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HOT SUMMMER IN OZ



Alistair Presnell's Australasian Tour record equalling round of 60 to win the Victorian PGA Championship at Sandhurst Club in mid February was a fitting way to bring the golfing summer of 2009/2010 to a close.

Presnell was on track to become the first player to break 60 on the APGA Tour when he raced to 11 under through 13 holes but a short missed birdie putt at the 17th cost him chance to create history. Both Paul Gow (2001) and Ernie Els (2005) had previously shot 60 and Presnell now becomes a member of those who share that milestone.

A round of 59 was produced in a Von Nida Tour event in 2005 when Brad McIntosh won the Queensland PGA Championship and Craig Jones had also done so in a Pro Am event in Queensland but to have done so in a PGA Tour event would have been something quite special.

While the PGA Tour of Australasia is now played over a calendar year, there is still a perception that the events of late 2009 and early 2010 are one. With the completion of the Victorian PGA Championship at Sandhurst however we must now wait until October for continuation of the 2010 season so perhaps now a chance to look back at the highlights of these past few months and what we can expect in the coming months.

The summer has been made up of three what could be described as mainstream events (The Australian Masters, Open and PGA Championships), two events co-sanctioned with the Nationwide Tour and eight events that have now come under the umbrella of the PGA Tour but are known as Tier two events.

If anything it has been the growth in number (eight) of the Tier 2 events that has been a highlight of the summer. All prizemoney earned in these events now counts towards

Alistair Presnell nearly reset the record books.

HOT SUMMER IN OZ



Left: Josh Geary completed an outstanding season on both sides of the Tasman.

Far left: The One Asia Tour is developing throughout the Asia Pacific region, the game's popularity in places like China witnessed at the World Cup of Golf last year.

◀ the PGA Tour of Australasia's money list and at a time when there is considerable pessimism and scepticism regarding the growth of the professional game in this region, their success has offered a ray of hope.

Further evidence of their success is that each (with the exception of the NZPGA Championship) has been covered via a one hour highlights package providing a cost effective means of covering events at this level and offering sponsors considerable bang for their buck.

Not that anyone is going to get rich by playing in these events but the PGA of Australia has fostered the growth in these events in order to offer a pathway to One Asia.

One Asia, a tour jointly sanctioned by the PGA of Australia, the China Golf Association, the Korean Golf Tour and the Korean Golf Association now appears as if it will contain a minimum of 11 events in 2010 growing to 15 in 2011.

Players who might normally have little else to do through the middle of the year other than play pro-ams or mini tour events in the US, will now have a viable alternative to the Asian, European and even the PGA Tours by earning access to One Asia events. Each will be played for a minimum of US\$1 million. The first of those in 2010 is in China beginning on April 1.

Starting in Western Australia in

late October the tour took in the WA Open, the WA PGA and the Queensland PGA before the long awaited arrival of Tiger Woods at the Australian Masters. It would be the last event for Woods before his philandering ways became public knowledge but he did not let anyone down on the golf course with a classy display to win for the first time in Australasia.

Then it was to the NSW PGA and NSW Open Championships before Adam Scott finally won at home when he held off Stuart Appleby to win the Australian Open at the magnificent NSW Golf Club. To make his first win domestically, his own national open was a double whammy for Scott who has promised so much but delivered so little until now in his homeland.

Then it was to Coolum and the Australian PGA Championship where Robert Allenby made it two wins in succession after arriving back from his victory at the Nedbank Challenge in South Africa.

That brought to an end the 2009 Order of Merit and given that it was necessary for a minimum of four events to have been played for a player to be included then it was Michael Sim who topped the list. That completed a magnificent year for the West Australian who during an outstanding Nationwide Tour season had won three events and earned

his way to the PGA Tour.

From a New Zealand angle the performance of Josh Geary was the standout. His runner up finish at the NZPGA, and his fourth place at the New Zealand Open were topped off by a very impressive seventh position at the Australian PGA Championship. Given that every other player inside the top ten that week at Coolum was either a PGA Tour or European Tour player it was a finish that deserved perhaps more recognition than it received.

Geary finished fourth on the PGA Tour of Australasia's money list, providing a number of options for him in 2010, and more importantly 2011, as he will have direct access to the PGA Tour School final stage later this year.

And so to the Victorian Open, the first event of 2010 and the start of a new Order of Merit. The tournament was played at the superb sandbelt layout at Spring Valley and was won by Jason Norris.

Two weeks later the New Zealand PGA Championship at Clearwater was won by New South Welshman Mitchell Brown before that field and more was strengthened with the addition of the Nationwide Tour players at the New Zealand Open.

Both the New Zealand Open and the Moonah Classic were won by Americans perhaps providing a lifeline for the continu-

ation of the Nationwide Tour in this part of the world.

The ongoing association or otherwise of the Nationwide Tour's now nine year involvement in Australasia has perhaps reached crisis point with so many variables and permutations determining its future.

It is clear that a minimum of two events in this part of the world will be necessary to encourage the Nationwide Tour down here again. That may be easier said than done however with no real guarantee of an event in Australia to support the New Zealand Open wherever and whenever that event itself may be held.

