



PLAYER FORM GUIDE

and betting market for the championship events conducted over the full week in

THE TOUR OF THE SAPPHIRE COAST 1998

Alan Bell

Has toured both the South Coast and the Murray in the past but has now been restricted by the Chief Steward to touring every second year. Recent form includes a skiing crash in the snow (busted shoulder) and a motor bike crash in Dubbo (collapsed lung and busted ribs).

Has the ability to play superbly but lacks consistency. Suffers from an apparently incurable affliction known as LHS, which invariably strikes at least a couple of times in every round and clearly affects his skiing and bike riding as well. If ever "Belly" gets this under control, he will be a major threat off his 13 handicap. Could fire. Each way chance. 5/1

Ron Childs

Maiden performer from the same Camden stable as Kevin Ross. Nothing known about his form and his trackwork has been kept under tight security wraps in an attempt to capture a first up win. Has not entered this type of endurance event before and may find the distance a little tougher than he thinks. Could need time to settle in with the experienced campaigners. Roughie. 5/1

Stuart Downing -

Disappointed and confounded keen students of form last year with an uncharacteristically poor performance on tour when he tied up the NAGA award with John Vallins. Lead up form had been hot including a 73 around Camden Valley just before departure. This year's form has been solid and a 74 last week to force a play-off in the "A" grade medal would suggest he is running into good form at the right time. Will benefit from the experience of the past 2 years and is again expected to take a hand in the finish unless the night-time trumpeting "killer ZZZ's" of his room-mate detract from his beauty sleep. Well supported. 5/1

Michael "The Burglar" Dunn -

A third time tourist and a very consistent striker of the ball. As the only known teetotaller on tour, Michael is always near the money and makes a habit of winning. The handicapper has been generous and at the time of writing he has slipped out to 12 and will be very hard to beat from that mark. Totally incorruptible and will start favourite. Selected. 5/1

Jim Hokin

Known as the "Old Grey Fox" and a three time tourist returning to the South Coast after missing the Murray last year. Has scored well in the past and always comes through somewhere on tour for a win, but hasn't managed to maintain consistent form on the course for the whole tour. Always available for off course counselling and can outlast many of the younger guys in the after dark events. His "black" performance in Wagga in 1995 is the stuff from which legends are made. Each way. 5/1

Kevin Hughes -

Backing up for his second successive tour, Kev proved last year that he really does cover more ground than any other golfer on tour. The absence of a navigator proved to be an almost insurmountable obstacle as Kev struggled to find every course, was never on time and boosted the petrol sales in the Murray region by a substantial amount. In addition he drove from Yarrowonga to Sydney and back again mid-week. This year should be easier as he doesn't have to return to Sydney mid-week and has Des to give directions (that's a very doubtful plus) and get

him to the course on time. Has the ability to finish on and regularly proves it. Chance. 5/1

John Killin –

The dreaded “killer ZZZ” thrower, intrepid explorer, discoverer, the scourge of those who want to sleep past 5.00am and whose singing voice between shots is likely to frighten even the most courageous crowd. A veteran of six tours, “killer” will always be remembered for his dogged performance at Tathra in '96 to snatch the play-off for his own bottle of scotch against a drooling Max Snr. A “lefty” who has now turned “rightie” he was not suited by the longer Murray courses, but will be a favoured runner for the events this year. Very hard to beat in skins. Good chance. 5/1

Keith McLaren –

Showed best tour form last year when narrowly beaten for best average. One of only two lining up for the 7th successive tour, Keith has been in good form this year and has heaps of experience in this type of event. Staying powers are legendary and survives on less sleep than most. Will give a good account of himself. 5/1

Peter McLoughlin –

First reserve who gets a start due to Alan Bell's late scratching. A good talker who hates to lose, Peter will back himself with confidence and with some justification and is not beyond applying a little verbal pressure during a round. Strikes the ball consistently and is on a special diet that ensures his well being and clear thinking for the week, but the real challenge for Peter will be to stick to it. If he does, he'll go close. Real chance. 5/1

Max O'Connor Snr. –

A wily old buzzard this one. Usually finishes in the top half of the draw and broke through for a good win at Corowa last year. Steady and never far off the pace, has potential to lead the field a merry dance. Started the tour last year with a “night of the long drink” with JV in Wagga and took some time to settle into his rhythm. Unlikely to resist if offered the chance to do it all again, but he will figure in a finish somewhere on tour and could wind up at the top. A win would not surprise. Keep safe. 5/1

Max O'Connor Jnr. –

Toured the Murray last year as a maiden and will be better for the experience. A long hitter from up Newcastle way, Max has the ability and confidence to threaten the field and is well handicapped for these events. On last year's record he will be relatively unaffected by extra curricular activities and PDD and could win without surprising. Each way. 5/1

