



Now it's Warney the TV variety host

By PHIL ROTHFIELD
 Sports Editor-at-Large

CRICKET superstar Shane Warne has been signed by Channel Nine for his own prime-time variety show over summer.

Nine boss David Gyngell finalised a deal with Warne last week for the show, which will go to air at 9.30 on Thursday nights during the upcoming Ashes series.

Since moving into the commentary box after retiring from Test cricket, Warne has impressed television executives with his insightful but relaxed style of calling cricket for Nine and Fox Sports.

Nine has brought back Glenn Pallister, formerly in charge of

The Footy Show, as executive producer of the Warne program.

It will feature live bands, and Nine will be bidding heavily for acts including U2, Sting and Leonard Cohen when they tour Australia this summer.

A Nine insider has told *The Sunday Telegraph* cricket will be only a small part of the show

“It’s a variety program heavily geared towards light entertainment, and Warney will have a guest host each week,” the source said. “We will have the top bands and interviews with big names who are coming out for the Ashes, like Mick Jagger and Michael Parkinson.

“Warney has great contacts and will attract the best talent.

“All the celebrities love him

Last week, he was at the races with Liz Hurley in the UK.”

Nine’s research has shown that Warne, once despised by women over the text-message sex scandals and for having affairs while he was married, is now accepted by females.

“He is very well received these days,” the source said. “Nine wouldn’t be putting the show to air if it didn’t think he’d attract good ratings.”

Since Warne retired as one of the greatest cricketers to wear the baggy green, his career has blossomed.

He has lucrative partnerships and deals with Advanced Hair Studios, Dunhill, Foster’s, News Limited, Channel Nine, Cricket Australia and Sky Sports. Since setting up the

Shane Warne Foundation, the former leg spinner has raised \$2.5 million for charities.



In demand: Shane Warne