

PLAYER FORM GUIDE

SAPPHIRE COAST 2002

Written and researched for **The Happy Hackers** by **Wobby Rorterhouse**,
Executive Director, Middle Bet Australia

Alan Bordina : Not much known about the form of this former soccer player who is having his first full tour with the Hackers. Was a starter in the mini-tour of Canberra and finished the four rounds with the creditable average of 30. Has not previously been involved in an event of this type and may find the distance beyond him. Looks fit, is very keen and might be able to stay but inexperience could be a major hurdle. Might need the run and experience.

Ron Dewar : The canny Scotsman who is dead keen and also backing up for his third straight tour. Has not managed to produce his best form as yet but has all the shots if he can hold it together. Good temperament and stamina and is capable of a prominent showing but has previously lacked consistency. Recently returned from overseas and may be a little under-trained, but he will be thirsty. Would need to improve on previous form and is only a rough chance.

Stewart Downing : Long time 'Hacker' backing up for seventh successive tour. Always well supported in betting markets but hasn't managed to break through for a win in the big one yet. Best result in 2000 finishing 5th on these courses but has overall tour average of 30.46 and cannot be discarded. Trains regularly and has been favoured by the handicapper for this tour and a win would be no surprise. Could well be right in it when we hit 'The Creek'.

Barry Dunn : One of the original '93 tourists and twice winner of the dreaded NAGA award, Barry is backing up for his eighth tour. In the past has trained well leading up to the trip then left all his form at home and struggled in the championship. Had best tour for some time last year finishing well above the 'dreaded' and expected to finish better again this year now he is training more consistently. Will finish full of running but form suggests a win is unlikely.

Col Dunn : Tour Champion on the Coast in '98 when he turned in a brilliant performance in gale force wind at Narooma to blitz the field with 36 points on a day when the average was 19.7, the runner-up had 28 and the lowest score was 10. Very solid and consistent with good technique. Putting has been suspect in the past but is clearly better now. Known as "Deadly", has missed only the '94 tour and has an overall average of 32.03. As usual will be very hard to beat.

Greg Dunn : A new face to touring golf and could be a bolters chance. Another of the long hitting younger brigade who will be coached by the senior members of the Dunn clan. Has no experience in this type of event and staying powers and concentration levels will be tested. Recently spent some time in Canberra and may have some local knowledge of a couple of the tour courses but not expected to be one of the front runners. Each way chance this trip.

Graham Harrison : Tour Champion on the Coast in year 2000 to become the second 'Hacker' to win on his first tour. Was not as strong last year but still has a commendable two-tour average of 32.63. Good scrambler with solid short game and will be keen to have Billy give him back the shield at Gold Creek. Member of Muirfield and must be respected. Will not damage his health at night, but recent overseas trip may have taken the edge off his touch. Watch the market.

Geoff Herbert : One of four new faces this year and a sweet swinging nine marker from the Kogarah Club. Inexperienced at tour golf and ability to handle the pressure of nine successive rounds is unknown. Has good technique and is sneaky long but plays mostly on home course and course management skills might need sharpening. Will handle the pressure and diversion of night tactics and cannot be written-off, but not fancied as a maiden. Each way chance.

Jim Hokin : Has had six previous tours and knows all the pitfalls of a long hard week. Despite his experience and knowledge he consistently backs up and gets caught in all the traps. No-one enjoys the week more than "O'Changi" and newcomers should be wary of his ability to divert focus. Runs hot and cold on the course and doesn't even stop talking to play his shot. Hard to see Jimmy holding it together for nine successive rounds and must be a rough chance at best.

John Killin : This year is one of only three to achieve ten straight tours and the only 'Hacker' ever to swap from left to right handed. The success (or lack of it) of that move could be debated for hours but the record shows "Killer": has averaged 32.25 for each of the past two years and shown consistent improvement since the switch in '98 when he picked up the NAGA. Will be up there and more suited by these courses than the Murray. Might be worth a small investment.

Keith McLaren : Touring for the tenth successive year and had best tour for some time last year finishing with average of 33 and remained focused for the whole week. A powerful and aggressive player, Keith tore Antill apart a few weeks ago with 47 individual points. However he is easily distracted and will have to contend with the 'Artful Dodger' again this year. Loves the coast and will be suited by the facilities. Has the experience and shots and a win isn't beyond him.

Peter McLoughlin : Official starter for the second time and new member at Antill Park. Choked badly on the very last hole of the tour last year to miss third place in his best showing since first touring in '98. Has all the shots and the ability to grind it out when it isn't going well. Is now in full training and has been very kindly treated by the handicapper. Has the talent (and handicap) to win but might be suspect under pressure. Will be hard to hold this tour and a big chance.

John Medland : Fourth time tourist with good ball striking skills and temperament. Almost won championship in '99 except for attention to detail when he hit a wrong ball on two separate occasions. Injured and not competitive in '00 before finishing well up the ladder last year with average of 32.63. Member of the tough Oatlands layout and now has the very generous handicap of 18. Has the skills and mental toughness needed to win. Hard to beat if on his game.

Dean Nicholls : Second tour after maiden start on the Murray last year. Finished strongly and recovered well after horror round at Yarrowonga and expected to be better second time around. Excellent temperament and will not damage himself after dark. Generously handicapped and known to handle pressure well. Has heaps of talent, technique, and discipline and will be very competitive. Has not been in good form of late but big improvement expected this trip.

