, to know why the bunkers aren't 'consistent' or as good as the ones they played down the road last week. Normally the 'members down the road' think the same of their bunkers, wanting to know why theirs aren't as good as the ones up the road.

For the vast majority of members, the measure of the job is the quality of the fairways and the greens.



Legendary curator Claude Crockford

So long as there are no bad lies and the ball runs purely on putting greens, the job is safe.

The superintendent's job, however, involves working with all manner of weather and climates and committees, often with at least one person who thinks they know more about how to do the job. Then there are those pesky things called budgets, something only the man at Augusta National never has to worry about.

Augusta is itself the bane of the lives of many because its 'perfection' has led to an expectation of unreasonable standards, which don't really add much to the game. 'Perfect' is fine and an admirable goal but 70 percent of 'perfect' is often just as fine and no detraction from the golf. And, not one super in Australia is working with remotely close to 70 percent of Augusta's budget.

Unquestionably, the standards of the playing surfaces in Melbourne, the Mornington and Bellarine Peninsulas and generally around the state have significantly improved in the past 35 years and it's been largely superintendent-driven.

Until the late 1970s in Melbourne, the fairways were a mix of cool season grasses, mostly poa-annua.

It thrived in the winter, was beautiful to chip off around the green because it had no grain and as the weather warmed up in the spring and early summer, it would 'drought out' to be replaced by the running couch grass.

In the late 1970s, Graeme Grant, a protege of Crockford, transformed the fairways at Kingswood by adopting the policy of ridding the course of poa and replacing it with 'santa ana' a new form of couch grass offering better lies than the earlier generation of 'common couch' grasses Crockford and his contemporaries managed.

All the sandbelt courses eventually followed Kingswood's lead and Grant, his reputation enhanced, headed down the road to Kingston Heath and set about establishing its reputation as one of the best-conditioned courses in the world.

His brother Bruce was the keeper of the greens at Victoria, then The Lakes, before spending more than 20 years managing The National's courses as well as Portsea.

Never once did anyone go to a course Bruce Grant was managing and find it anything other than faultless. Unless, that is, he was in the process of smashing poa in the greens and replacing it with the bent grasses he and Crockford so revered as a putting surface.

The superintendent's job, however, involves working with all manner of weather and climates and committees, often with at least one person who thinks they know more about how to do the job.

"In this game", he would often say, "you are measured by the quality of your greens."

Grant also understood the difference between 'perfect fairways' and fairways that were 'perfect for golf'.

As long as the ball bounced, the lies were good but not necessarily the same or always 'perfect', and they reflected something of the weather and the season, he was happy. The fairways at Portsea didn't have to be the verdant green of Augusta and he didn't have the water anyway.

His measure was how well they played and his knowledge came from an abiding understanding of how to play the game and how it was best played. Crockford had taught the two brothers well and they, in turn, passed their knowledge down to the generation following.

The 'condition' of the course is almost always assumed to be the condition of the playing surfaces – the fairways, greens and

the bunkers – and their state is so often how a course is judged. For every person commenting on the architectural merits, or demerits, of a course, there are dozens who comment on the condition as if it's a more important measure of the worth of a course.

Of course the 'condition' is important, especially if it impacts on how the ball bounces and rolls, but it's the architecture which creates the abiding interest, or lack of it, and superintendents have a critical role to play in maintaining the architectural standards. As Gil Hanse, the American architect of the Olympic course in Rio, has often said, "I can only do so much but after we've left, it's up to the superintendent to maintain what we've built. They are the ones who can make it or break it."

The 'mowing lines' or where the grass is cut short and how the edges of the short grass meld into the rough and the hazards are so important to the look and play of a course. In Melbourne, the superintendents have nearly always got them right.

The fairways run all the way to the fairway bunkers (as opposed to the curious habit of Americans where so many of the bunkers are surrounded by rough) and the fairways themselves are kept as wide as the original architects intended. None of them, in an attempt to mitigate the effects of the modern ball, have narrowed the fairways and grown more rough, something many Americans see as the solution to the problem of the technology.

Short grass is used beautifully and elegantly around the greens both as a hazard, sweeping the misdirected shot away from the green, as well as offering good lies to play a multitude of chips and pitch shots.

The other part of maintenance most members never consider is that it's the job of the staff to manage everything inside the fences and not just the playing surfaces. Crockford was the master of managing the vegetation, both the trees and the beautiful heathland plants so abundant at Royal Melbourne.

The condition of the playing surfaces comes and goes a bit like the form of a player but the managing of the off-fairway areas is critical to the real condition of the property and the best superintendents understand it and set their courses up for generations to come, just as Crockford did all those years ago.

And lest you think superintendents aren't an important part of 'growing the game', reflect back to Merv Humphries and the incredible kindness he showed a small boy almost 50 years ago.

Golf Victoria **2018** **HONOUR ROLL**

MEN'S PENNANT



• Division 1: Metropolitan d. Huntingdale 4-3



• Division 4: Sandhurst d. Riversdale 4-3



• Division 5: Medway d. Cranbourne 5-2



• Division 2: Royal Melbourne d. Yarra Yarra 5-2



• Division 3: Keysborough d. The Heritage 4-3



• Division 2: Kingston Heath d. Green Acres 5-2



• Division 3: Woodlands d. Centenary Park 4-3



• Division 2: The National d. Yarra Yarra 4½-½



• Division 3: Cranbourne d. Heidelberg 4-1



• Division 2: Huntingdale d. Yarra Yarra 4-3



• Division 3: Eynesbury d. Northern 5-2



• Division 6: Eastern d. Whittlesea 5½-1½



• Division 1: Commonwealth d. Huntingdale 4-3



• Division 4: Rosedale d. Settler's Run 5-2



• Division 1: Huntingdale d. Commonwealth 5½-1½



• Division 4: Spring Valley d. Ranfurlye 6-1



• Division 1: Commonwealth d. Royal Melbourne 3-2



• Division 4: Box Hill d. Sandhurst 3-2



• Division 5: Bacchus Marsh d. Green Acres 4-1

WOMEN'S PENNANT



FRIDAY WOMEN'S PENNANT



COLTS PENNANT



Taking pictures of golf courses for a living sounds like a dream career. Melbourne photographer Gary Lisbon tells GRAHAM ECCLES he loves nothing more than hitting the fairway, camera in hand, looking for the perfect shot.



The man behind the lens... Gary Lisbon at work. Photo by: Daniel Pockett

There is something magical about a golf course when shadows lengthen across the fairways in the fading light of a warm summer's evening.

New York Times writer Bill Pennington summed it up perfectly some years back when he wrote that, compared with all the mainstream sports, golf has no equal in terms of setting.

"There are hundreds of golf courses that jut into the ocean, hundreds more that wind through forests, hundreds more with majestic mountain views and hundreds more that flow through parkland valleys," he wrote.

"Stand on the 18th tee at Pebble Beach, a few feet from the Pacific Ocean with the spray from the waves landing softly on your shoulders..." Well, I think you get the picture. Gary Lisbon certainly does, because that's been his life's work for many years.

