

## **2019 Championships - Will the Drive Names Change?**

With the 2019 championships beginning soon (women's first round on Tuesday August 27), many are wondering if the drive names will change this year? Last year's champions, Anne Hunter and Darren Sterling must be favourites again given they both have several championships behind them – Hunter 6, including 2015 to 2018 and Sterling 4, including 2016 to 2018. They know how to win and have been in good form so far this year.

Who might challenge? While Anne Hunter has to be a short-priced favourite for the women's championship, challenges will certainly come from Sara Manser and Joy Page. Captain Judy Thomson doesn't rate her chances but one never knows when the comp gets going. She was runner up last year. Annette Virgo is improving every week but probably needs to wait a year or two. The main contenders in the grade competition are likely to be Mary Parkyn and Barb Hird.

In the men's competition, Darren Sterling is the obvious favourite but he will face many challengers. Last year's runner up, Scott Schultz will be keen to turn the tables while Darren's friend and travelling companion Matt Knight (they are in the UK watching cricket) will be applying pressure. Incidentally, Knight is a four-time Club Champion. John McInnes, a former winner can't be ruled out either. Others who will be trying to tip out the favourites include Adrian Braddock, Adrian Loechel, Leigh Hiscock, Mark Shippies, Shane Virgo, James Smart and course director (who knows the course like the back of his hand), Grant Parker. Last year's B grade winner, Sam Graeber, now in the As, will find it very difficult to get into the winner's circle this year. Likewise, captain, Ben Birtles, Andrew Basford and Josh Pym will find the going tough in the As.

In the Bs, competition may not be as intense as last year with several players moving their handicap down into the A category. Jim Knight could be a surprise given his handicap has blown out a bit into the Bs. The two Gregs – Baschiera and Young will certainly be in the running. President Pete Murray, although he hasn't played a lot of golf recently, is in pretty good form as is George Papargiris. Vice-captain, David Schultz, after a long layoff with his hip, is currently playing consistent golf.

The C grade, which will have a big field, is likely to be dominated by former winners Neville Mansell, Ken Makings and last year's winner Aaron Burzoni. But there are a number of others keen to cause an upset. These include Wenzel Cup winner, Roger Thurnwald and last year's D grade winner, Jeff DeBoer. Trevor Schubert, Ian Honeybone, Matt Judd, Barry Henningsen and Max Jenkins are all capable of good golf but consistency over 4 days may be a concern. Unfortunately, club secretary Bruce Macky will not be competing this year as he's recuperating from a spell in hospital.

Three-time winner, Norm Raggett will be at short odds to make it four in the Ds but he can expect strong competition from Rob Harris and Ken Ritter.

Please Note: There are several players on the borderline between grades and this could change with two Wednesdays and a Saturday before the men's championships start.