

## SPORT

# Phelps faces jail over drink-driving charge



Arrested: Phelps

SWIMMING ace Michael Phelps has admitted it was a dangerous mistake after the six-time Olympic champion was arrested for driving under the influence last week.

Phelps was arrested and charged with drink driving after a policeman saw the 19-year-old American go through a stop sign in Salisbury, Maryland, on Thursday night.

The policeman saw signs of intoxication and arrested Phelps, police said.

Phelps was also charged

with violation of a licence restriction and failure to obey a stop sign. The legal drinking age in Maryland is 21.

"I want to say that last week I made a mistake. I wanted to share my feelings and I know that getting in a car with anything to drink is wrong, dangerous and is unacceptable," Phelps said.

"I'm 19, but I was taught that no matter how old you are, you should always take responsibility for your action, which I will do.

"I'm very sorry this happened."

If Phelps is convicted of driving under the influence of alcohol, he could receive a year in jail and a \$1300 fine, *The (Baltimore) Sun* reported.

He could be subject to a 60-day sentence and a \$660 fine if convicted on a first offence on the charge of driving while impaired.

On either charge, a judge could give a defendant probation before judgment or impose a lesser penalty, but

the driver could still lose his driving privileges.

Phelps, who hails from suburban Baltimore, was the star of the pool at the Athens Olympics and is the hottest name in world swimming.

The teenage prodigy equalled Soviet gymnast Alexander Dityatin's 1980 record for the most medals at the one Games, winning eight — six gold and two bronze.

There was much hype surrounding Phelps' quest to equal compatriot Mark Spitz's

record of seven gold medals, set at the 1972 Munich Olympics.

Phelps would have netted a bonus of more than \$1 million from swimwear sponsor Speedo if he had succeeded.

Phelps returned to the pool for the world short-course championships in Indianapolis last month and won gold in the 200m freestyle before he was forced to withdraw because of back pain. AP

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## ASC review gives local programs a grand slam

# Tennis faulty

Trevor Grant

AUSTRALIAN tennis appears set for sweeping changes after a damning independent review of player development in the sport.

The just-completed Australian Sports Commission report is believed to question Tennis Australia's management structure and its system for producing elite players.

The government-funded ASC, which allocates more than \$900,000 a year to Tennis Australia, mainly to provide a pathway for young talent, wants serious reform in a hurry to stem the decline in Australian fortunes on the international scene and to stop money being wasted on ineffective coaching programs.

The report, which was presented to the Tennis Australia board on Monday, comes at time when Australian playing stocks are at an all-time low.

Australia has only two male players in the top 100 in the world rankings — Lleyton Hewitt (3) and Wayne Arthurs (98) — and three between 100 and 150 — Mark Philippoussis (105), Todd Reid (109) and Peter Luczak (145).

In the women's rankings, there are three Australians in the top 150 — Alicia Molik (13), Nicole Pratt (51) and Samantha Stosur (69).

It is believed the ASC has raised concerns about the governance of the sport and it has been suggested that reforms could include the end of Geoff Pollard's dual position as TA president and chief executive.

It is also believed there is a serious push to force the sport into introducing a wide-



Under fire: Pollard

ranging review, similar to the AFL's Crawford report which led to major structural changes in football administration. One call has been for an independent body, such as an AFL-style commission, to take charge from the current board.

One source said the sport's administration needed to be dragged, "kicking and screaming if needs be", into the 21st century. "One of the major problems is that it is still run by people from the 1950s and '60s," the source said.

The ASC, which was invited by Tennis Australia to undertake the report, is known to have pressed for it behind the scenes, mainly because it had received complaints from tennis people concerned about the lack of an effective development program.

Among the major questions raised in the report are believed to be:

**A LACK** of accountability and professionalism in the board of Tennis Australia and the lack of a coherent national structure to run the sport.

**MAJOR** problems with the high-performance coaching regime, including a lack of results and a lack of clearly

defined pathways for athletes and coaches.

**CONFUSION** between the roles of the national men's and women's coaches.

**A LACK** of effective use of the Targeted Athlete Project, which provides concentrated funding for individuals.

**POOR** use of consultant coaches and whether the right coaches are recruited.

A spokesman for the ASC confirmed yesterday the report had been completed but declined to give details about the content.

"All I can say is that our high performance review committee has finished its report and it has been presented to 'Tennis Australia,'" he said.

A spokesman for Tennis Australia said the report had been "positively received" and the recommendations would be considered over the next couple of months, along with a TA-initiated review of player development.

Pollard recently addressed the issue in his column in *Australian Tennis* magazine, saying that Tennis Australia spent about \$5 million a year on player development.

Announcing the search for a new full-time national director of player development, he said: "Tennis Australia has an urgent priority to lift its national level of player development."

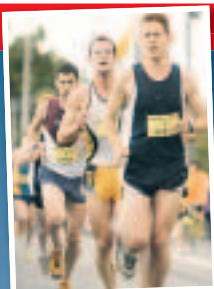
"Australia expects to have three players in the top 20 (both men and women) to ensure we have potential grand slam winners, Davis and Fed Cup success, plus inspirational role models to help grow the game."

Right now it has one male (Hewitt) and one female (Molik) in the top 20.

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**Plenty to ponder:** Lleyton Hewitt remains one of Australia's few shining lights.



TOMORROW IN YOUR Herald Sun

# OLYMPIC DREAM FUN RUN

THE COURSE — THE COMPETITORS — HOW TO ENTER