What started out as a passionate hobby eventually led this equally passionate golfer to establish himself at the forefront of golf landscape photography in Australia. Lisbon estimates that he

WHAT



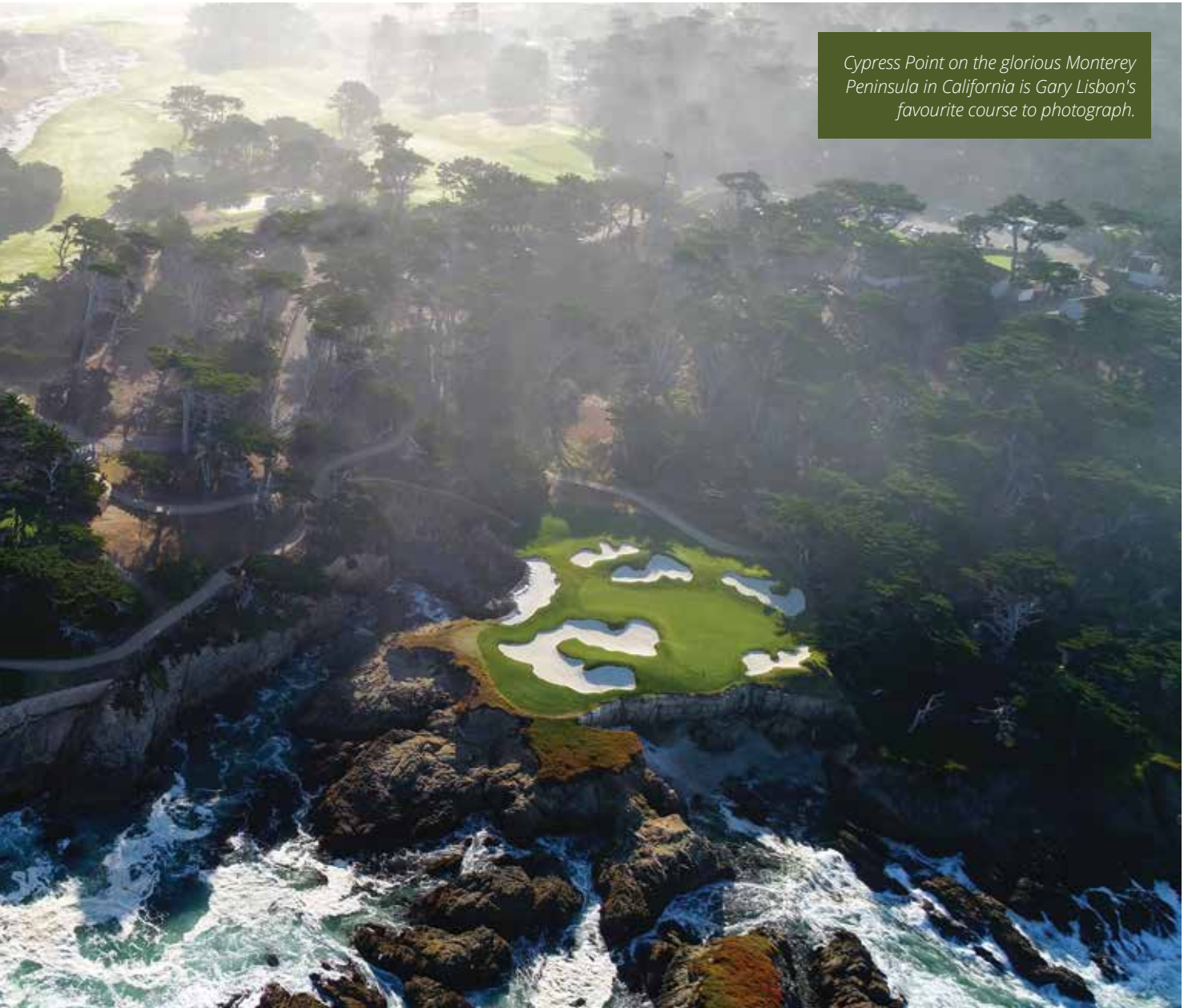
has so far photographed over 500 courses in 21 countries.

He has just released his third volume of *Great Golf Down Under*, a compilation of images from 136 courses in Australia and New Zealand. Designed as coffee-table books with few words, the first two volumes each had a print run of 5000 copies and have sold out.

A chartered accountant with KPMG for many years, Lisbon developed his love of golf photography into a full-time occupation as part of the corporate golf and golf holiday business he established in 1998, *Golf Select*.

"I started taking pictures at places like Kingston Heath and so forth and things just grew from there," he recalled. "I think I am

A SHOT!



Cypress Point on the glorious Monterey Peninsula in California is Gary Lisbon's favourite course to photograph.

blessed to be able to do something every day that I love doing. Every day is different.

"If I contrast it with my accounting days working in town for a big city firm Monday to Friday, I only had time for golf and my hobby at weekends.

"Now I could be in Australia or overseas taking photos of golf courses, videos

and a whole manner of stuff any day of the week. It's all so varied."

As Pennington wrote, it's the setting that is all important to Lisbon. The vista is his focus and most of the time the images are devoid of people.

"I think the only shoot I have done recently that included golfers was a

job for Tourism Victoria. They wanted a fresh series of images of the sandbelt – but with talent," he said. "So we got Jo Charlton from Metropolitan and Mick Burgess from Sorrento to model for us."

Taking pretty pictures of golf courses is not always plain sailing, particularly when bad weather intervenes. "It can really muck up your day, big time," Lisbon said.



“The best light for landscape photography is either sunrise or an hour and a bit afterwards and again at sunset minus one and a half hours. These are the best times when the sun is at its lowest and the shadows are long.

“There’s a richness and warmth in the colours, too. So if there is cloud cover, it really is a wasted day. We did a shoot in Fiji at Denarau a few years ago where we had four days to do the job. There was torrential rain for three and a half days, then the sun came out and we had a two-hour window.

“We ran around like headless chooks grabbing shots wherever we could. We’ve had other weather events too, like in North Queensland where we had to reschedule after losing virtually the whole week.”

When it comes to cameras, Lisbon says he has always been a fan of the digital Canon 5D Mark 1V with a variety of lenses. His favourite and most-used lens is a 24-105mm. And he loves digital “because you shoot and then see the image. If you don’t like it, you simply take another shot”.

He has also fallen in love with drone photography, which he says has added an aerial element to his work. “You get some fantastic images from the air because you really see the look, shape and feel of the course, whether it is the contrast between fairway and rough or, in the case of the sandbelt, the distinctive bunkering,” he said.

“Previously I would go up in helicopters, but they are very expensive and limiting as to where you can go and what you can shoot. They are not always available when you want them, so the advent of drones makes me feel like a kid in a lolly shop.



Left: Looking down the 13th hole of the Cathedral Golf Course in Victoria and (right) the 13th hole of Arrowtown in Queenstown, New Zealand... just two of the magnificent shots in Lisbon's latest book.

"I've only been using them for 18 months and it annoys me to think of the shots I have missed by coming to drones fairly late."

Lisbon's constant smile faded when the subject turned to the tragedy that engulfed him last year when a plane Golf Select had chartered to fly three American golfers to King Island crashed on takeoff from Essendon Airport, killing all five on board.

Lisbon said it was very close to home on a number of fronts. One of the

passengers, Glen Garland, was a good friend who had organized three of his buddies to join him on a golfing holiday in Australia. "We had dinner with them and their wives the night before," Lisbon said.