While Geary's effort to finish fourth on the 2009 Order of Merit was the New Zealand highlight of the summer, the consistency of Mike Hendry was not far behind. Hendry recorded five top-10s in the eight tier two events including being third at the WA Open and the Queensland PGA, fifth at the NSW PGA, ninth at the Victorian Open and 10th at the NZPGA. He then finished 10th at the Moonah Classic, finishing off what was essentially a breakthrough season for the North Harbour professional.

Michael Long's share of third place at the Australian open behind Adam Scott should also be considered when assessing New Zealand efforts this summer.

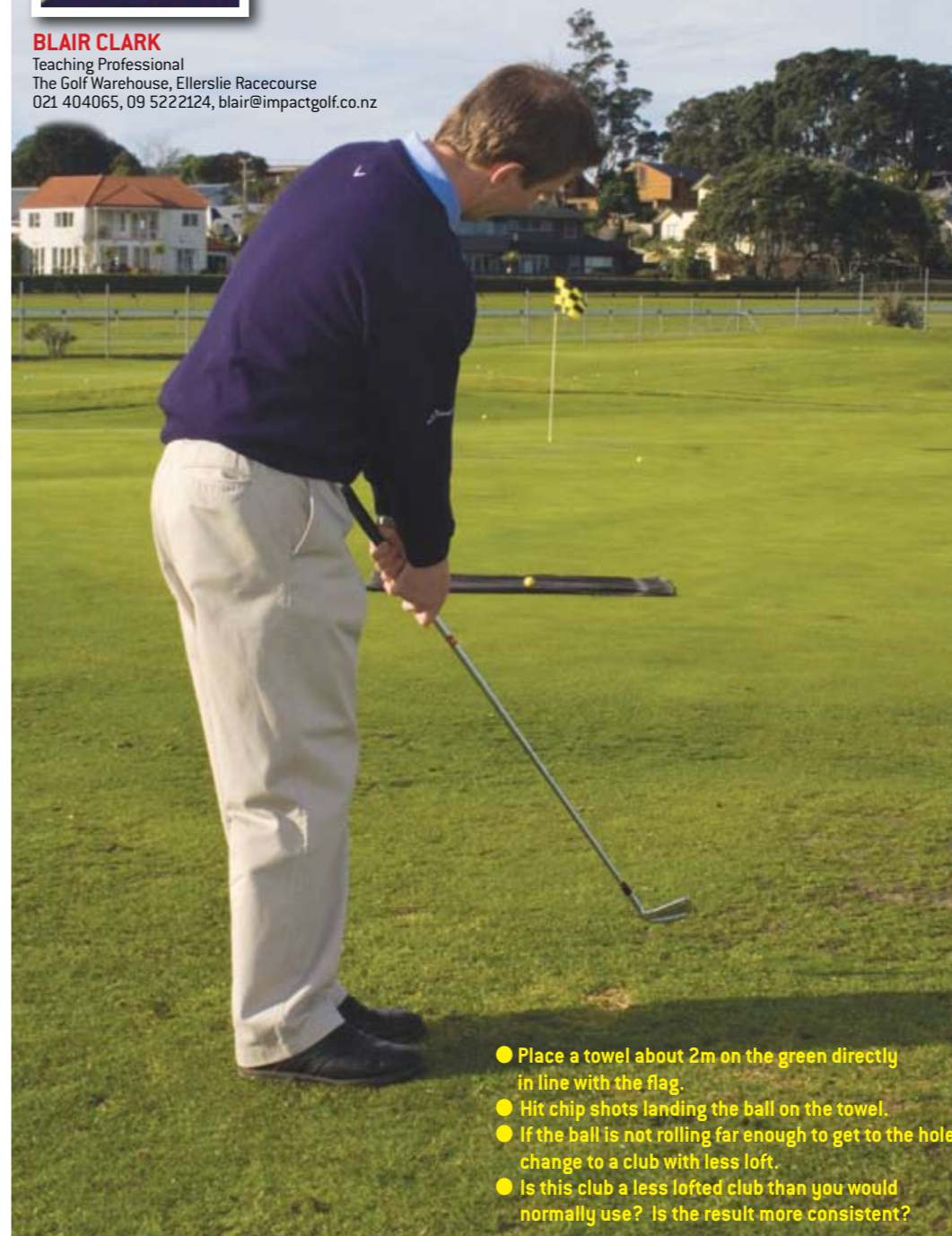
Coaching 12 PAGES OF WORDS & PICTURES TO PICK UP YOUR GAME

PULL-OUT & KEEP CHIPPING



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When chipping, the lower you can keep the ball and the more the ball is rolling, as opposed to flying through the air, the more control you will have.



- Place a towel about 2m on the green directly in line with the flag.
- Hit chip shots landing the ball on the towel.
- If the ball is not rolling far enough to get to the hole change to a club with less loft.
- Is this club a less lofted club than you would normally use? Is the result more consistent?

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Chipping yips! Susan gives tips on how to avoid this happening to you.

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