



August 12, 2007



Southern Hills Country Club

Hole #	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Out	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	Out	Total
Yardage	464	488	451	372	653	200	384	245	374	3,631	366	173	458	537	223	413	507	358	465	3,500	7,131
Par	4	4	4	4	5	3	4	3	4	35	4	3	4	5	3	4	4	4	4	35	70
Score																					

An Interview With:

WOODY AUSTIN

KELLY ELBIN: Woody Austin, runner-up at the 89th PGA Championship at Southern Hills Country Club. He shot 67 in the final round for a four-day total of 274, 6-under par, two shots behind PGA Champion Tiger Woods.

Woody, congratulations on your best finish ever in a major golf championship.

WOODY AUSTIN: Thank you very much.

KELLY ELBIN: Thoughts on the atmosphere, what it was like out there today and finishing second.

WOODY AUSTIN: Well, it was pretty much what I expected as far as dealing with the position that I was in. And I got off to a great start. I hit a lot of good shots the first five holes, the first six holes, so I was able to get settled into my round a lot easier than I was yesterday because I got off to a bad start yesterday whereas today I hit every shot right down the middle of the fairway, every shot at the flag, and I played the first six holes about as well as I could play.

So I was into the round, and just made it a lot easier. And then it was just a matter of making a few and trying to put a little pressure on him.

KELLY ELBIN: Can you go through your birdies and bogeys starting on 3.

WOODY AUSTIN: Third hole I hit a drive in the middle of the fairway and hit an 8-iron to I guess it was about eight feet -- eight, ten feet.

Like I say, a lot of good shots through the first six holes and I got up on 7, just tugged my 4-iron in the left rough. It looked like a flyer out of that thick stuff for me and I just played what I thought was the smart shot short as opposed to catching it and hitting it in the grandstands. Hit a decent chip. I just didn't make the putt. I had about, I guess, probably about seven, eight feet for par and didn't make it.

The turning point of the tournament was No. 10. Even though it was a par, it was a 6, really. It was a 6, turned into a 4 that saved my tournament. Then I finally got the putter going. Hit a good shot on 11 and made a really good 15-foot curler. I hit a perfect drive on 12 and hit one of the worst shots I hit all week but was able to make it from -- I don't know how far that was, but it was the first putt I made over 12 feet all week. And it just got the crowd going, got me going.

Then I played 13 perfect. Hit it down the fairway and hit it pin-high about 30 feet and 2-putted.

A couple good chances and then a couple good scrambles the last few holes.

KELLY ELBIN: Woody's 32 coming in was the low nine for the week. Let's open it up for questions.

Q. You were awfully hard on yourself all week because of missed opportunities.

WOODY AUSTIN: I was right, wasn't I.

Q. You were right, yeah. That was sort of -- but that was where I was kind of going. Now that it's over, how do you feel?

WOODY AUSTIN: Well, like I said on Friday, you cannot give somebody seven shots, especially someone who happens to be the best player in the world.

And I -- like I said, I went over his round and over my round, and I outplayed him from tee-to-green. Seven shots I gave up in one round. Now, I wasn't supposed to be disappointed? Like I said, a person in my position cannot give that man that much cushion. That's why I was disappointed and that's why I came up short.

Q. Was this a breakthrough for you, and what, if anything, did you learn about yourself during this experience?

WOODY AUSTIN: Well, there's no question it's a breakthrough for me because I had never been in this position before. So I can't say that it's nothing but a positive.

I'd like to know exactly how I did it today, to be totally honest. You know, I was able -- I was able to control myself better than I was yesterday, and what the formula is, I have no idea for me. But I'm going to take this as far as I can take it and try to be as positive about it as I can and hopefully turn the corner.

Q. How does the satisfaction or emotions of finishing second in a major here to winning the regular tournaments that you have won?

WOODY AUSTIN: Well, obviously this was -- you know, this was probably a little bit more electric obviously because it's a higher atmosphere. Like I said, the roar on 12 for me was bigger than anything I had ever heard. So from that standpoint, it's obviously better.

And to be in this position for the first time and to actually give that good of a run at it, I'd probably be crazy to say that it was not better than the victories.

Q. My question is quite similar. You're in your early 40s, why now, what about your game, your career has made this possible?

WOODY AUSTIN: Well, like I said all along, I was a pretty good player a long time ago. I didn't just come out of the bank like everybody

thought I did. I just got sidetracked. Everybody gets sidetracked.