Jeff Pearson

Has joined the tour this year for the first time and under no circumstances could Jeff ever be described as a maiden. Form in this type of event is unknown, but this mature performer has a superb sense of pace and a wealth of experience in most things. Has not been playing regularly of late but it would be foolish to ignore his chances. May find the winning post just out of reach when the whips are drawn. Rough chance. 5/1

Ken Rogers –

It's all been said before. The only thing definite this year is that Ken Doll has scratched himself from the average, eclectic and the secret 18 by not being available for the last day at Gold Creek. In a re-run of last year he has another wedding to attend and will depart for home after the Narooma game. Canberra can breathe a sigh of relief. Had his most successful tour last year and is always difficult to beat in skins. On the steward's instructions he has been scratched from the betting market. Not that it matters a win would have been a major upset anyway.

Kevin Ross –

Backing up for his third successive tour, this tough old stallion is constantly in work and trains a minimum of 2 or 3 times a week. Played these courses in '96 and finished on last year on the Murray to prove he can stay the distance. Will be improved by the experience and is well handicapped. Good front runner and if he starts well, will take a power of stopping. Favoured. 5/1

Ray Rutledge

The number 20 spot went to this late developer whose laid back approach to the game will stand him in good stead for this arduous week. Previous experience in this type of event is unknown and joins the tour without prior publicity or fanfare. Is not possessed of a high profile reputation around the Club and may be a quiet achiever, but will need to be a good judge of pace if he is to take a hand in the finish. Watch closely as the week winds down and the pressure mounts. Could need the run. 5/1

Rod Short –

Now one of the international jet set, spending annual holidays overseas in the more exotic capital cities of the world. Not long returned from Europe, “the rod” might be short of a run and rusty around the greens, but he will be as relaxed and comfortable as anyone on tour. Always up there and a veteran of 6 tours, this sweet swinger is always a threat and finished 4th in the average last year and 2nd in the secret 18. Expected to take a hand in the finish. Keep safe. 5/1

John Vallins –

Couldn’t handle the pace last year in his maiden tour and fell by the wayside as the non-stop action took its toll. Started with a big night in Wagga and maintained that form for the rest of the week. Developed the best left hander’s slice seen since former tourist Barry Dunn was in his prime and, despite winning on the last day in Harden, failed to escape the NAGA award when he tied with Stewart. Recent form is more promising with a good win at Gold Creek and may not be so easily diverted from the main event this year. Has firmed in the betting. 5/1

John Vincent –

Experienced campaigner who knows these courses. Three times winner of the best average, including last year on the Murray. Has been in poor form for some time and has slipped out from 6.2 to 7.8 with successive CCR plus cards and maintained the trend through the club championships last month. Will benefit from a newly acquired mechanical aid during this tour and is due to come out of the slump. Unwise to discard but will need to improve. 5/1

Bill Williams

Another first time member of the troupe and a single figure marker who also uses the bionic caddie. Has a reputation for consistency and plays regularly during the week to polish a sound all round game. Has played some of these courses before on private excursions and rumoured not to be distracted by off course activities. Big chance. 5/1

Des Williams –

At the barrier for his third successive start Des will be hoping to bring some of his training form into the main event this year. Has not been “on song” in previous tours, but is gaining experience and expected to perform better this time around. Whatever happens he is bound to enjoy himself and if nothing else he has certainly proved he can stay. A long hitter with a good all round game. A win would not surprise. 5/1

Trent Wilson –

Youngest player on tour who easily picked up the “Rugged Early Morning Look Award” last year on the Murray. The longest hitter in the party with excellent shotmaking skills, Trent is the most likely and dangerous threat to his co-driver and sleeping partner, but only if Mother Michael can get him out of bed and on the tee on time. Displayed excellent form and awesome power at Gold Creek to finish second with 33 points and if he can maintain that form over the whole week he will be very hard to beat. Excellent prospect. 5/1

Abbreviations

- LHS – Lifting Head Syndrome
- NAGA – Not A Golfer’s Arsehole
- PDD – Performance Disenhancing Drugs

The management of Middle Bet Australia has published this comment on the 1998 field of Sapphire Coast tourists for the information of anybody intrepid enough to want to try and pick the winner of the Average, the prestige event of the week.

Past form means nothing, attitude counts for something and the whole issue is confused by the distractions and temptations on offer during the week.

Before tee-off in Batemans Bay, every tourist is invited to give their selections to John Vincent for the winners of the Best Average over the full week and the NAGA Award. A mystery prize is offered to the successful tipsters and, in the event of more than one successful tipster, the winner will be decided by a draw from a hat.

Our scribe accepts no responsibility for the accuracy or otherwise of comment but will accept accolades if there are any.

Good Luck and we hope everybody enjoys a wonderful week with much laughter, golf and fine weather.

Wobbie Rorterhouse
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
