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Bellata golfer edges closer to stardom

By Gerald Cowan

BELLATA golfer Matthew Steiger is edging closer to golfing stardom after a strong performance in the 2009 Australian Amateur Championships held at Virginia Golf Club, Brisbane from March 19 to 25.

Matthew's solid performance at the championships saw him finish 17th out of a field of 280 players, all of whom are rising stars in their own right.

He finished with a score of +2.

The championship was the final qualifying round for the Australian Open.

Since January 1, 2008, Matthew has been busy training at St Michael's Golf Club in Sydney with the help from new coach Jeff Wagner.

Matthew says he has made progress in many aspects of his game since he made the move to Sydney.

"My putting has improved quite a bit and in my overall game I have improved by two or three shots," Matthew said.

"These days if I don't hit under par I get a little disappointed."

His latest impressive result is one of many in Matthew's promising sporting career.

After taking out the Harvey Norman Week of Golf in the 16 years' category, he was selected for the NSW representative squad that competed in the Australian Junior Boys Championship at Melbourne in January 2008.

There he placed 20th overall out of a field of 160.

Matthew's next major golfing tournament will be at the Junior Masters' event to be held in Perth in April.

There, Matthew will square



MICHAEL Williams, Bellata golfer Matthew Steiger, Bob Ford and Prim Winston-Smith discuss Steiger's performance.

off against 72 other aspiring golf pros in what he says is the biggest junior golf tournament in Australia.

On a brief visit back to Narrabri on Friday, March 27, Matthew spoke with representatives from the Narrabri Education Foundation on his recent golfing accomplishments.

The Narrabri Education Foundation, along with Monsanto, will be providing ongoing financial support to help pay for Matthew's travel expenses, accommodation and golfing equipment as he attempts to carve out a spot as one of Australian up-and-coming golfing talents.

Whilst Matthew's ambitions for a successful and lucrative golfing career seem to be becoming a reality, the sport requires top players to often 'live out of a suitcase' and embark on nationwide travel.

Such demands are often a financial drain on golfers like

Matthew who frequently compete in tournaments across the country.

Jocellin Jansson from the Narrabri Education Foundation said Matthew's dedication to his sporting career despite the many challenges he has faced due to living in regional areas is 'inspirational'.

"Matthew is definitely a role-model for not only young golfers, but for those looking to excel in any sport," Ms. Jansson said.

"The Narrabri Education Foundation is proud to support Matthew as he attempts to achieve all his goals in the sporting arena.

"It is important for communities to support and encourage young athletes like Matthew," she added.

Over the last seven years, the Narrabri Education Foundation has supported 54 recipients and given out grants of over \$70,000 to allow Narrabri's youth to fulfil their ambitions.