There's only a few of us that their lives just kind of go according to plan. Most of us have all of those bumps and peaks and valleys. Unfortunately I had a few pretty big peaks and valleys, and it's just taken me a little bit longer to maybe -- like I said, it may be just that at 43 I deal with my nerves better than I did at 32. I was a better player at 32 than I am now, but maybe I just handle my nerves better. That's the biggest key for me is how I handle my nerves.

I don't think anybody plays any better than I do when I'm on; I know that's crazy, but I think I can hit any shot anybody in the world can hit. But it's hard to do that when you're afraid of it, and that's the fight I have every day.

Q. I understand that qualified you for the Presidents Cup. Do you have any thoughts on that or is it too early for you to tell?

WOODY AUSTIN: Well, that makes me real happy because I've always wanted to be in one of those things. I think my personality suits that kind of competition. I'd like to think that my personality is a lot like Tiger's, very out there, very emotional, and I think in that format, in a team format, in a two-man or a one-on-one, I like the idea. I like the competition. I like the mano-a-mano, one-on-one, look you in the eye, as opposed to coming out at 8:00 and the other guy comes out at 3 o'clock. I like looking right at you when I'm playing you and I think that's going to be a lot of fun.

Q. On the telecast right afterward, you said that you're always aware of what Tiger is doing. How does that awareness, how did it shape what you were doing on the back side?

WOODY AUSTIN: Well, like I said, it doesn't take a genius. Everybody follows him. He always has the biggest gallery, every time he does something, even when he hits it 30 feet, he goes crazy. You can't not know what he's doing.

So whether it's the Buick Open or the PGA, they go crazy for him. So you always know -- you can always tell what was -- well, that was a great shot or that was a birdie. It's just -- and so from that standpoint, you know -- I knew where he was at, and I've looked at a few boards, so I had a pretty good idea.

When I made my run on 11, 12, and 13, I wanted him to know that there was somebody else out there.

Q. It seems a lot of times when guys come in here after Tiger wins a major, they feel beaten, but you and Ernie both gave him a run and it seems a positive experience. Do you think the corner is being turned for everybody in terms of putting a little pressure on him?

WOODY AUSTIN: I can't speak for other people. I can only speak for myself. But I think it's great that Ernie and I didn't let him just coast in. You give anybody who is really good a four-shot lead over you -- I beat him today, but it doesn't matter because he had four shots on me.

So, you know, I don't care -- he happens to be the best player in the world, but if you put any great player, any good player with a four-shot cushion, their odds are going to be pretty good. Especially when they happen to be the best. So it almost is insurmountable when you give somebody like that -- that's why Friday and Thursday were so disappointing because I know you can't do that.

Q. You've alluded to this a little bit, the disappointment you had with the missed opportunities earlier on, but the way you played today and the way you kept the accelerator down, you're going to have to feel really proud of what you've accomplished over the weekend I would think.

WOODY AUSTIN: Oh, absolutely. To be in this position the first time for me as far as in this exact position, to go out and play the way I did and perform the way I did, I've got nothing -- I've got only good thoughts to myself or whatever you want to say, praise for myself or what have you.

You know, it's so early from it being over; so I still can't help but think of the missed opportunity, too. I'm human.

Q. Along the lines of knowing where you stood, as it turned out the birdie putt on 15 would have tied you; were you aware of that?

WOODY AUSTIN: No, I did not have any idea on 15, no.

Q. Can you talk about that putt?

WOODY AUSTIN: Well, unfortunately that green was pretty tough for me because I hit it that close almost every day there and I kept missing it.

And I was -- I believe on Friday's round, I had it about six feet almost in the same spot, and I felt like I miss -- I felt like I misread it on Friday. So Brent and I talked about it today and I thought I played even more break, and I just think I had to hit the putt so easy that it just either hit or just snapped. I don't know, that green just didn't like me.

Q. Going back to your comment about liking to look players in the eye, would you have liked to have been paired with Tiger today?

WOODY AUSTIN: I said it yesterday. I was upset -- I was disappointed with my bogey and Steve's birdie. I wanted to be in that arena. Like I said, I maybe looked at it as a little bit strange, but I think I have the almost identical personality in a way that he does, in that I want to be right there.

He always says -- what does he always say? He always says, "I want to be in the last group on Sunday." If he wants to be there, and I want to be -- why do I not want to be there? Why would I want to be somewhere else? I want to be there just as much as he does. I don't get why you would want to not be there or be, as you say -- as you always say, are you intimidated by him? I don't get that either. What, are we going to fight? Are we going to get into a fight? Why should I be intimidated?