"I was actually going to fly with them but another engagement came up and I pulled out. It all became quite surreal when I got a phone call asking if I had heard about a plane crash at Essendon. There was so much misinformation before we found out it was their plane.

"My wife Maureen and I went straight to the hotel and spent the next three days with their wives. We are still in contact more than a year later. The whole thing is still very raw for all of us."

Golf Select in Malvern East has been operating for 20 years, organising corporate golf days and golfing holidays for people either going overseas or coming into Australia and New Zealand. The firm will shortly escort 18 people to Carnoustie in Scotland for the British Open.

"Photography, of course, is a key part of our business," he said. "It helps greatly to be able to showcase nice imagery to people we are trying to entice to Australia, particularly

Americans who want to play our sandbelt along with King Island, Barnbungle and the top New Zealand courses."

But ask Lisbon his favourite course to photograph and it's on the other side of the Pacific: Cypress Point on the glorious Monterey Peninsula in California.

"It's a real standout, a place where you could play golf every day for the rest of your life," he said. "It's special in so many ways. It's free from people, has beautiful holes that are through the trees, through the dunes and beside the ocean. It's a very, very special place."

Sounds quite like that spray landing softly on one's shoulders at Pebble Beach.

Great Golf Down Under
VOLUME THREE

PHOTOGRAPHY BY GARY LISBON
FOREWORD BY MICHAEL OLAYTON

Great Golf Down Under Volume Three is available online at www.greatgolfdownunder.com.au or from Golf Select, 405 Waverley Rd, East Malvern, Victoria 3145.

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Perfect STORMS

Like many country golf clubs, Barham faces plenty of challenges. But as ANDREW MARMONT reports, it faces them with enthusiasm, innovation and the dedicated commitment of members like Liz and Geoff Storm.



Dynamic couple ... Liz and Geoff Storm have made Barham an important part of their lives.



Liz Storm is the first female president of Barham.

It was only when Geoff Storm's back started to ache from too much footy that he decided to take up golf.

That was in the early 1980s. Now, more than 30 years later, he and wife Liz have dedicated their lives to the sport and, in particular, Barham Golf Club.

The couple has contributed to the club's standing as a popular attraction for visitors to south-west New South Wales through their years of service on committees and around the club. And last year, Liz was appointed the club's first female president in its 105-year existence.

Barham Golf Club manager Tony Freeman summed up their contribution to the club succinctly. "As with all golf clubs, the core group is what makes good clubs tick and they've been part of the core group for a very long time," he said.

"They're enormously well-liked and they're a dynamic couple. Their energy and enthusiasm, particularly with Liz, our president. Her caring nature in regard to the club is enormous."

Liz's love of golf started as a youngster playing around the family farm in nearby Kerang. "When we were kids, we had a farm and had paddocks and would take the golf clubs and chip it around," she said.

"Mum was always off to golf. It was always part of my life – I always knew what golf was about."

Geoff was a keen sportsman – cricket and Aussie rules were his preferred pastimes – and after meeting Liz, they moved to Barham. After settling into family life, Geoff decided to get more involved with the golf

club including stints on the committee in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

He was also club captain from 1984-87. It was during this time that Liz put her hand up too. "Because he was captain, I became quite involved because he was working and there were lots of things he couldn't do," she said.

"A tournament secretary was needed. I thought I could do that and did that for quite a few years. I got very involved. Then I started playing golf too."

Both husband and wife took turns in leadership roles at the club. Along with Geoff's board and committee roles, Liz had six years on the women's and was appointed the club's vice-president for five years.

The two committees formed a general one, and she was approached to apply for the presidency.

Liz felt it was time to step up and generate positive change. "I suppose I'm one of those people – if you've got something to say, you should get yourself involved and be part of the organising committee," she said.

"I find it hard to believe there are a lot of people who are not interested, but they are very quick to knock what goes on. Always been a person to think I'd like to be on a committee, like to be busy, be involved. Always willing to help at any stage. I always have been."

There are challenges as a small and isolated club: an ageing membership, a transient visitor base and lack of juniors.

The club, affiliated with Golf Victoria's northern district, has 188 full members,

of which around 50 are women. Barham has been without a club professional since the pro retired last year. Jane Wall, a former pro, leads the ladies now as an amateur and also helps on the committee. But more is needed to keep Barham's golf club thriving.

"Sometimes it's not easy to implement change," Liz said. "Our members are happy. We have a wonderful little club. But we've got an ageing club, which is a worry to us, as probably a lot of clubs have.

"We tried to do ladies' clinics a couple of years ago when our professional was here. The girls come and would be enthusiastic, but are working or have young children, or are involved in football and netball – which is such a big part of country town life. It's hard to get people to come and be interested in golf."

One way is to take part in the thriving annual pro-am event in September which brings a flood of visitors to the course including plenty from Melbourne. Around 250 golfers participate on the first two days and another 160 on the third day.

"When I used to do the tournament secretary role, you'd have to be quick to get your entries in," Liz said. "It is still very popular. It brings a lot of people into town – the course has been extremely busy recently."

Liz says the mixture of small-town appeal and a relaxed vibe makes the event a long-standing and successful fixture. "It's a little bit more informal," she said. "A bit more relaxed, it's got a pretty happy atmosphere and the town's small. It's maybe something that appeals, and you can go to the local club or pub."

With Liz's rise into a more public role, Geoff continues to be active with the club behind the scenes, leading the 'Dad's Army' to help out. "They're a very hard-working bunch of fellas that get out there Monday mornings and devote their time to the golf course – tree planning and looking after odd jobs around the golf course," Geoff said.

The club's active volunteer community – in collaboration with the greenkeeping staff – have contributed to the greens and some holes have changed over the past decade.

So what makes the couple dedicate the last 30 years to their local golf club? They love the sport and the people who play it.

"I enjoy the comradeship with golfers, and I enjoy watching golf," Liz said. "Hopefully my grandchildren will play golf. There's plenty of time."

Heathcote Parties Like It's 1928



Tristen and Stephanie Wearne in party mode.

They partied with true country spirit when Heathcote Golf Club, about 110 kilometres north of Melbourne, turned 90 in April. EVAN HARDING looks at the integral relationship between the club and the town.

On the site of an old racecourse, amid a region now more recognised for its wine, the community of Heathcote has celebrated a constant across both those eras – its golf club.

Not that Heathcote Golf Club has stood still in its 90-year history. Far from it – in fact, the club's growth over the decades is a tribute to the people of Central Victoria, who devoted a full day in April to party and honour the club so dear to their hearts.

Heathcote's story typifies the relationship between many golf clubs and country towns.

"We only have one employee, so the rest of it is all voluntary – the kitchen, the bar work, out on the golf course," said Bryan Wearne, the club's vice-president. "I could count over 20 people that regularly donate their time, and in fact weekly, putting in time here at the club."

Wearne, who also serves as the club secretary, assistant treasurer and, as a professional, does a bit of coaching ("I have a number of hats"), has been a member of Heathcote since 1985, just a few years before the club changed its greens from sandscrape to grass with significant help from the then-Shire of Mclvor.

