

LYLE DIGS IN FOR THE

Jarrold Lyle has it all — a loving wife, a new daughter and a promising career. But, as **Aaron Langmaid** reports, once again cancer threatens to take it all away

JARROLD Lyle is ready for the fight of his life. A decade after conquering leukemia, the Aussie golf pro has been forced to confront the devastating disease again.

Just days after doctors delivered the terrible news, his beautiful baby daughter Lusi was born.

Now he says he is desperate to beat his illness so he can always be there for her. Yesterday he began a second gruelling course of chemotherapy.

This week he spoke for the first time of his joy at fatherhood, and the challenges he faces.

"I cried when I found out," he says. "I just didn't think I could do it all over again. But Lusi has given me a new reason to fight."

His first round of chemo was delayed so he could be there for the birth.

Little Lusi Joy has granted him the perspective only a daughter can, making sense, if possible, of tumultuous emotions — happiness at having created life, etched deep with the fear of losing it.

While Lyle found himself in one hospital, his wife Briony was in another.

As he cradled five-week-old Lusi yesterday, he saw a reminder of human fragility; of a little girl who will need her dad, and a father desperate to always be there.

But Lyle doesn't kid himself. He knows the fight, though familiar to him, is one he could lose.

In the space of a few weeks, he's swapped the



lush greens of the PGA circuit with the sterile surrounds of a hospital ward. He's stared down the cold white walls of the chemotherapy unit and considered the reality that

confronts every single cancer patient.

"This could be the end," Lyle admits. "I don't want to think like that, but there's a distinct possibility. It's a fact of life. It's hard, but that's the nature of the beast."

After a recent event in Mexico, Lyle sought treatment for an inflamed insect bite.

He returned to Victoria last month intent on enjoying the precious days ahead with his new family. But a call from his GP changed everything.

Tests had revealed the beast he'd once beaten was back — acute myeloid leukemia. "I cried when I found out," he says.

"I just didn't think I could do it all over again."

He first fought the disease as a 17-year-old when he was on the cusp of a hugely promising career in the sport he loved. It took him almost two years of chemotherapy to be given the all clear.

Back then, he says, it was golf that gave him the will to win on and off the course. But now he's not so certain. His perspective has had to shift dramatically.

"The first time around golf was the thing that helped me through it, but now I have a wife and a daughter and the game is out of the equation . . .

"Will I keep playing? I can't answer that question

right now," he says.

Married in December, Jarrod and Briony have been by each other's side since a chance meeting at a Shepparton petrol station almost five years ago.

THEY had schooled together but that encounter finally ignited a spark. As their relationship progressed, Briony jetted around the world while Lyle positioned himself on golf's world stage.

He turned professional in 2004, played the British Open in '06, the US Open in '08, and has earned his PGA Tour card every year since. This season he had his best finish yet, fourth at the

Northern Trust Open in Riviera.

Lyle is nonchalant about his success, quick to credit his wife for keeping him focused. "Briony understands what is needed of me and that comes from the life we lead," he says.

"She has to deal with packing up every week and moving to another state or country so I can pursue my dreams. She gave up everything for me.

"She has me figured out and just blows my mind every day. So I know I have found somebody I will spend the rest of my life with, no matter what."

In the past year life had been especially good. Lyle's game had picked up and he

Tiger returns to Tasmania

TIGER Airways has completed another phase of its comeback with the announcement of the resumption of flights to Tasmania.

After being grounded last July over safety issues, Tiger has clawed its way back into a difficult market to the point where its fleet and its destinations are expanding.

"Tiger Airways is continuing with its Australian ex-

pansion as planned, and Tasmania is an important milestone on this journey," the airline's CEO Andrew David said.

"This is all part of the rebuilding from seven months ago when the airline was on the ground. There are many other destinations keen for Tiger's return or commencement of services."

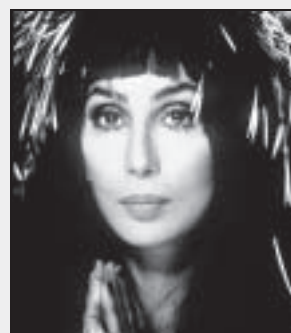
The grounding of the cut-

price carrier for five weeks was ordered by the Civil Aviation Safety Authority after a Tiger jet made a low approach to Avalon airport.

CASA had identified several earlier issues.

Since resuming operations in August, the airline has been trouble-free, which Mr David said was the result of meeting the demands of the travelling public.

