



## Larry Canning

AGAINST all odds and some very worthy opposition from Cootamundra, Kangaroo Valley and Highlands Golf Clubs, my City Team was holding a slim but solid 2-1 lead over Country.

Game number four was taking place in Canberra at the Magpies Belconnen Golf Club, home of one of the most influential Canberrans since the creator of the city's first water hazard, Sir Walter Burley Griffin. Don Portway literally grew up in the pro-shop at Belconnen

where he not only started his PGA Apprenticeship back in 1977, but also retired as the club professional in 2008. He is, as they say, an institution.

Respected member and former Chairman of the Australian PGA, Neville Wilson, created Belconnen Golf Course in 1974 and under its current owners, the Belconnen Magpies Sports Club, the club and the course have gone on to become one of the most successful and flourishing in the ACT. Club Professional, Jonathon Hickman has a fantastic range of equipment and

his coaching skills are gaining a reputation in the area as innovative and uncomplicated.

Our day started with a juicy steak at the Magpies Sports Club, a cold beer and a glass of the finest local red. It was going just fine until Don dropped the bombshell that all but ruined my lunch. "I have Eric Ceeney and Matt Miller on my team and we hit off in 15 minutes". Matt did his apprenticeship

with Don at Belconnen and now plays the European and One Asia Tours against some of the best golfers in the world. Sadly for us, playing an ambrose against Phil Drever, Mike Fish and Larry Canning wasn't exactly going to see Matt calling his sports psychologist in anticipation.

Belconnen was in beautiful shape with a rich carpet of Rye grass covering the fairways and the bent greens in outstanding condition. The match was a plethora of birdies and even though the nearest Phil, Mike and I had been to playing the European Tour was once being told to stand still by Colin Montgomery, we found ourselves one up, standing on the final tee.

It was then I allowed my innocent, naïve cockiness to get the better of me and without a n y t e a m consultation, doubled up. 20 minutes later and one of the "lamest team bogeys" I have

ever witnessed, Phil, Mike and I were cooking an early dinner on the club's BBQ while Don, Matt and Eric were kicking back and with schooner glasses full of Carlton Extra Gloat.

General Manager of The Belconnen Magpies Sports Club, Jon Burrows, is excited about the future of the Club and with a strong financial backing

of the Magpies, it is only going to go from strength to strength.

Club Captain Phil Dreiver said: "With the course in mint condition and over \$5,500 worth of prizes up for grabs the annual 'Belconnen Magpies Open' attracts amateur golfers from all over the country for a great weekend of golf.

"The competitors last year were full of praise for the course and the event and entries this year are expected to fill quickly".

Dates for the 2010 event are Saturday 11th and Sunday 12th September.

There is no doubt that spring in Canberra is special time of the year and a game of golf at Magpies Belconnen should be part of every visit to the country's capital.

Golfers who enjoy playing an excellent golf course which rewards good ball striking or just take pleasure in winding their way through glorious stands of pines, eucalypts and tranquil water ways, and panoramic views of the Brindabella ranges, Belconnen Magpies Golf Club is the ideal place to visit. The course and club are open to visitors 7 days a week and the green fee rates are extremely reasonable for both individuals and groups. For more information regarding Belconnen Magpies Golf Club or to enter in the Belconnen Magpies Open Tournament you can ring the Pro Shop (02) 6254-6740, Club House (02) 6254-2922 or visit [www.belconnenmagpies.com.au/golfclub/](http://www.belconnenmagpies.com.au/golfclub/) ◀





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