"They allowed us to use their machinery, we only had to buy sand and irrigation



Left to right – Christine Scott, Lachlan McLean, Molly McLean, Kate McLean and Dot Trott enjoy the party. Club treasurer Craig Hough is DJ at rear.

equipment to build the 18 greens. When you talk about hiring trucks and bulldozers, you talk about thousands and thousands of dollars but we were lucky enough to have that given to us."

Of course, it's not a one-way street – the golf club is also doing plenty for the community.

"We run a lot of charity days throughout the year, we are a fairly popular place for birthday parties, anniversaries, wakes, all sorts of things, so we're a pretty strong part of the community here," Wearne said.

Heathcote's 90th anniversary celebrations also saw Stephanie Wearne and Mitchell Hogg top a field featuring players from all around the area in the Golf Central Victoria District Mixed Championship, with a gross score of 74 in the Pinehurst event.

And the day ended up being a real Wearne family affair, with Bryan's wife Tristen, vice-president of Golf Central Victoria, helping run the day, while other daughter Chelsea, a handy golfer herself who often fights out the club championship with Stephanie, getting the festivities started by 'winning' the morning golf cart race around the old racecourse.

"It wasn't really a race, because not everyone knew where the track was. We had it sort of marked out," Bryan Wearne said. "Chelsea was in the lead car and most of the people just followed her around!"

The return of racing, in some form at least, to Heathcote for the first time in half a century was a fitting start to proceedings, given the club's beginnings on the site.

Although golf had been played in Heathcote beforehand, it wasn't until the Heathcote Racing Club allowed the golfers to use the recreation reserve in 1928 that the sport really started to take hold in the town. And when costs forced the racing club to close in 1969, Heathcote Golf Club took over management of the recreation reserve.

A handful of players have been around since that time, with the 90th anniversary dinner seeing long-time club members given certificates to recognise those who have been around for 40 and 50 years, with one even closing in on a 60th year at the club.

The dinner was attended by the Mayor of the City of Greater Bendigo Mrs Margaret O'Rourke, Cr Yvonne Wrigglesworth, Golf Victoria President Mr Stephen Spargo and Golf Central Victoria President Mr Daniel Nancarrow.

As Heathcote Golf Club continues to push towards 100 years, those members are fully aware it needs to adapt just as it has done over the last 90. And Heathcote's growing fame as a region for some of the country's best shiraz is part of that future.

"I think these days if we were just to survive on golf we probably wouldn't survive," said Wearne. "We have a fairly busy social night on Friday – we probably have more social members now than we ever had in the past – and with Heathcote really booming in the wine business, we've got to be able to tap into all those people that travel this way."

The annual Heathcote Wine and Food Festival will be held on 6-7 October.

It was a full house to celebrate Heathcote's 90th.



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SHORT AND SWEET



There's something about a par-three hole which brings hope, every time a golfer walks to the tee. **JARROD LYLE** looks at his favourite short holes and nominates his top six.

I love par threes and, in particular, I love short par-three holes. They can define a golf course, whether in a positive or a negative way, and in that sense, we're very lucky in Australia, where we have some crackers.

It flabbergasted me to go around the world and see how crazy-long the designers are starting to make their par-threes. For instance, at the US Open at Oakmont in 2016, they stretched one out to 288 yards (263 metres), the longest par-three ever in that tournament.

I've actually played that hole, the eighth, and it's a brute. It was just after they popped in the new back tees there, and I hit driver and came up short of the green! To me, the best par-threes are short and they are visually challenging. A lot of them are in this country, although my favourite is in the Arizona desert.

1.

TPC SCOTTSDALE, ARIZONA 16th hole, 149 metres

Play this one outside a tournament week and it's probably easy. But at the Phoenix Open, aka the Waste Management Open, on the US PGA Tour, it's complete madness. It's Super Bowl weekend and they get up to 200,000 people on the course on the Saturday, many of them drunk and loud. About 30,000 of them will be at the party hole, the 16th, with its amphitheatre effect.

Which is where I hit my most famous single shot in golf, a hole-in-one at the Open in 2011.

You walk through the tunnel under the grandstand and on to that tee and it's the golfer's equivalent of going down the race for an AFL grand final. The noise hits you in the face, a wall of sound, and they are not all there to support you, either. A lot of them want to put you off; they'd just as rather you hit a bad shot so they can get on your case.



Jarrod Lyle's hole-in-one at Scottsdale was a YouTube sensation.



The short holes at Yarra Yarra are famous, this the 15th .

Photo: Paul Shire

I've always said that if you gave me the first tee shot in a major, or that tee shot at Scottsdale, I'd say that Scottsdale is more nerve-wracking. A few guys don't especially like it, because it's so different to your week-to-week golf tournament where the crowds are respectful and quiet. Personally, I love it.

My shot in 2011 was an eight-iron with a little taken off it. In the air, I was asking for it to sit down, but it bounced in the right place and, BANG, disappeared into the cup. The crowd went completely ballistic – I've never heard a louder crowd on a golf course – and so did I, with a double fist pump and a little expletive which is easily lip-read if you watch it on YouTube. Something like: 'You ****ing beauty!'

When I turned up in the clubhouse the next day, my name was already on the board in the clubhouse. I reckon if you were going to pick a spot to do it, then that's the one.

2.

ROYAL MELBOURNE WEST 5th hole, 161m

What a golf hole! Royal Melbourne's my favourite track and the par threes are just one of the reasons why.

This one is played over a big valley which means that if you are short, you end up down in the ravine. Go long and you have to chip back down the back-to-front tilted green. Find the bunkers on the left and right and you have a near-impossible up-and-down.

You hear about people putting off the green here and it's no surprise. It's not long – I'm hitting seven-iron or so – but the thing is, you have to be precise with every single shot. You can't get away with anything here, no let-up from the moment you tee it up until it goes in the hole.

3.

YARRA YARRA 15th hole, 149 m

A classic par three where I had two holes-in-one in a day in 2015. It was the Challenge Charity Day, and I was out the back hitting balls as part of the fundraising, where people would chuck in 50 bucks and see if they could hit it closer than me.

The green has a big ridge through the middle which means if the pin's on the back, you have to hit a perfect golf shot. If it's on the front, you can work it back off the ridge and get it close but I've hit four-iron into that hole into a stiff southerly!

In 2015, I spun a nine-iron shot back off the ridge and into the cup in the morning, then in the afternoon a group of guys who I knew quite well came through. One guy hit it to five feet and the other to three feet and they were quite chirpy. I stepped up and hit a wedge that came back down the slope, threaded its way through their two golf balls and disappeared. They lost their cash!

4.

KINGSTON HEATH

10th hole, 130m

Another short par three makes the grade. I love this one, which, unfortunately, they tend to drop out in tournament weeks so that they can build a corporate area. It's too good a hole for that.

It's only a wedge shot or even a sand wedge to a front flag, but it's challenging – a bit like the Postage Stamp at Royal Troon, or 17 at Sawgrass and a few others where you can walk off with a four or five and say: 'I just hit a wedge to a par-three and made five.'

There is nowhere to miss here. Even if you're on the green, you make your three and think: 'That's not too bad'.

5.

ROYAL MELBOURNE WEST

7th hole, 135m

Another sandbelt classic, this one is intimidating because you can't see the green surface from the tee. If the flag is on the right, it literally looks as though it is in the bunker.