AAP



Fire sale: Cher.

She's got brass

CHER has angered town hall after the key to the City of Adelaide she was given in 1990 was placed on auction website eBay.

The brass key and accompanying plaque is one of dozens of items being auctioned by Cher's personal consignor.

The key was presented to Cher during the 1990

Adelaide Grand Prix. Then lord mayor Steve Condous yesterday said he was disgusted that it was for sale.

Cher's key had attracted just one bid of \$US125 late yesterday. A spokeswoman for Adelaide City Council said the key would be of very little value to anyone other than Cher.

FIGHT OF HIS LIFE



CHALLENGE FOR KIDS

JARROD Lyle is an ambassador for Challenge, a non-profit charity that provides support for children and families living with cancer.

The Challenge Family Centre gives young cancer patients, their parents and siblings access to non-medical support services free.

More than 300 children benefit from in-hospital activities like cooking, arts and crafts, bedside games and book reading each week.

It also provides access to a broad range of extra-curricular activities including camps, information seminars, respite accommodation, parent retreats and social activities and scholarships.

Other high profile patrons include golfer Robert Allenby and Collingwood coach Nathan Buckley.

The charity mascot Leuk the Duck was created by Herald Sun cartoonist Mark Knight and plays a vital role in explaining cancer to young people.

Net link: www.challenge.org.au

Family time: Jarrod Lyle enjoys being a dad (main image), shares a happy moment with his wife Briony and Lusi (left) and in action on the golf course (below). Pictures: CRAIG BORROW



was adjusting to being a proud husband with a baby on the way.

They had intended to enjoy their time in Victoria with Lusi before heading back to the US.

But it didn't go to plan. "We've had conversations on the phone where neither of us has spoken to each other for a couple of minutes. There has just been tears," Lyle says.

"But that is the kind of connection we have.

"Briony has been a pillar of strength."

Lyle says he has his past experience to draw on.

He knows what he has to do and there is no point dwelling on it.

"The more you worry

about the bad stuff, the more it gets to you and the more you get down," he says. "It is a tough situation that we are in at the moment but I figure that

“This could be the end. I don't want to think like that, but ... it's a fact of life

JARROD LYLE

the more positive I can be, the better."

With any health crisis comes perspective, and Lyle says he learned not to worry about the small stuff long ago. And he knows there are others doing it worse.

"I've probably got plenty to complain about," he says.

"But there is no need."

It's the support of friends and a huge network of fans that has kept him buoyant.

Phone calls from high-profile players like Ernie Els

and Phil Mickelson, dozens of emails and just as many texts from other players have made him realise just how much support he has.

Players wore badges and even scrawled Lyle's initials on their hats during the most recent competition.

"To have that support

from the players and the officials, it's humbling and you know you are not fighting this thing alone," he says.

But he admits the fight can be a lonely one and, ultimately, his fate will lie partly in his attitude.

He says he is strong — the first bout of leukemia made him even stronger.

He emerged from the initial health crisis to a burgeoning career and the girl of his dreams.

Now it's back to the future. "I know what I have to do now," he says. "I've been there before. I just have to fight my butt off. That's all there is to it."

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Top of the world: Greg Ham and Colin Hay.

Foul play ruled out in muso's death

FOUL play has been ruled out in the death of Men at Work musician Greg Ham.

It is suspected Ham died of natural causes, but it will be weeks before further testing can give investigators an exact cause of death for the star.

A investigation of the hard-living performer's death had involved members of the homicide squad

Mark Buttler and Siobhan Duck

but an autopsy confirmed it was not suspicious.

Ham was found dead at his Canning St, Carlton, home on Thursday.

He was part of one of the world's biggest bands in the 1980s when Men at Work enjoyed massive international success with songs such as *Down Under* and *Who Can It*

Be Now? from its *Business as Usual* album.

Paul Stewart, of the Painters and Dockers, said Ham had still been recording music even though he was depressed by the 2010 ruling against him that his flute riff from *Down Under* was taken from the 1934 nursery rhyme *Kookaburra Sits In The Old Gum Tree*.

"I was always struck by

his humility and his down-to-earthness," Stewart said.

"He could never quite believe that he went from playing pubs in Richmond to dominating charts around the world."

Hey Hey It's Saturday musician and fellow saxophonist Wilbur Wilde said Ham — or Norman, as he was known to his mates — would be greatly missed.