

# Tennis naming debate fires up

## Rafter in the running

Paul Malone

QUEENSLAND tennis figures are calling for former world No.1 Pat Rafter to be honoured at the new state centre at Tennyson to be opened in December.

Rafter, 35, will be inducted today into Australia's Tennis Hall of Fame today and a bronze bust of him will be added to those previous inductees on display at Melbourne Park.

The State Government will decide whether the naming rights to the \$80 million Tennyson centre or its 5500-seat main stadium will be sold to corporate sponsors, as has been done with the main rugby league stadiums in Brisbane and the Gold Coast.

Tennis Queensland president Ashley Cooper, a former Wimbledon champion, and the 2009 Brisbane International tournament director Steve Ayles last month recommended the centre and the main stadium be named after two retired Queensland champions.

US resident Roy Emerson, the Blackbutt native who won 12 Grand Slam singles titles, the most by an Australian man, has also emerged as a popular choice of Queensland tennis community figures.

A spokesperson for state Sport Minister Judy Spence yesterday said a decision had not been made on how the tennis centre and its main

stadium would be named. Decision-makers will need to address whether it is necessary to honour the state's greatest tennis player, Rod Laver, who has his name carried on the Australian Open's main court.

Rothwell's former world top 50 player John Frawley said he could not see the need to also honour Laver at a state centre and he would like to see Emerson and Rafter both recognised.

"The Roy Emerson centre and the Pat Rafter stadium sounds pretty good to me," Frawley said.

The Sunshine Coast's former ATP tour player and coach Peter Tramacchi said if a corporate sale were not required, Rafter's name would be his preference.

"I'd say Pat should be a leading contender if they want someone more of late. The younger generation know who he is.

"The new centre will be a first-class facility for the kids, with the gym and pool as well as the courts, and set a standard for them."

Former Tennis Queensland president and former Australian Open tournament director John Brown said "Emmo" would be first choice, with Pat Rafter second.

"That's purely on the basis of the number of major wins Emmo had," he said.