



▲ Peter Croker gives former Australian Open champion Peter Fowler and Champions Tour player Stewart Ginn a putting lesson at The Dunes.

# Super coach

By Rob Vanderzalm

PETER Croker is widely regarded as one Australia's best golf instructors.

But last month it became official.

The 58-year-old was awarded the prestigious Victorian Teaching Pro of the Year accolade at the PGA of Australia's annual awards night.

Croker was acknowledged for his years of service in helping grow the game through a range of innovative teaching methods both in Australia and overseas.

And he couldn't believe he'd finally broken through to join the likes of Steve Bann and Dale Lynch.

"It really came as a shock to me," he told *Golfer Pacific*.

"I've been in the business a long time and worked with a lot of coaches along the way who have won awards both here and

Australia.

"I would have never thought about getting it myself."

Croker began his career as an assistant professional to Denis Brosnan at Redcliffe Golf Club in Queensland.

He relocated to Victoria where he worked at Victoria and Yarra Yarra golf clubs.

Croker played the tour full-time for more than ten years.

But it wasn't until 1981 that he shifted his focus to teaching after bringing out World Golf Hall of Fame inductee Paul Runyan out to Australia.

Like Runyan, Croker adopts a simple philosophy.

"I always wanted to discover the basic mechanics that line up to make an orthodox golf swing.

"I wanted to work out what makes a golf swing really work."

Croker has worked to helping many of Australia's best coaches

improve their skills.

In fact, he's taught many of the past recipients of the PGA coach of the year award.

Croker is based at The Dunes Golf Links in Rye where he runs a successful academy working with amateur golfers and the local community through primary and secondary schools.

His on-line golf academy is the first of its kind to offer students a system where they must learn the game in sequence.

He believes the internet will play an important role in golf

instruction into the future but hands-on coaching is still essential.

"The on-line teaching doesn't allow the student to learn out of sequence. It's also a step-by-step program that teachers can use with their students.

"And although it's important, nothing beats coming to see a golf pro face to face."

Meanwhile, Amstel professional Ian Denny was named the club professional of the year while Portsea Golf Club took out the pro-am of the year.

## Other Victorian PGA Award winners

|  |                             |
|--|-----------------------------|
| 2007 Victorian Country Pro-Am of the Year                      | SS & A Wodonga Country Club |
| 2007 Victorian Pro-Am Course of the Year                       | Keysborough Golf Club       |
| 2007 Victorian Order of Merit Winner                           | Tim Wise                    |
| 2007 Victorian Trainee of the Year                             | Jean-Daniel Coulon          |
| 2007 Victorian Trainee Tournament of the Year                  | Northern Golf Club          |
| 2007 CPM Victorian Trainee Order of Merit Winner               | Alex Tahin                  |
| 2007 A&L Windows Victorian Trainee Country Bonus Series Winner | Alex Tahin                  |
| 2007 Victorian Trainee Dux Year 1                              | Matthew Docking             |
| 2007 Victorian Trainee Dux Year 2                              | Grant Balcke                |
| 2007 Victorian Trainee Dux Year 3                              | Robert Rowe                 |

## The class of 2007

THE PGA of Australia Southern division has added seven professionals to its stable in Victoria.

Brent German (Elsternwick), Alex Tahin (Croydon), Nick Bielawski (Werribee Park), Robert Rowe (Corowa), Aaron Kelly (Moonah Links) and Jean-Daniel Coulon (Portsea) recently received their graduation certificates at a gala function in Melbourne.

They all successfully completed their three year qualification which involves a combination of playing and academic work.

Kelly and Coulon recently accepted coaching positions at the Mission Hills Golf Club in China. Tahin has decided to focus on his playing career while German has left Elsternwick to coach golf.



▲ The class of 2007, PGA of Australia boss Max Garske, Brent German (Elsternwick Park Public Golf Course), Alex Tahin (Croydon Golf Club), Nicholas Bielawski (Werribee Park Golf Club), Robert Rowe (Corowa Golf Club). Bottom row: Aaron Kelly (Moonah Links Golf Club) and Jean-Daniel Coulon (Portsea Golf Club).

## PRO-AM RESULTS

### Drouin Pro-Am

- 69 Adam Fraser
- Ben Hallam (SA)
- Jarrad Roxby (SA)
- John Horvath
- Matt Docking
- 70 Andrew Gott (WA)
- Jonathan Lie
- Kevin Booker
- Tigh Van-leeuwen (WA)

### Lakes Entrance Pro-Am

- 68 Chris Gaunt
- Ryan Haywood
- Tigh Van-leeuwen (WA)
- 69 Nick Dastey

### Kings Cove Metung Pro-Am

- 136 Ben Bunny 65-71
- 138 David Walker 71-67
- 143 Ben Hallam (SA) 74-69
- Pat Giles 77-66

### Bairnsdale Pro-Am

- 65 Ryan Hammond
- 68 Adam Porker
- Tim Wood

### Latrobe City WIN TV Traralgon Pro-Am

- 137 Heath Reed 69-68
- 138 Pat Giles 72-66
- William Oliver 70-68
- 139 Kane Streat 70-69
- Michael Faraone 71-68
- Nick Dastey 71-68

### Berwick Montuna Pro-Am

- 65 Brendan Chant (SA)
- Carl Smedley
- 66 Ashley Hall
- Cameron Vurovecz
- Craig Spence
- Tony McNaughton

### Beaconhills Pro-Am

- 65 Craig Spence
- 66 Jason Dawes
- Tim Wood

### Italian Golf Association Pro-Am

- 65 Chris Gaunt
- 66 Mark Williamson
- 67 Ashley Hall
- Raffael Toperoso
- Ryan Haywood

### Sunshine Pro-Am

- 66 Ryan Haywood
- 67 David McKenzie
- 68 Brett Bridgman (Qld)
- Glenn Joyner
- Jason Norris (SA)

### Gisborne Pro-Am

- 67 Tony McNaughton
- 69 Euan Walters
- Troy Hughan

### Bacchus Marsh Pro-Am

- 64 Ryan Haywood
- 67 Pat Giles
- Ryan Hammond

### Hardings Hardware Anglesea Pro-Am

- 64 Chris Gaunt
- 65 John Wade
- 67 Ashley Hall
- 69 Alistair Presnell
- Heath D'Alterra
- Peter Nolan
- Steve Jones

### Trafalgar Pro-Am

- 68 Jarrad Roxby (SA)
- Stuart Bouvier (Qld)
- 69 Andrew Rogers
- Carl Smedley
- Michael Harwood
- Phil Hodge
- Ryan Hammon