

# Sports



## Mickelson could play at S'pore Open

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AFTER Tiger Woods, he is probably the biggest draw in golf. But, while organisers are in talks with world No 2 Phil Mickelson, reports yesterday that suggested the American superstar had already pencilled in the Barclays Singapore Open as part of his schedule for the second half of the year are off the mark, for now at least.

Singapore Open chairman Graham Bell released a statement yesterday evening, in which he said: "I'm happy to say we're in discussions with Phil Mickelson at this stage and we hope to be able to announce more players in due course."

"We have always stated our intention to bring the world's best players to the Barclays Singapore Open."

The Singapore Open, known as the "Major of Asia", will offer a total prize purse of US\$4 million (\$6 million) this year and will be held at the tough Serapong course at Sentosa Golf Club from Nov 1-4.

The field this year will feature a star-studded line-up that includes world No 5 Adam Scott, reigning US Open champion Angel Cabrera, and three-time Major winners Ernie Els (world No 4) and Vijay Singh (world No 7).

Other notable names that will tee off at Serapong are former US Open winner Michael Campbell, Ryder Cup hero and stalwart of the European Tour Darren Clarke, and Japan star Shingo Katayama.

If three-time Major winner Mickelson agrees to do battle in Singapore, it would mean four of the world's top-10 players will feature in the tournament.

# No night race, please

Melbourne rejects Ecclestone's call, Australian Grand Prix will stay as a day event

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WHAT Bernie Ecclestone wants, he usually gets.

This time, however, the Formula 1 czar is in for disappointment. Yesterday, reports in the media Down Under said organisers of the Australian Grand Prix had rejected calls to host a night race.

Instead, they will delay the race by 90 minutes and flag it off at 3.30pm, local time.

In an effort to capture television viewers in Europe, Formula 1's key market, Ecclestone wants races in the Asia Pacific region to be held at night.

Singapore's inaugural race next year, scheduled to be in late September or early October, will almost certainly be held under the stars, which would mean the European audience can tune in comfortably sometime in the afternoon.

In May, Ecclestone warned Australia's race organisers they could lose hosting rights unless they held a night race, but Australian Grand Prix Corporation (AGPC) chairman Ron Walker said in a statement on Sunday that the company's investigations have convinced them "that as things currently stand, the disadvantages outweigh the advantages".

There has been a public outcry in Melbourne ever since the idea of a night race was mooted by Ecclestone.

Many were concerned about noise levels in the evening. The Australian Grand Prix has been held at Albert Park in South Melbourne since 1996 and is close to many residential areas.



ALL ABOUT MONEY: The corporate clients want the Melbourne race in the day.

When contacted yesterday, AGPC chief executive Drew Ward revealed the main reasons why the night race idea was rejected.

"Our corporate clientele form a big part of the revenue we earn and they have indicated to us that they have a strong preference for the Australian Grand Prix to remain a day event," said Ward.

"A key concern is also attendance. We have a lot of response from the public and many who attend the race with their families have said they want to enjoy the entertainment in the sunshine

and may not attend a night race."

Of course, the other big factor is the cost of staging a night race. The Victoria state government already finances part of the A\$70 million (\$93.2 million) annual budget and justifying any further expense would be hard.

"The technical requirements and logistics of staging a night race are too high and it is something that has played a role in our decision to stick to a day-time race," Ward added.

The Bahrain Grand Prix will replace the Australian Grand Prix as the first race of the 2008 season.



MORE THE MERRIER: Organisers are targeting 38,000 participants in total this year.

# The Singapore marathon just gets bigger

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LAST year, the famed Boston Marathon featured an estimated 22,000 enthusiasts who ran the full 42km distance. That figure has now become the benchmark for the Standard Chartered Singapore Marathon, which enters its sixth edition this year.

Speaking yesterday at the launch of the Standard Chartered Singapore Marathon 2007 — to be held on Dec 2 — at Raffles Place, Singapore Sports Council chief executive officer Oon Jin Teik said the target is to reach 20,000 participants for the full marathon by 2011.

"About 12,000 are expected for the full marathon this year, and we're aiming to increase that figure to about 20,000 by 2011," said Oon, 44. "That is the benchmark if the Standard Chartered Singapore Marathon is to become a truly world-class marathon like London,

New York, Chicago, Boston and Berlin."

In the inaugural Stan Chart marathon in 2002, 6,300 participants took part in the event. Last year, the figure rose to a whopping 31,000 runners. The target for this year's marathon, which has a total prize purse of US\$114,750 spread across five categories — full marathon (42km), half-marathon (21km), 10km, 10km team, Kids Dash and 10km wheelchair race — is 38,000 participants.

Regarded as the world's best, the London Marathon in April attracted over 36,000 participants for just two categories — the full marathon and wheelchair race.

Registration for this year's Singapore event opened on July 16 and so far, 7,000 runners have already signed up.

For safety reasons, the full marathon will start at 5.30am instead of 6am, the distance between water points will be shortened from 2km to 1.5km, isotonic drink points will be

stationed every 3km instead of 6km, and there will be deep-heat stations at every 3km interval.

"We're also making minor route adjustments to ensure everyone has a safe and enjoyable run," said Loh Lin Kok, co-chairman of the event's organising committee.

"We want the event to be well-organised, runner-centric and spectator-friendly."

After the tragic death of teenage triathlete Thaddeus Cheong last month, the organisers have hired Alexandra Hospital to provide medical and emergency services for the event.

Around 20 doctors, 40-50 nurses, more than 100 first aid volunteers and 15 ambulances with equipment such as defibrillators are expected to be on standby at various points along the route.

For registration and further details, visit [www.singaporemarathon.com](http://www.singaporemarathon.com)