

Thursday, December 13, 2007

SPORT



**CLOSE
CONTESTS
PAGE 56**



ON THE PROWL

Stuart Appleby says Lonard is the Tiger of Aussie golf

AUSTRALIAN OPEN

- The Australian GC, Sydney
- Par 72
- 7229 yards
- Top chances: Aaron Baddeley, Peter Lonard, Geoff Ogilvy.
- TV: Seven 10.30am

GOLF: Stuart Appleby has labelled Peter Lonard the Tiger Woods of the Australasian PGA Tour and the man to beat when the \$1.75 million Australian Open starts today.

Lonard, who romped to his third Australian PGA title last week, and Aaron Baddeley are both chasing a third Open title and are favourites to hold aloft the Stonehaven Cup at The Australian course on Sunday.

Australian Masters winner Baddeley is the \$8 favourite with SportsTAB, just ahead of Lonard on \$9.

Appleby, who missed the cut last week with rounds of 78-71, is still fifth in the betting at \$16 but admits he and Lonard are at opposite ends of the spectrum when it comes to form on home soil.

After enduring his first winless season on the US PGA Tour since 2002, Appleby is desperate to end 2007 on a high and envious of Lonard's home record.



Peter Lonard has dominated major golf events in Australia during the last decade.

PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES

Lonard has nine wins in Australia to Appleby's two.

"I'd like to win again and I'd like to win soon," Appleby said after a practice round yesterday.

"Every year when I come home my ultimate goal is to win one event out of the three I play.

"It seems like Pete Lonard's the Tiger Woods of the Australian Tour. He's the dominant force.

"I'm the opposite in a way. I'd like to take my US form, not this year, but my (usual) US form to Australia and Pete would like to take his Australian form to

the States."

Appleby has eight US PGA Tour wins, the most of any current Australian, plus the 1998 Coolool Clasic and 2001 Australian Open back home.

While Lonard has dominated the local scene since his Australian Masters

triumph in 1997, he can only boast one US trophy, the 2005 MCI Heritage.

Once again there is a strong local flavour to the Open, including US Open champion Geoff Ogilvy, playing in Australia for the only time this summer, defending champion John

Senden, Robert Allenby and Nick O'Hern.

US PGA Tour rookie of the year Brandt Snedeker, Kevin Stadler and Ryan Moore will fly the American flag.

There have been minor changes to the course since Lonard won his last Open.



Cutters chairman Greg Sutherland, Cowboys CEO Peter Parr and Cowboys Football Manager Dean Lance are looking forward to working together next year when the Cutters will act as a feeder club to the Cowboys.

PHOTO: AMANDA BALMER 121207/564

'Boys riding shotgun for Cutters

By **LISA GRIFFIN**
lisa.griffin@dailymercury.com.au

RUGBY LEAGUE: Cowboy officials were in Mackay yesterday to re-affirm their relationship with new feeder club Mackay Cutters and to prepare for next year's pre-season trial against Canberra.

Cowboys CEO Peter Parr said the NRL outfit was proud to be associated with the district and it's new team.

"From the Cowboys point of view there's progress. We're looking to get involved with the feeder club and to provide a lot of opportunities particularly for NRL players aligning with players here" Parr said.



"In all facets we've got interaction, experience and respect for each other. We don't hide anything, we're open, honest and swap ideas," he said.

The relationship between the Cowboys and Mackay Cutters "hasn't been stronger" according to Cutters Chair Greg Sutherland.

"The Cowboys play a very

strong function for the juniors and seniors of the clubs.

"We co-operate to share knowledge, education and experience. It's the best times I've seen working together," he said.

Sutherland said the relationship gave rugby league enthusiasts an important sense of what they could achieve.

"It gives people a better reality. They realise their potential to be signed and know they can live and stay in the region.

"There is a genuine career pathway that extends beyond the players to administration coaching, marketing, promotions and development," Sutherland

said.

Meetings were held yesterday regarding the Cowboys' trial to be held on March 1 against the Canberra Raiders.

Cowboys Football Manager Dean Lance said it was a great opportunity for Mackay to get involved in the Cowboys preparations for next season.

"It's the club's most important trial," he said. "Coaches play the full strength team as practise for the following fortnight when the comp starts."

Sutherland said there was also discussion regarding the activities the Cowboys would be involved in during the match lead up.