Jeff Pearson : First toured in '98 and has been regular since then. Hasn't done much since winning 2001 "B" Grade Championship at Mona Vale Golf Club and not expected to do much on the golf course here either. Will disrupt the focus of the unwary after dark and has great staying powers but not as supple as he used to be and would be better suited to WFA events. Best effort last year to finish on 31.25 but will need to improve to be a threat this year. Each way at best.

Ken Rogers : 'The Artful Dodger' has steadily improved since first tour (and the NAGA) in '95. Won "C" Grade Championship at Antill Park in 2001. Forms a hazardous team with McLaren and will see the fat lady most nights. Not as dangerous as he used to be and will win his fair share of skins but won't trouble the leaders in the big one. Longer off the tee now with his new driver but I wouldn't back him with your money. Not fancied (in more ways than one).

Ray Rutledge : Had best of four tours last year finishing on 28.13 when not treated well by the handicapper. Could go better this year but not expected to claim the main event. Will maintain steady focus on the plimsoll line and ensuring Pearso and a couple of others don't get to bed too early. Good striker on his day but hasn't been able to maintain form for the whole week. Will probably ask the same question this year as every other year – "Why do I play this bloody game?"

Hans Sewalt : Another new face and a very keen golfer who has toured the Murray before with other groups. Has not played most of these courses and will need to be right on his game to contest the main event. Rumoured to like a couple of drinks at the end of the day and is a stayer. Was on mini-tour of Canberra and finished with average of 31.25 and could be a rough chance. Has a dangerous room mate and could be brought undone after dark if he's not very careful.

Trevor Thomas : Known as "Thomas the Tank" after easily winning the NAGA last year on maiden trip as the traps of after dark and the taste of 'black' took its toll on the serious side of the tour. Was consistent over the whole week but unable to score highly enough to avoid the need to return and attempt to pass on 'the dreaded'. Expected to be more competitive this year in second outing but would need to improve big time to be a serious threat to the tour leaders.

Des Thompson : Third successive tour and has been in good form. 'Slim' is very capable, has all the shots and well treated by the handicapper. After good scores at Tocumwal last year, tired badly with sub-standard performances in the least two days to trail off to 29.38 for the week. Seems to have recovered from back injury affecting last two showings and gives indication of improved performance this time around after some good recent scores. Could get up.

John Vallins : Pushed Col Dunn right to the wire on these courses in '98 to finish runner-up. Has tour average of 29.57 and five straight tours experience. Was well in it last year until a 'shocker' at Albury put paid to his chances. A 'leftie' with good ball striking ability, will again be competitive but has a history of putting in a low one on the Friday and will need to overcome that record if he is to fight out the finish. Capable of good showing and could get amongst the leaders..

John Vincent : Had best tour score yet to finish third last year after failing at Gold Creek. Has been in consistent good form all year and chances of claiming the big one will depend on how he handles the 'chilli dips'. Suited by these courses and knows them as well as anybody after 9 straight tours. Daily help with organising starts, cards and pins etc took some pressure off and concentration improved last year. Has the game and the shots and believes he can win.

Bill Williams : Defending champion and will be keen to collect back to back titles. Came from one point behind Trent Wilson at Gold Creek last year to win on a countback. Plays more golf than most and has good course management skills. Good striker and will be trained to peak during the tour. Very consistent with good temperament and handles pressure well. Will deservedly start favourite and be very hard to beat but will need to be on his game in this field.

Des Williams : Will be touring this year for the 7th successive time and the scoring record shows the Murray courses are preferred. Had best tour score ever last year after a poor start at Thurgoona but put in a big one next day to win easily at Yarrowonga. Has aggressive and fearless style of play and hits it long off the tee. Is capable of tearing any course apart but has previously been unable to maintain consistent high scoring over the whole week. Capable and could win.

BETTING MARKET

	Previous Finishes	Starting Price 2001	Starting Price 2002
Bill Williams	4,2,1	5/1	4/1
Peter McLoughlin	19,12,12,4	12/1	5/1
Col Dunn	2,9,9,1,3,4,12	6/1	6/1
John Vincent	1,12,1,3,8,8,3	5/1	6/1
John Medland	2,17,9	8/1	7/1
Graham Harrison	1,11	5/1	8/1
Stewart Downing	8,15,6,9,5,13	5/1	9/1
Dean Nicholls	9	6/1	9/1
Jeff Pearson	17,11,9,16	8/1	10/1
Keith McLaren	7,10,2,13,6,21,5	15/1	10/1
Des Thompson	14,19	10/1	12/1
John Killin	6,2,12,N,13,6,10	12/1	12/1
John Vallins	15,2,10,20,15	10/1	15/1
Des Williams	14,10,15,7,11,8	10/1	15/1
Hans Sewalt			15/1
Geoff Herbert			15/1
Alan Bordina			20/1
Greg Dunn			20/1
Ken Rogers	N,11,5,11,17,18	12/1	20/1
Ray Rutledge	12,18,N,21	25/1	25/1
Ron Dewar	16,22	25/1	25/1
Jim Hokin	8,14,18,22,23	20/1	33/1
Barry Dunn	5,N,N,19,23,20	20/1	33/1
Trevor Thomas	N	15/1	50/1

Good luck and I hope everyone has a wonderful week of golf and the weather is fine and mild.

Grip it! Rip it! And enjoy it!!!! It just doesn't get any better than this!

Wobby Rortterhouse