

# PLAYER FORM GUIDE

## MURRAY RIVER TOUR 2003

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Written and researched for **The Happy Hackers** by **Wobby Rorterhouse**,  
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**Alan Bordina** : First full tour last year but did play Canberra mini-tour as initiation to the ranks. Has not visited the Murray region before but finished with a creditable 30.11 on the South Coast and will benefit from the experience. A comparatively latecomer to golf he is very fit and still improving. Trains regularly and will give good showing. A special 'training' run with 'Liberty' Vallins by leaving a day earlier than the rest shows how keen he is. Chance.

**Ron Dewar** : Fourth consecutive tour this year and second trip to the Murray. Plays at the Camden club and is not normally seen by most of the Hackers between tours. Is very keen golfer and looks after himself, but form has been well below expectations on previous tours. Great temperament and has the shots but would need to improve on previous tour form to win here. Prone to occasional 'disaster' holes which ruin all the good work. Rough chance.

**Col Dunn** : Touring for the tenth time this year and former tour champion in '98. One of the most consistent and competitive performers on tour in all conditions and never far off the money. Has been known as 'Deadly' for many years because of his driving accuracy and will again be one of the favourites. Has tour average of 32.24 and plays well under pressure. Constantly strives to improve technique and a win would not surprise. Always short odds and demands respect.

**Graham Harrison** : Won tour championship in 2000 on first tour and is a good scrambler. Very even tempered and is a member of the difficult Muirfields layout so will be well handicapped here. Did not perform so well last year and finished with 30.89 which was well below his winning South Coast form 2 years previously, but he had not long returned from lengthy sojourn overseas. Plays regularly a couple of times a week and is trained for this. Could easily bob up.

**Jim Hokin** : Seven previous tours under his belt and a real veteran. Is a streaky player with many a hot score in his bag but has lacked consistency in previous events. Will gather a skin or two with occasional four-pointers but last year had 26 slits in nine rounds and thereby hangs his chances. Might be getting more practice these days but not sure if that would make any difference. Well known for running commentary during play, will be interesting to see if his trade mark hat is 'still the one'. Bolter!

**John Killin** : Tour veteran and one of the 'originals' from 1993. Has tour average of 29.88 but is capable of very good scores. Possessed of an 'unusual' technique, his ball striking has been described as miraculous but isn't always consistent. Not favoured by length of these courses but plays within himself and is crafty. Doesn't lack confidence and always fancies his chances, but more likely to win sprint events and skins than a staying event. Each way bet.

**Keiran McGuire** : One of three maiden tourists this year and a completely unknown quantity. Last acceptor to the field and not known to have played in this type of event before. Introduced by Col 'Deadly' Dunn who says he can play a bit. Handicap suggests that is true but may need the run in this test of skill and endurance. Watch market.

**Keith McLaren** : Another of the 'originals' and lining up for his 11<sup>th</sup> successive tour. Long off the tee, has all the shots and finished runner-up in '97 which was also the last time we played Wagga Country Club. This might be an omen as 'Disco' is due for a good one after his worst tour so far last year which included two sub-twenty point rounds. Can be a bit erratic on an off day and is a very streaky putter – sometimes good but sometimes BA. Each way chance.

**Peter McLoughlin** : Touring for 6<sup>th</sup> successive year and loves the tour. Does more damage to the field off the course than he does on it and used to be known as 'The Grinder', but name may have a name change to 'Butterscotch' after what he did to some of us with Schnapps during the nights of the short drink at Tocumwal. Has the game to be there and scores better on the Murray than the Coast. Can pace himself and understands the rigours of the tour. Big chance.

**John Medland :** Four previous tours will see him set up for a big effort this year. Was runner-up in '99 after hitting the wrong ball on the last at Gold Creek and made the last day 'top four' of the seeded draw last year and again finished runner-up. Has tour average of 31.71 which would probably be better if he had not had problems with hands in 2000 South Coast tour. Well handicapped member of the difficult Oatlands track and a very good striker. Will be hard to beat.

**Bob Norris :** Known as Aussie Bob (dunno why with an accent like that) and had first taste of touring with Canberra trip in April to finish the four rounds with a 27.5 average. Has been very keen to tour since then and reserved his place with substantial funds. Not much known about his form or staying power but trained by Des Williams and should be well briefed. Lacks experience and a win first up would surprise but may be worth an each way bet.

**Wayne Purcell :** Doesn't look like a maiden but is a first time Hacker and very competent left hander playing off 5 at Antill. Very long off the tee and one of the fastest players in the west. Spotters have revealed he recently bought a new set of Wilson's (kept the Brosnan Driver though) and is going through an adjustment (all over the place I heard). Lowest marker in the field, he commands respect for that alone, but not an experienced tourist and may struggle first up.

**Ken Rogers :** Eighth tour this year. Everything that can be said has been said over the past seven years and new tourists should be aware that Kenny is looked upon as the guiding light for the inexperienced. He is known as 'The Reverend' because of his willingness to help newcomers find their way through the long week and show them how to overcome the temptations of the night. When it comes to golf he's the same. Don't do anything the 'The Rev' does or says – ever! No hope!