I'm intimidated by the fact that I have a chance to win a golf tournament. I'm not intimidated by any other person. I'm intimidated by the golf.

Q. I was going to ask you, there's not many birdie holes coming down the stretch, did that make it tough, too, knowing there are just not a whole lot of opportunities those last three or four holes?

WOODY AUSTIN: Well, like I said, 15 I had played perfect all week. I had hit it in the fairway and hit it close every day. I knew that that was a great chance for me to at least get to seven and make him -- you know, at that time, I thought if I could get it to seven and par the last three, at least make him play the last at even par, and I felt that was a really good chance for me.

And then, you know, I hit a great drive on 16, but just after that, I just didn't hit too many quality shots.

Q. You talked about the up-and-downs coming into where you are now. Is that an urgency for you because you've lost some of that time?

WOODY AUSTIN: Oh, absolutely. I mean, let's face it, at 43, I'm not as good as I was when I was in my 30s, you know, everybody gets mad when I say that you've never seen how good I was or how good I could have been. But let's face it; Nicklaus won his last one at 46, but was he as good at 46 as he was when he was in his prime? No. So, yes, there are -- you know, there is that urgency because I know that, let's face it, unless Father Time is going to do something strange, I'm supposed to start to diminish. I'm supposed to start to deteriorate.

So I need to hang on and do the best I can before I start to go.

Q. You mentioned earlier the emotion you felt after the long putt on 12, and the crowd's reaction, can you expand on that and can you tell us what the pulling at the ear signified?

WOODY AUSTIN: Well, I wanted them -- I wanted to hear them. That was -- I wanted them -- I wanted to hear it. Like I said, you always hear it for him. And you hear it for yourself, but it's never -- those are immensely different. So I wanted them to keep yelling. I wanted them to keep yelling for me. I wanted him to know that there was somebody else out there, because even on the front nine when I was playing so good, my roars were nothing like his.

So, like I said, I wanted him to understand that there was somebody else that was trying to make a move.

Q. Ernie Els was in here a few minutes ago talking about how it's time for somebody to start making a run at Tiger; would you agree with that?

WOODY AUSTIN: Well, yeah, obviously, like I said, how could someone in my position make you understand or get to you grasp when all you do is "he's unbeatable." If he's on his game, he's unbeatable.

Well, you said in the media, especially on Friday, that he played just an unbelievable round of golf and that he was in total control and that he was just toying with the field. We can go through

our rounds. I outplayed him on Friday, but he beat me by seven shots.

So, does that mean he -- does that mean he's that much better? I don't get it. It just happens that he scored better, and like I said on Friday, can you not throw away that many opportunities when you are trying to win a big golf tournament. He took advantage; I didn't. Does that mean he played better than me or he's better than me? I don't agree with that.

Q. You said your turning point was No. 10, you're looking at 6 and you made 4. Could you describe that and what you were thinking and feeling going through that, please.

WOODY AUSTIN: Well, I was playing really good. I had such a good stretch, and then my -- at 7 through 10 was my little bit where I started to hit a couple of balls in the rough off the tee. And I struggled a little bit so I bogeyed 7, but then I was okay and I hit a horrible 5-iron off 10 tee and I tried to play the ball short of the green-side bunker, so I had the whole green and just chipped it up the green, as opposed to just hacking it out and having a full wedge to the back pin, I thought that was the smarter play.

I thought I hit a pretty good shot but I guess the middle of that fairway is so steep that it hit that knoll and chased all the way up to the tree where I had pretty much no shot and I was able to hit it under the tree but I couldn't keep it on the green. It went just through the back of the green. It was a pretty simple pitch as far as looking at it, but I knew it was like this table as far as speed and whatever (knocking on table). It was a matter of getting it on the green and hoping for the best. I hit it dead-center, but if it didn't hit the hole, it's ten or 12 feet by and I probably make 6.

Q. You've had a good summer. What do you attribute the good play to, and the second part is, you putted well today, were there any adjustments you made after Friday on the stroke?

WOODY AUSTIN: I did work on some things today. One of the best -- one of the best pieces of advice I think I ever got far as putting-wise was from one of the best putters of all-time, Ben Crenshaw. I really concentrated really hard today to not grip the putter. I did the best I could on short putts or anywhere from ten feet or closer to make sure I had the lightest grip I

could possibly have and still actually make the stroke.

You know, I putted from ten feet a hell of a lot better today than I did the rest of the week.

KELLY ELBIN: Woody Austin, runner-up in the 89th PGA Championship. Thank you, Woody.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports ...