

# MacLean grabs national win in 'fairytale' result

GREY MORRIS

HIDDEN Valley Drag Racing Association president Scott MacLean had the right words for his win at last week's national titles in Darwin – "a fairytale".

MacLean's win in the Top Alcohol bracket was his first at national level and a fitting reward for the 39-year-old Top

Ender. "It was fairytale stuff," he said.

"I was there with my Hidden Valley hat on to make sure the competition ran smoothly, but I was also there as a competitor with my support crew and sponsors and we were lucky enough to get the job done.

"On paper it wasn't meant to happen against 17-time Top Alcohol champion Gary Phil-

lips, Jamie Noonan and last year's runner-up John Cannuli.

"We were very much the underdog and those boys I mentioned are very, very fast and very good at what they do. John almost won the last series and it was only a big fireball in the final against Noonan that cost him the title.

"He smashed me on elapsed time and miles per hour, but I

got him on the whole shot after a big wheelstand at the start."

MacLean got a big reaction time advantage on Cannuli, who had been quickest all weekend and reached the finish line first with a 5.617-second elapsed time at 260.76mph to Cannuli's quicker, but losing, 5.446 ET at 265.53mph.

Earlier he beat defending champion Phillips with a 5.579

ET at 262.03mph when Phillips spun his tyres, and Noonan when his dragster blew an oil pump.

Cannuli described his slow start as stupid, a mistake that cost him the championship.

"In this game there are a thousand ways to lose and one to win and this time it was Scotty that found it. Good luck to him, I wouldn't have wanted

to lose to anyone else," he said.

There is no standing still for MacLean, who in between his administrative duties is planning for an in-depth shot at the ANDRA series in 2016.

"We've got a brand new doorslammer in America we're waiting to bring out and we're hoping to chase national sponsorship and the series next year," he said.

# Major Events look at drags

GREY MORRIS

NT Major Events general manager Andrew Hopper wants some in-depth discussions with Territory drag racing and its parent body Motorsport NT before any decisions are made on upgrading the sport to another level.

Hopper was responding to requests from Hidden Valley Drag Racing and Motorsport NT to assist them with Darwin's national round of drag racing.

Drag racing president Scott MacLean claims the costs involved in running such a prestigious event and the responsibility associated with the infrastructure demanded more support from Major Events and the government.

"It was interesting to see in the paper what they want and even more so what it all means," Hopper told the NT News yesterday.

"Obviously it can be taken in different ways. Do they just want to be considered a major event, do they want funding or do they want support?"

"So there is a bit to worked

through I would have thought and catching up and having a chat on what they actually mean and what they are looking for is going to be important."

Hopper said the crowd numbers being advertised were impressive, but he queried the origins.

"Potentially they are good numbers, but it depends on how they are made up," he said. "Are they interstate, local or international?" he said.

"That's why we need to have that very in-depth discussion on just what the event is and what it is made up of. I don't profess to know that event well. Unfortunately I couldn't make it on the weekend which was unfortunate.

"But it's certainly being considered successful by everyone who is talking about it which is a step in the right direction."

While the AFL and NRL premiership matches are looked after by the Territory Government's sport and recreation department, the Finke Desert Race and the V8 Supercars are very much in the domain of Major Events.



NT Major Events general manager Andrew Hopper

Picture: IVAN RACHMAN

## Mega Monday Crossword solution

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## Scott follows Spieth in to Open

JORDAN Spieth on Tuesday. Adam Scott yesterday.

With two of the sport's biggest names confirmed, the Australian Open from November 26-29 at The Australian promises to offer a fascinating duel. Golf Australia has confirmed former world No. 1 Scott will return to compete in the nation's most prestigious tournament.

Scott, came close to winning the US Open recently with his sensational final round 64, eventually tying for fourth at Chambers Bay.

Reuniting with his longtime caddie Steve Williams, he tied

for 10th at the Open Championship at St Andrews over the weekend.

"The Australian Open is a tournament that I value highly, Sydney is a great city and The Australian Golf Club is an excellent venue for Championship golf," Scott said.

"I am really looking forward to competing to win my National Open once again."

The Queenslander won the Australian Open at New South Wales Golf Club in 2009, eclipsing the field by five shots at the tournament's only visit to that venue.

He has been a regular con-

tender in the country's most famous tournament, finishing fifth at The Australian last year, runner-up to Rory McIlroy in 2013, 14th at The Lakes in 2012 and fourth in 2011.

Golf Australia's chief executive Stephen Pitt said Scott's appearance confirmed a white-hot field.

"Adam has been a great supporter of the Open and he is always thereabouts at the finish", said Pitt. "He's an immensely popular figure and a great ambassador for the sport in this country."

World No.2 Spieth is the defending champion.

## Huge field ready to tee off

DARWIN Golf Club officials expect almost 200 players to hit off this morning in the 54-hole Lion Channel 9 Darwin Open at the Marrara course.

Club captain Andrew Hollick said the championship is a world amateur ranking event, giving it more prominence on the local golf scene.

Defending men's champion

Gary Barker will not be back after turning professional.

But club champion Neil White will start, as will another pre-tournament favourite Matthew Fricker and veterans Paul Edwards, Tom Harold and Peter Hargreaves.

Last year's women's champion Chantelle Shaw is a definite starter, along with the

smooth swinging Asha Hargreaves and Jade Longstaff.

All hit off times today, tomorrow and Sunday are from 7.30am. A winner is expected to emerge from the pack at 5pm on Sunday.

Winners will be decided in A, B, C and D grade in men's and women's, along with a junior division.