**Ray Rutledge :** Sixth tour this year and had best tour so far last year. Generally regarded as the best 'Tour Treasurer' we've ever had and no-one argues with anything he says – not even the Committee of One! Another one for the unwary to watch after dark as his capacity for 'black' followed up with a 'black-chaser' is legend and not afraid to throw in a Schnapps or six as well. Not much chance of tour champion but no-one enjoys the tour more. Rough chance – any odds!

**Rod Short :** A former member of Antill Park and now of Camden Valley, Shorty last toured in 2001 and is a veteran of seven tours with a tour average of 31.02. Form of late is unknown to our 'spotters' but he has always been a quiet achiever, very consistent and not usually far off the pace. Recently retired and now getting more practice. Expected to be competitive and biggest threat to chances might be his travelling companion and room-mate. Good chance if focused.

**Des Thompson :** Fourth tour this year and had best tour so far last year finishing with 32.56 in 6<sup>th</sup> place. Is a good golfer and strikes the ball very consistently. Plays regularly, has been in very good and consistent form of late and is well handicapped for these courses which will suit his style. Inexperience in this type of event saw 'Slim' finish well back in first two tours but expected to take a hand in this one now that he has a couple of runs under his belt. Will go well.

**John Vallins :** Seventh tour this year and as keen as mustard. Another one of the 'lefties' in the field and is sneaky long, good striker and very solid. First toured in '97 and will only vaguely remember his first ever night on tour, in Wagga, a bottle of scotch, Max O'Connor and going to bed shortly before the rest of us got up. 'Liberty' never recovered sufficiently for the rest of the week to produce any real golfing form. Unlikely to repeat and some chance if on game.

**John Vincent :** The last of the 'originals' with 10 tours behind him. Stacks of experience, knows and likes these courses and has been freshened up with a short spell after the 'Penal Tour' in the Hunter Valley. Had worst tour ever last year after expecting to do well, but has been much more consistent with a couple of good wins this year. Fitness could be a problem as appetite and thirst has been well serviced in past few months. Will take beating if on his game but risky.

**Bill Williams :** Touring for 5<sup>th</sup> successive year and Tour Champion in each of the last two tours. Will start firm favourite to repeat the past two years and will take a power of beating. Has form on the board, is very consistent and plays regularly on many different courses. Has proved he can handle pressure after running Trent down in 2001 and outlasting Meds last year. Won't have it all his own way though as there is a lot of talent here and all of them want the trophy.

**Des Williams :** Eighth tour this year all in succession. Has been well in there both of the last two years and has plenty of experience. Has length off the tee, is suited by these courses, knows what is needed to win and has been in good form. Early tours reflected inexperience but is now a seasoned campaigner and must be respected. Is a very aggressive player and if on his game has all the shots to tear any course apart. Consistency and patience will be paramount. Go close.

**Trent Wilson :** Sixth tour this year. Champion in '99 and runner-up in '01, both on the Murray. The records show he always scores better on the Murray and is obviously suited by the style of these courses. Prodigious length from the tee

and has all the shots but doesn't play as much these days as he used to. Well handicapped and comes from the tough Cabramatta layout and will be very heavily supported in the market. Expected to fight out the finish at Gold Creek again.

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## BETTING MARKET

|                         | Previous Finishes         | Starting Price<br>2002 | Starting Price<br>2003 |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| <b>Bill Williams</b>    | 4,2,1,1                   | 4/1                    | 4/1                    |
| <b>Trent Wilson</b>     | 8,8,1,7,2 <sub>CB</sub> , | -                      | 5/1                    |
| <b>John Medland</b>     | 2,17,9,2                  | 7/1                    | 5/1                    |
| <b>Col Dunn</b>         | 2,9,9,1,3,4,12,3          | 6/1                    | 6/1                    |
| <b>Des Thompson</b>     | 14,19,6                   | 12/1                   | 6/1                    |
| <b>Graham Harrison</b>  | 1,11,11                   | 8/1                    | 7/1                    |
| <b>John Vincent</b>     | 1,12,1,3,8,8,3,20         | 6/1                    | 8/1                    |
| <b>Des Williams</b>     | 14,10,15,7,11,8,4         | 15/1                   | 10/1                   |
| <b>Rod Short</b>        | 4,4,8,5,6                 | -                      | 10/1                   |
| <b>Wayne Purcell</b>    |                           | -                      | 10/1                   |
| <b>Peter McLoughlin</b> | 19,12,12,4,18             | 5/1                    | 12/1                   |
| <b>John Vallins</b>     | 15,2,10,20,15,16          | 15/1                   | 15/1                   |
| <b>Keith McLaren</b>    | 7,10,2,13,6,21,5,22       | 10/1                   | 15/1                   |
| <b>Keiran McGuire</b>   |                           | -                      | 15/1                   |
| <b>Bob Norris</b>       |                           | -                      | 20/1                   |
| <b>John Killin</b>      | 6,2,12,N,13,6,10,17       | 12/1                   | 20/1                   |
| <b>Alan Bordina</b>     | 12                        | 20/1                   | 20/1                   |
| <b>Ken Rogers</b>       | N,11,5,11,17,18,15        | 20/1                   | 25/1                   |
| <b>Ray Rutledge</b>     | 12,18,N,21,13             | 25/1                   | 25/1                   |
| <b>Ron Dewar</b>        | 16,22,19                  | 25/1                   | 25/1                   |
| <b>Jim Hokin</b>        | 8,14,18,22,23,14          | 33/1                   | 33/1                   |

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 Rorterhouse*