It's a nine-iron or a wedge, and on the tee you feel like you should go for the flag. Realistically, a lot of times you are better to aim left, hit it to 20 feet, and take your medicine. You will run to the next tee. But go left and long and you are in the trap, where it's all downhill to the flag.

It sums up the greatness of Royal Melbourne, and it is the essence of a great par three.

6.

SHEPPARTON GOLF CLUB

5th hole, 162m

I have to put one in from my hometown! I grew up playing this track and I always loved the fifth, where myself and my mates would have up-and-down competitions from the deep bunker on the right of the green. I must have been in that bunker 100 times in my life and maybe got up-and-down 10 times ...

When I was a kid I used to hit four-wood in here; now it would be a seven-iron or so. It's a long, narrow green and if you are a natural fader, you can aim at the left trap and feed it back in. But I have seen guys take five and six shots in the right trap and then blade it straight out and into the left bunker.

The seventh West at Royal Melbourne is the essence of a great par three.

Photo: Gary Lisbon



Shepparton's fifth hole is uphill, with a narrow green and bunkers either side.

Photo courtesy Shepparton GC

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CARR DRIVEN TO GROW THE GAME

Megan Carr knows sport as a player, coach and administrator. JANELLE WARD meets a woman determined to grow golf from the inside.



As a regional development officer for Golf Victoria, Megan Carr is helping clubs in her area grow the game. At the same time, she is those clubs' perfect challenge – a busy professional who is keen to play but, with a young family, is time poor.

"My situation makes a good starting point for the clubs I talk to," she says. "I tell them, 'I'm a beginner, what does your club offer someone like me?'"

It's one area where professional and personal knowledge converge perfectly.

Carr has been Regional Development Officer for the North East, Goulburn Murray and Dalhousie golf districts – covering about 12,500 golfers across 63 clubs - for about 22 months.

Her challenge in a nutshell? Grow the game, get more women, men and children into golf, streamline committees, assist club volunteers, rethink 'the way things have always been done'.

She has an extensive CV in sports administration, deciding at an early age that sport was where she wanted to be.

Her journey saw her move from Sydney to Shepparton 15 years ago and through such roles as sports facility organiser with the Shepparton City Council and regional coordinator for the Active After Schools Committees Program. Over almost six years there, Carr helped develop community coaching under the Australian Sports Commission's "Play for Life" initiative.

"We would train the coaches and help the schools get funds," she says. "We would then place coaches into schools and work with them to run programs that were inclusive, safe and high intensity. The ultimate aim was to help children develop a lifelong love of sport."

While she knows governance procedures, funding options, structures, strategies and pathways inside out, she also benefits from having been on the opposite side of the fence – playing netball, hockey, tennis, soccer and now, golf.

Until 2016, soccer was her main game. She played both state league and A-Grade Women's in Sydney, resulting in five A-Grade premierships, and then played Open Women's division in Shepparton, collecting another nine premierships, many of them as captain and/or coach.

By the end of 2015, soccer had become too time-consuming due to further

studies and a growing family – and Carr is not one for not doing things well.

About the same time she accepted her current job with Golf Victoria, she joined Mooroopna and got a handicap, which is currently 26.3.

Which brings us back to her ambitions on and off the course.

How exactly do you go about growing golf in the region? How to lift the female participation rate, which currently sits at around 20 per cent nationally? How to help regional clubs survive and thrive?

"We offer clubs a two-pronged approach," says Carr. "First, there's the game development side to increase participation: link club programs to national beginner programs such as MyGolf and Swing Fit, and to schools, and make clubs aware of participation models and pathways to promote the game.

"Then we're also involved in building club health by providing them with support around governance, policy procedure, strategic planning, committee restructures – ultimately looking at sustainability."

Carr says one aspect of her role has involved working with districts and clubs to amalgamate men's and women's committees, with the North-East the most recent district to be amalgamated.

She says: "I talk to committees to find out what they do and share stories from clubs that are innovative in their approach. We look at the stats, the membership. If it's 80-20 males to females, how can we redress that? Can we have a day when the men in the club invite a female? And then how do we make the women feel included and keen to be a part of the club?"

Does she encounter resistance?

"Some found it hard initially to work through the changes and the impacts of those changes. But they're all there for the good of the game; their hearts are in the right place. Generally we just need to explain the benefits of change."

In her quest to boost the number of females in the area playing golf, Carr sought funding from Sport and Recreation Victoria; that funding is now being used to work with local Regional Sports Assemblies to analyse data from surveys and focus groups conducted in Broadford and Wangaratta. When did women want to play? Did they want social golf? Competition? Weekend golf? Should there be nine-hole competitions? Could there be sessions limited to one or two hours?

"We are close to testing and trialling a few initiatives at both Broadford and Wangaratta with the information that's been collected," she says. "Hopefully, we will get a model that we can take to other clubs."

Carr is conscious that delivering beginners' programs is just part of the challenge. Next is keeping those participants, helping them move into competition golf.

"We need to nurture those beginners, show them the pathways," she says. "Golfers who have been in the game for a long time may not remember what it was like starting out."

She urges her clubs to consider three key areas: time, equipment and club environment. If times are flexible, equipment is available for use until a player is hooked, the club is welcoming and the game taught slowly in a fun environment - then the only way is up, she believes.

Carr says she is loving the role. "No one day is the same. I get to work across a range of areas in a range of locations.

"And I get to meet so many wonderful people – like the club volunteers.

"I'm continually amazed by how many volunteers are out there, working tirelessly and putting in so many hours to run clubs and provide opportunities for people to play the sport," she says. "Without them, we wouldn't have clubs. Part of my job is to work out how I can assist them, make it easier for them to continue to offer those golfing opportunities."

Carr believes that is one area requiring urgent change. "It's about sharing the load," she says, "especially with an ageing membership base and new members who are often time-poor."

And her own golf?

"What I missed most after soccer was being part of a club. That's why I like ambrose and those sorts of competitions, because there's a team feel.

"My district is running a women's winter pennant on a Sunday for the first time ever. I'm really looking forward to it as I think I'll enjoy the team aspect of that."

"The whole family (husband Darrin and children Jamie, 15, and Mikayla, 11) now play. Golf is a game for all ages, something we can all do together. One day, my husband and I can travel and play golf. That's something I really look forward to."

But not just yet.

THE TWINKLERS

Continuing our look at some of the little stars that shine so brightly as they start out in golf.



LIAM HOWLETT

AGE: 11

Liam Howlett is a MyGolfer from Golf City Ballarat. He started playing two years ago and got a handicap in October 2017. Liam is actually right-hand dominant but due to his dad being a left-handed golfer and there being no right-handed clubs in the house, he taught himself to play left handed. Over the summer he played as much golf as he could, resulting in him lowering his handicap to 16. He plays at Ballarat Golf Club on the weekends and loves meeting new people and socialising with the members. His lowest round of golf is 85 and he is eager to better that soon. His idols are Rickie Fowler and Jordan Spieth. His parents credit his coach Andrew Cartledge for helping Liam to develop into the golfer he is becoming. Liam is chock-full of natural ability, so watch this space!

