

Peak

It's ludicrous that we say www – that's three times as many syllables as it takes to say world wide web

Stephen Fry on the inefficiencies of modern abbreviations

Court jester returns

Michael Kosta is now serving up laughs, writes **Chris Hook**



Career change:
Michael Kosta is
loving his new gig
Picture: Katrina Tepper

HE MAY not have performed here before but this is not Michael Kosta's first professional visit Down Under.

No, way back in the early noughties, the 30-year-old US comic dropped in for the Australian Open – in his previous life as a professional tennis player.

"I always wanted to be a professional tennis player, that was my goal," he says.

"When I left the tour I was 700th in the world and I'd made \$22,000."

But comedy had always lurked in the margins for Kosta and by the time he was employed as a tennis coach at a university in his native Michigan, he was already doing open-mic spots wherever he could.

And in 2006 it was crunch time – he'd been given a spot in an out-of-state comedy festival on a weekend in which he had coaching duties.

So he decided to leave the tennis dream behind.

"I felt OK about it because I felt I had done it as well as I could," he recalls.

"I think the move to comedy was actually a little easier [for me] than for other people because your success or failure [in comedy] is so dependent on you, and it's very personal when you fail . . . and with tennis, too, there is nothing to hide behind."

Not that he's losing.

In 2007, Kosta relocated to Los Angeles to have a crack and since then has

clocked up sets on Jay Leno, Chelsea Lately and a bunch of other chat show appearances.

Not bad at all.

"I almost hate to admit that because then it makes me feel like things are going to slow down," he says. "I can't tell you how many times I was sitting in a tiny apartment in LA thinking nothing is happening then three things happen in a week. It's weird, but I feel like I got into comedy a little older and because of that I am sure this is what I want to do, and I'm so focused on that that maybe things are happening because I'm in the right spot." True, the discipline of the professional athlete must surely help.

"I do approach it with a sense of discipline and maybe that's one area I can be better at with my comedy – letting go a little more," he says. "And I do approach it competitively, but I'm not competing with other comics. I want to win against the audience."

This is Kosta's first comic outing outside North America. It has its own challenges, as Kosta discovered on Tuesday.

"I was heckled and I said, 'Look you've gotta speak slower I don't understand the accent – I'm happy to accept the heckle but you just have to slow it down!'"

The Comedy Store,
122 Lang Rd, Moore
Park; today 8.30pm,
\$20-\$30, 9357 1419,
comedystore.com.au