

[Home](#) » [Sport](#) » [Golf](#) » Article

## Big-hitter Bylsma in it for long haul

Adrian Prosenko  
November 25, 2007

AUSTRALIAN golfer Mark Bylsma is preparing himself for a tilt at the world record for the longest drive.

Bylsma is Australia's answer to Happy Gilmore — a monster of a man with a monster of a drive.

He stands 196 centimetres, weighs 160 kilograms and bench-presses 180 kilograms. And when he hits a golf ball, it stays hit.

Like the time he teed off at Duntryleague, in Orange, two years ago. Stepped up to the first tee, wound up and hit the green — on a par-five hole 415 metres away.

But the former chef isn't satisfied with that. He is hungry for a crack at the world's longest drive, 648 metres by Briton Paul Slater on the tarmac of Heathrow Airport.

"If I set the stage and get the right conditions, I can definitely crack it, hold the world record," Bylsma told *The Sunday Age*.

"It's about hiring the airport, getting the right conditions and then getting the job done.

"Stuart Appleby and Robert Allenby tried to break it a couple of years ago. Appleby came pretty close and I can definitely hit the ball a lot longer than those guys."

In fact, he can hit the ball harder than pretty much anyone. Tiger Woods is one of the longest hitters off the tee in pro golf, courtesy of a swing speed of up to 204 km/h — about 39 km/h behind Bylsma's.

"Tiger hits it about 300 metres — he's about a football field behind me," Bylsma said.

That's why he is confident the record will be his when he tries it early in the new year.

He was hoping to have a crack at it earlier, but work commitments — he runs a tavern in Penrith — and the impending arrival of a baby have put his ambition on hold.

"I'll try to get a couple of sponsors and some publicity and do it that way," he said.



It's shades of John Daly as Mark Bylsma lets rip.

Photo: *Simon Alekna*

Getting in some hitting practice could be an issue, however. Bylsma has been banned from most driving ranges because they simply are not big enough to cater for him.

"I tend to hit them over the back net on to freeways. I lose a lot of golf balls," he said.

"I normally leave about 350 metres before I tee off (on course). I don't want to hit anyone."

The secret to belting the ball so far? "It's a combination of strength and technique," Bylsma said.

"Physics definitely plays a part in the game. There's no point being built like Arnold Schwarzenegger if you can't turn your shoulders or hip flexors.

"I try to hold a rhythm, be strong and explosive through the ball but hold a rhythm, let the club do the work."

Bylsma's driver alone is enough to put a golf ball into another postcode. Very stiff, 12 grams heavier than standard. And a menacing head with six-degree loft.

He plans to take it to the world long-drive championships in the US next year.

The previous time he was there, in 2005, he came 28th out of 140.

As well as setting a new world record, his other new year's resolution is to take out the \$143,000 prize.

"I know I'm big enough and strong enough to hopefully one day be world champion," he said.

---

**When you see news happening:** SMS/MMS: 0406 THE AGE (0406 843 243), or [email us](#). **[More](#)**

---

[Get the Age home delivered for as little as a \\$1 a day!](#)

Copyright © 2007. The Age Company Ltd.