TANVI CHIRIMAR

AGE: 10

Tanvi is from Yarra Bend, where she is coached by James Hartley, the co-ordinator of Yarra Bend Junior Golf. Tanvi has loved golf since she was three years old! She started playing at five. When the family was in New Zealand, Tanvi got interested after playing mini-golf and golf became her main sport after moving to Australia. In 2017 Tanvi won a scholarship from Yarra Bend Junior Golf and she also won Student of the Year in 2016. Tanvi has played in the Golf Victoria rookie series, the primary school tournament and the pitch & putt championship. Her dream is to meet Tiger Woods, have him caddy for her and get a few tips from him! Tanvi loves golf because every course is different from each other and playing is a new challenge every time. She also loves to meet different kids and make friends while playing!





ON THE RISE

In our regular column highlighting some of the brightest young talent in Victorian golf, LUKE DODEMAIDE profiles Star On The Rise, Keeley Marx.

Power-hitting 14-year-old Keeley Marx harbours ambitions that exceed the red tees and with the scores to back it up, there is no stopping her drive.

A member at both The Heritage and Portsea Golf Clubs, Keeley plays several other sports but admits golf is never far from her mind and is by far her game of choice. "I do hockey and softball just so I can play 18 holes afterwards," she said. "I think being able to hit a ball helps my game, and the ability to have that swing on a hockey field improves my golf game."

While Keeley's training routine is left of centre, her results are concrete: Victorian Under 14 Masters champion, Victorian Under 14 Junior champion, number one player for both her Heritage and Portsea pennant teams, and a representative in the School Sport Victoria Pacific School Games.

Forging her own path into golf, Keeley was not dragged to the course by links-loving parents, rather picking it up at a family-orientated golf day organised by her father Darren's law firm. "My brothers (16-year-old Shaye and 18-year-old Cody) went along and they started, and my mother (Rochelle) was like, 'Why don't you have a go?'"

Under the tutelage of Michael Sund at Bann Lynch McDade, her passion and talent quickly grew.

She also found an idol in American Lexi Thompson, with whom Keeley is nearly on a first-name basis, having met her four times.

"The first time was when I went to Canberra to watch the LPGA (Women's Australian Open), and I met her over there and I was just like, I want to follow her


because she is such a great person," Keeley said. "When she came over to Melbourne, I went and followed her again. Then when we went on a family holiday in America, we did a bit of a detour and we watched the LPGA Tour in Alabama."

Keeley said she admires the work ethic of Thompson, something she has incorporated into her own routine. "She just trains so much harder than other golfers and she just knows she has to do certain things to get there," she said. "I would say that I am a harder trainer than most, because I have other sports, mornings and nights, that I train hard for, too."

Keeley is inspired by the precocious talent of Thompson, who qualified for the US Women's Open at 12 and was granted LPGA Tour status at 16, but also draws from the likes of Michelle Wie and Annika Sorenstam, whose goals stretched from the women's tour with the desire to compete and prove themselves amongst the men.

"I hate that women are judged apart by men and I guess it should just be equal rights," Keeley said. "I find that women are able to do just as much as guys do and we should be able to do what they do. We should be able to play in the men's comp and try to beat them." She plays off the blue tees regularly, and recently shot two-over at The Heritage.

From tee to green, to the hockey pitch and the softball field, Keeley has the fire to compete on all grounds. And with such talent to burn, who would bet against her achieving all she sets out to do?



Keeley Marx has put no restriction on her ambition.

Golf Vic Events On The Horizon

VICTORIAN MEN'S AND WOMEN'S SENIOR AMATEUR CHAMPIONSHIPS



The 2018 Victorian Men's and Women's Senior Amateur Championships will be played at the Shepparton and Hill Top Golf Clubs from Monday to Wednesday, September 10-12.

Thanks to generous support from the Greater Shepparton City Council, approximately 200 players aged 55 and over will be competing in Victoria's premier golf event for senior players.

First played in 1995, the Victorian Men's Senior Amateur is played over 54 holes strokeplay and is one of just two Golf Australia national senior ranking events played within the state. 2017 winner was Doug Francis from Metropolitan.



The Victorian Women's Senior Amateur was first played in 1931 and consists of 36 holes of stroke qualifying followed by matchplay rounds. Four players qualify for the overall Women's Senior Championship which is then decided by 18-hole semi-finals and final. An additional four women players will qualify for respective 18-hole semi-finals and finals in the 55-64 year and 65-and-over age groups. Helen Pascoe (Buninyong), who also won in 2014, was the 2017 champion.



Entries will open on June 18 for the championships, which are sure to attract strong interest from players within Victoria and interstate. Entry is online via the Golf Victoria Events Page at www.golfvic.org.au/2018calendar.

THE VICTORIAN WOMEN'S CHAMPION OF CHAMPIONS AND THE JOAN FISHER PLATE

The Victorian Women's Champion of Champions will again be played alongside the Joan Fisher Plate at Metropolitan Golf Club, on September 14 this year.

First held in 1989, the Joan Fisher Plate is a 36 holes strokeplay event and is named after one of Australia's greatest amateur golfers, the late Joan Fisher, who was a life member of Metropolitan GC, Australian Amateur Champion three times and Victorian Amateur Champion eight times, amongst many other honours.

Club, district and state champions are exempted into the field and will also be eligible for the coveted Victorian Champions of Champions Trophy, first contested in 1929. In 2016 the two events were combined to run concurrently, with Geraldine O'Callaghan of Southern Golf Club winning the Joan Fisher Plate and Ashleigh Hall of Cranbourne winning the Champion of Champions. In 2017 Kono Matsumoto of Victoria Golf Club claimed both titles.



The player with the best nett 18-hole score in the morning round of the Victorian Champion of Champions will receive the Gwenda Anderson Trophy, named after the past Victorian Ladies Golf Union and Australian Ladies Golf Union President. The trophy was first played in 1976.

The Joan Fisher Plate has trophies for winners and runners-up in both gross and nett sections.

The cost of entry is \$100 (\$50 for Metropolitan Golf Club members) including a light lunch. Entries close at 5pm on August 31. For more information and to enter visit www.golfvic.org.au/joanfisherplate.



TRIMAX VICTORIAN SAND GREENS CHAMPIONSHIP

Polish up your bump-and-run games for the 2018 Trimax Victorian Men's & Women's Sand Greens Championships, to be held at Maldon Golf Club in September.

One of country golf's most popular events, the championships are played on a course with greens comprised of oiled sand, which require players to rake and then smooth their line of putt before play.

First held in 1972 for men and 1975 for women, the events were held concurrently for the first time in 2016 at Bannockburn. In 2017 they were played at Wedderburn Golf Club, where Edward Carracher from Euroa took out his third title while Martina Whelan from the Grampians Golf Club won the women's title on her eighth attempt.

The women will tee up on Wednesday and Thursday September 5-6, while the men compete over Saturday and Sunday September 8-9. There will be an optional fun-filled four-ball event hosted by the club on Friday September 7.

Entries cost \$65 through the online portal and include a light lunch on both days. There is also an optional tournament dinner for the women's event on Wednesday evening and for the men's on Saturday evening. Entries close on Friday August 24. For more information and to enter please visit www.golfvic.org.au/sandgreens.

Entries for the four-ball event are \$15 per person, payable on the day.

The 2018 Junior Sand Green Championship will again be held at Bannockburn, on Saturday September 8. 2017 winners were Mitchell Crabbe (boys) and Ella Rogers (girls). Please direct all enquiries and entries to Chris Crabbe of SWGA at crcrabbe9@gmail.com.

