

# Hewitt ace coach for Nick

LEO SCHLINK

ROD Laver says Lleyton Hewitt is the "ideal" coach for Nick Kyrgios, whom he says squandered US Open title glory with poor shot selection last month.

Revered as an all-time great, Laver said former world No.1 Hewitt was the right person to get the best out of talented Kyrgios.

"Lleyton Hewitt, in my mind, he's be the ideal person to get Nick," Laver said.

"I had heard they would be together, I don't know it is true or not, but those two together could heal a lot of the things Nick has been doing."

Hewitt, who was yesterday given a wildcard in to what will be his final Australian Open this summer, is already mentoring Kyrgios.

**"He's young and he's got to come out of this"**

And, if as expected, he is formalised as Australia's next Davis Cup captain, Hewitt will take an even closer interest in Kyrgios's career.

Laver said he was mystified by Kyrgios's sledging of Australian Open and French Open winner Stan Wawrinka in Montreal.

"There's no answer for that," he said.

You'd have to be psychologist to explore that one.

"He's young and he's got to come out of this.

"I don't know what caused it.

"I didn't see the match to see what happened."

Laver insists Kyrgios blew a potential US Open title victory with a cavalier first-round loss to Andy Murray.

"The last US Open, he could have won the tournament but he comes to the net (in the first round against Murray) and he's half-volleying it between his legs," dual grand slam champion Laver said.

"You figure, 'Yes, if you don't have any other way of doing it, then you have to hit it that way.'

"Maybe it's boring for him to be on the court and not being able to show all the shots he has, but that's not going to make him a champion. And he does have the ability to be a champion and it would be a shame if he doesn't allow himself to be that much better."

## Jason raises bar in teen powerlifting



Darwin powerlifter Jason Lay was the No.1-ranked teenager in his weight division at the world championships held recently in Las Vegas

Picture: ISABELLA MOORE

MARC MCGOWAN

DARWIN'S Jason Lay set off for Las Vegas last month with no particular expectations for the Global Powerlifting Committee World Championships.

There was just one thing the 18-year-old wanted to do and was nervous about: weighing less than 110kg to avoid coming up against the real big boys.

Lay not only achieved that – coming in at 108.2kg – but

went on to place first in the teenage division of his weight category.

"I was pretty stoked and pretty amazed. I didn't expect it. No one expected it," he said.

"I was so nervous for the weigh-in, but on the day of the comp I was just normal. It was like another training session.

"If I was overweight I'd be in another category, but I was below and that's when I started eating anything – lots of

burgers – but you try not to over-consume."

Lay lifted a career-high combined weight of 520kg, including a 190kg squat, 120kg bench press and 210kg dead lift. His previous best was 495kg.

"It's only a small difference, but still a good difference. I was most pleased with my dead lift," Lay said.

"I found out later (I was the top teenager) and I'd rather

know later than during, otherwise I'd get pretty nervous."

There was no rest or relaxation since returning to the Territory, with Lay keen to maintain his physical condition ahead of a competition at Palmerston Recreation Centre on December 6.

That competition will involve only bench press – Lay's weakest discipline – and dead lift.

His goal is to produce a

230kg dead lift, knowing he won't have to squat before it. Lay is less optimistic about his potential bench press.

"125kg is my aim, but I suck at bench – I'm just weak," he said. "I don't really like it and I don't train as much."

Lay will compete in the Australian championships at Brisbane in May before considering whether to again contest the world championships, which is in Europe next year.

## Legend to say a final farewell at Melbourne

MELISSA WOODS

HE may miss out on the title he desperately wants but Australian Open fans can send retiring Lleyton Hewitt out a winner with special celebrations planned for his final ever tournament.

Australian Open tournament director Craig Tiley said on Monday that the 34-year-old would receive a wildcard into the January tournament, which would be a record 20th consecutive Open campaign at Melbourne Park.

Tiley said they still had to work out the details of how the tournament would honour former No.1 Hewitt, as he drew the curtains on his career.

Now ranked 296, Hewitt's best result is runner-up in 2005 while he hasn't made it past the second round in the last three years.

"We want to celebrate the great career Lleyton's had but we need to sit down and talk with him because he will also want to focus on doing the best he can at the Open," Tiley said.

Hewitt intends to retire after the tournament and then take over Australia's Davis Cup captaincy.

At 19, Thanasi Kokkinakis isn't old enough to remember an Australian Open without his Davis Cup teammate in it and said it would be sad to see him go.

"He's done so much for the sport here so it's going to be disappointing," Kokkinakis said. "I know he's always going to be involved in tennis so while it's disappointing for the fans I think a few players can take a breath they don't have to face him anymore."

Meanwhile, Tiley said prize-money would rise 10 per cent for next year's tournament, with a total of \$44 million on offer. Organisers also announced a partnership with the Shanghai Masters to pool resources and open up the tournament to the Chinese market.

Kokkinakis, ranked world No.76, welcomed the boost in prizemoney.

"Tennis is a tough sport because everyone in the top 100 makes a good living but if you compare it to other sports, if you're 200 in the world in other sports you can make a killing but in tennis it's tough to get by."

## Cazalys up there as top four sides sorted in sevens

BRUCE KENNON

THE last minor round of Rugby 7s confirmed the top four spots in the Heineken 7s finals this weekend.

Cazalys, the fans' favourite, cemented top spot with two good wins over Squid Ink and Mix 1049.

But the US Marines that make up the Squid Ink side were far from disgraced.

A converted try courtesy of

Joe Oliver and some determined defence saw the "Inkmen" hold the Flying Fijians to a modest 24 points.

Mix 1049 also scored a try against Cazalys in a 28-7 loss. The "Shock Jocks" rebounded to score a 45-15 win over Cannon's Kitchen that lifted them to fourth on the ladder and a semi-final rematch with Cazalys.

Shamrock Scaffold Services had two big wins, totalling 110

points without conceding a try against Squid Ink and Bundaberg Rum.

Shamrock is a definite contender for the Heineken crown with quality players like Bobby Nurse, Simaika Salaa and Alex Costello able to influence the result of any game.

Shamrock's semi-final pits them against a patchy Marsh outfit who recorded several highlights during the season and a number of lows.

The Greens' hard-hitting utility Gary Keppell was yellow-carded at the weekend and will need to show more self-discipline if he is to be an asset to his team.

Cannon's Kitchen failed to turn up the heat for much of the season but they still have some quality players who can carve up the defence of opposition teams who take their feet off the pedal.

Squid Ink have been a revel-

ation this season, with their ability almost on par with their desire.

The "Inkmen" are in seventh spot on the ladder but could easily find themselves in a better position after this week's action.

OneSteel will need some steely resolve against a spirited Bundy outfit after a poor showing on Saturday and find themselves the competition's cellar dwellers.