THE VICTORIAN GOLF FOUNDATION PAUL RAK MEMORIAL TROPHY

This year marks the 30th anniversary of the Victorian Golf Foundation Annual Golf Day at Royal Melbourne.

The Victorian Golf Foundation, which makes grants to assist individuals, projects, programs and services which benefit golf, first ran its annual golf day in 1988 to raise funds for the educational and golf development of talented Victorian junior golfers, and junior golf development projects and initiatives undertaken within Victoria.

Since 2016 it has been renamed as the VGF Paul Rak Memorial Trophy Day, in honour of the late chief executive officer of Royal Melbourne. One of the great contributors to Victorian golf, Rak had served the game since caddying at Royal Melbourne when he was 14 years old and filling a range of positions at the club until moving to Kingston Heath to become general manager.

In 2008 he returned to Royal Melbourne as CEO and under his leadership the club hosted the 2011 Presidents Cup, the 2013 World Cup of Golf, the 2013 Australian Masters and the 2012 and 2015 Women's Australian Opens. He was awarded an OAM for his services to golf in 2015 before passing away later that year.

The VGF Paul Rak Memorial Trophy will be contested over 18 holes of 4BBB stableford on Monday July 2.



2018 VICTORIAN GOLF INDUSTRY AWARDS

The 2018 Victorian Golf Industry Awards dinner will take place on Friday August 10 at the Arts Centre, 100 St Kilda Road, Melbourne.

The awards, which are open to all interested persons, celebrate significant achievements and contributions to the sport throughout the past year, and are a joint initiative between the PGA, Golf Victoria (GV), Golf Management Victoria (GMV) and the Victorian Golf Course Superintendents Association (VGCSA). The night is a wonderful celebration of golf across the state and will also see new members inducted into the Victorian Golf Hall of Fame.

Arrival is 7pm for a 7.30pm start. Dress is evening wear (suit and tie for men).

Tickets are \$160 per head or \$1500 for table of ten. Until June 30, there is an Early Bird Special of \$1400 for a table of ten. Dietary requirements can be accommodated.

For further information about the Victorian Golf Industry Awards dinner and to nominate individuals or clubs, please visit www.golfvic.org.au/victorian-golf-industry-awards.

A full calendar of Golf Victoria events can be found at www.golfvic.org.au/2018calendar

Join the Victorian Golf Industry to celebrate the significant achievements of 2017. The industry will also recognise those that have made a significant contribution to Victorian golf, both past and present through the Victorian Golf Hall Of Fame.

2018
Victorian
Golf Industry
Awards

Save the Date!

When: Friday August 10th, 2018
Where: Arts Centre Melbourne — Pavilion Room

For all event information and to purchase tickets please contact:

Chris Donovan
cdonovan@pga.org.au
03 8320 1934



CITY GOLF SURVIVES



Melbourne's golfing community has united to save the much-loved Albert Park golf course from redevelopment, but it was a close thing. STEVE PERKIN explains.



Brendan Donohoe is the longstanding state political reporter for Channel Seven in Melbourne. He's also a mad-keen golfer who, like so many other club golfers, started his playing career at Albert Park.

Every Thursday morning for 15 years, Donohoe's four-ball was the second group to hit off. They'd play their nine holes, or 18 if time allowed, then head off to work.

Part of the attraction of the Albert Park course for the award-winning journalist was that he would be at his city desk within minutes.

These days, Donohoe is a member at Royal Melbourne, Anglesea and Sorrento Golf Clubs and has his name on a board at the latter. But he has never forgotten his beginnings in the game.

"I always loved playing at Albert Park," he said. "It has narrow fairways and small greens, and the par three up the top end is a beauty. And the city views are brilliant."

So it came as much of a surprise to this weekend warrior as it did to hundreds of other golfers when Parks Victoria late last year released a master plan for the Albert Park area which included turning the 119-year-old course from 18 holes back to just nine and reducing the footprint for golf in Albert Park by 75 per cent.

New parkland with wooded areas would be created along Queens Rd and would include a 'major events' area of lawn. There would be 16 new indoor basketball and netball courts in four halls, a three-storey office building and new accommodation for interstate sports teams and school groups.

For everybody involved in the game of golf at Albert Park, the proposal came as a complete shock. Parks Victoria, however, said its release was part of a "public consultation process".

Whether Parks Victoria envisaged the outcry that was to follow is unknown, but clearly its release, so close to the Christmas holidays, was designed to limit any negative feedback from city workers and local residents who enjoyed an occasional hit but were now thinking more about Christmas holidays and buying presents.

Glenda McIntyre, the president of the Lakeside Ladies Golf Club, which conducts competitions on the Albert Park course twice a week for 90 or so members, said the proposal to halve the size of their course came out of the blue.

"A story in The Herald Sun just before Christmas, detailing the master plan, was the first we'd heard of it.

"We had to organise an urgent meeting of the interested parties – clubs like ours that use the course, representatives from the driving range that was also to be affected by the master plan, managers of the course, Golf Victoria, Golf Australia – and that was a problem so close to the holidays.

"We built a website – save18holes.com.au – which immediately attracted supporters, and we were able to quickly get support from the Liberal Party."

The State Government seemed to be hedging its bets. Labor Member for Albert Park in the lower house, Martin Foley, described the golf club as being "elite sport" and suggested that maintaining it as an 18-hole course was against the wishes of "local clubs, park users and the community."

The Government avoided giving total support to the Parks Victoria proposal, but appeared to have a preferred option and that was to redevelop the park area.

Golf Australia and Golf Victoria both campaigned strongly against the project.

The battle lines had been drawn.

Wayne Carroll, president of the Lakeside Golf Club, which is separate from the Lakeside Ladies Club and has some 300 members, said the master plan, while having some redeeming aspects, seemed to ignore the merit of the Albert Park course.

"If I was looking at tourism in Melbourne, what a unique asset it is to have a golf course of this quality just two kilometres from the city's edge.

"This course is used by people from dawn to dusk seven days a week and some 250 rounds a week are played on the course by our men and women members."

In broader terms, somewhere between 70,000 and 85,000 rounds are played at Albert Park each year and the course has seen increased player numbers every year since 2014 when improvements to the layout and the neighbouring restaurant were carried out.

As well as providing a golfing facility for the general public and a home base for three clubs – Lakeside, Lakeside Ladies and the recently formed City View Golf Club – Albert Park also hosts numerous charity events and one such event last year raised in excess of \$100,000 for indigenous women in the Northern Territory.

Margaret Fitzherbert, the Liberal MP for Southern Metro in the upper house, says it didn't take long for the people of the area to voice their opinions.

"I received several thousand responses and they were overwhelmingly in favour of keeping the course as 18 holes," she said.

"This didn't surprise me. I'm not a golfer, but I've been driving past this course for a long time and it's always being used. Reducing the course always seemed like madness to me."

The State Government, not surprisingly, was getting the same response. Given that the golf course sits in marginal electorates, this reaction had to be taken into account and couldn't be ignored, especially with an election due in November.

Reading the lie of the land, the Liberal Party quickly announced that it would retain the full-sized course if elected and by February this year, Parks Victoria had backed away from its plans.

The Government then announced that Albert Park Golf course would remain untouched.

Since then, everybody has been waiting for the release of a revised master plan from Parks Victoria. The fact that nothing has been forthcoming and signed off on has meant that some of those caught up in the battle have delayed victory celebrations.

"Until it has been signed off on the dotted line, we're not going to be 100 per cent confident that we've won," said Carroll.

If the master plan does see the course maintained as 18 holes, supporters say that's only part of what they'd like to see.

The lease operator is a local company called Melbourne Olympiad Development which runs the neighbouring Lago Lounge Bar Restaurant. MOD purchased the lease for the golf course in 2014 and immediately started carrying out improvements. It has promised to carry out further upgrades.

"We'd like to have a clubhouse and see properly watered fairways," said McIntyre.

Unless a new long-term lease is offered and signed off on, the Albert Park Golf Course will continue to fight for survival against other sports demanding more facilities.

As Donohoe points out, golf has already made sacrifices.

"How many people remember that there used to be a par-three course at Albert Park, with lights that enabled you to play at night? Jeff Kennett took that land for the Grand Prix."

THE COURSE FOR ALL OF MELBOURNE

Golf has been played at Albert Park since 1897 when businessman James Gillespie moved into the area with his family.

His father Robert had come from Scotland and passed onto his son his love of golf.

Formed in 1899 and originally a private club called the Albert Park Golf Club, it was turned into a public course in 1947. Club members promptly packed their bags and moved to Keysborough and established the Keysborough Golf Club.

The Lakeside Golf Club was formed in 1948, basing itself at Albert Park. The Lakeside Ladies Golf Club came along in 1953.

The course has hosted two Victorian PGAs and numerous charity and corporate golf days.

It is often considered to be unique because of its proximity to Melbourne's CBD, but this would be to ignore Victoria Park in Brisbane, North Adelaide's two courses, Canberra's Capital Golf Club, and Moore Park which is just two kilometres from downtown Sydney and has hosted qualifying rounds for the Australian Open.





A VISION FOR A BIGGER GAME, A BETTER GAME

There's an expression that has a certain impact around golf and it's going to be heard a lot more going forward. It's *gender-neutral*. The very mention of it seems to raise the hackles of the establishment, the old school.

But it doesn't where I hang around.

At the club where I play golf, the genders are invisible. A few decades ago, The National took a position that it believed would fit the modern world. The women's committee was absorbed into one central board to run the club, and tee times were opened up completely.

That is, there would be no regular men's and women's competitions as such. Women and men would have equal access to the courses (and The National now has four) at all times. They would play together in mixed competitions, off different tees of course, but competing with each other. The only separate competitions would be monthly medals and club championships.

On any given weekend there are women dotted throughout the field, enjoying the benefits of full membership.

I love playing golf with my mates; equally, I love playing golf with my partner. And I have played with many women at The National, enjoying the benefits of equal membership on an awesome golf property.

The sky didn't fall in.

The National was ahead of the curve, as it turns out. In 2018, gender-neutral golf is a talking point around the world. Despite the naysayers – and there plenty of both sexes – there is big change afoot in the game in Australia. Golf Australia recently announced its Vision 2025 strategy, which aims to lift the participation rate of women in the game, currently running at a poorly 20 percent of club memberships, the lowest ever.

In Victoria, GA and Golf Victoria launched an Equal Opportunity paper that aims to show clubs where they need to be in this space. That is, they are potentially breaking the law if they deny people equal access, opening themselves up to the sort of legal fights and embarrassment that has already happened in at least one Melbourne club and at Royal Queensland, where a female member took court action last year over access to the course.

The National model is probably closest to the one that Golf Australia wants but any change in that direction would be welcomed. And it does feel that the change is coming, albeit slowly. Metropolitan Golf Club recently opened up gender-neutral tee times on Tuesdays (previously reserved for women) and Wednesdays (previously reserved for men). It is also moving toward the notion of women's championships being held on a weekend.

Some big clubs have also begun calling their events 'women's competition' instead of the outdated 'ladies'.

Ballarat Golf Club has embraced gender-neutral golf and equal access with a formal acknowledgement in its strategic plan. The club believes it is the way forward, the means by which it can attract more members, especially women. At Box Hill Golf Club, there is no distinction between members, male or female, although when a club representative stood and asked at the Equal Opportunity launch at Huntingdale recently 'can we still have separate competitions?' no one seemed to have an answer for him.

These are the questions that golf needs to work through.

None of this is easy. Often the pushback comes from what might be perceived as an unlikely source, the more conservative women members, anxious that an opening of tee times will take away their space. One big Melbourne club has spent a while trying to shift its women's club championships to the weekend so that the young female amateur players who are stuck at school or university on weekdays, as well as the professional women who want to play, can actually compete. The biggest hurdle with the change, it found, was not the men but the older women of the club.

I believe there are a number of clubs monitoring how that particular debate pans out because they know that they need to act.

As for Vision 2025, right now it's still mostly talk. Vision statements are one thing. It's what happens next that really makes the difference and I would argue that it's a huge moment for Australian golf, potentially a big game-changer.

That number, 20 percent of club members, speaks to a culture of exclusion, although we should not be surprised. Quite frankly it came right from the top, from the old clubs of Scotland and England and that infamous sign at St George's, 'no dogs or women allowed', removed 20 years ago but not forgotten.

The example set by the pillars of the game has not been great at all (although it is worth noting here that the Royal and Ancient

and Augusta National now admit women as members, lurching into the 21st century).

It could not go on like that. The game here cannot afford it. Golf in Australia has so much to gain from making a proper and concerted effort to draw in half the population, who are largely isolated from the sport, especially when it is struggling for traction in a crowded sports and entertainment market. It is not rocket science to work out that women's golf is a monumental, untapped growth area for the sport.

It is not just about access, either. It is about culture and the idea of inclusion. I asked Golf Australia board member Jill Spargo at the Vision 2025 launch in Adelaide this year why she felt that women had stayed away from the game over the years. Spargo is a golfer herself, and a doctor by profession as well as a driver of Vision 2025. "I think they find it intimidating," she said.

This is the culture that needs to change, and part of this is drawing women on to club boards and into administrations, an across-the-board transformation that is required.

I see it as a glass-half-full versus glass-half-empty situation. Yes, the 20 percent number is low. But the glass-half-full option is to view this as a pivotal moment in time in the sport where smart strategies, resources and efforts can potentially produce a magnificent result for the sport, an explosion in numbers at the grassroots that would sustain the game and its clubs for many years. Which is where it will be good for men as well.

The AFL set the tone, as often is the case. Women's football fought for years for its place with little or no success. Then the AFL administration under Gil

McLachlan decided that the time was right, and everyone scurried around trying to get ready. I spoke to women in the sport's administration who felt that they were not ready to take on an elite-level national competition.

But they went ahead anyway, and the AFLW was a phenomenal success in its first season, 2017, holding its ground in 2018. At grassroots level, they don't have enough facilities to deal with the explosion in numbers, calculated at 56 percent this year.

Vision 2025 was overdue. It's all about how they go forward, how they respond to the challenge, and hopefully, golf can keep up because I can assure you that sports like the AFL are running hard.

Football already found this space and to borrow from the movie *Field of Dreams* ...

If you build it, they will come.



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