



August 7, 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:

TIGER WOODS

KELLY ELBIN: Defending PGA Champion Tiger Woods, ladies and gentlemen, joining us at the 89th PGA Championship at Southern Hills Country Club in Tulsa, Oklahoma. He is competing in his 11th PGA Championship at Medinah last year outside of Chicago, was his third PGA Championship and 12th major overall.

Tiger, welcome to Southern Hills. You must feel pretty good about your game right now.

TIGER WOODS: Yeah, it does feel pretty good. Made some nice strides last week, headed in the right direction and really look forward to this week.

KELLY ELBIN: How about some initial thoughts on the golf course, practice rounds you played, please.

TIGER WOODS: Yeah, the golf course is in fantastic shape. The greens are a little bit soft. As you know, really can't get them too hard out there; probably lose them. The greens are pretty receptive. The fairways are just in perfect shape. The rough is penal enough where you really can't control your shot, and marginal whether or not, you can get the ball to the green. So it will be a pretty darned good test this week.

KELLY ELBIN: Open up to questions, please.

Q. Can you talk about the first two times you played this course, and at THE TOUR Championship, you had your dad in the hospital and next time around at the U.S. Open you had just won four in a row, and I don't know whether you had the weight of the world on or off your shoulders coming into the week. Are you happier or ready to tackle this course with everything you've been going through mentally?

TIGER WOODS: Yeah, I'm looking forward to it. Last time I wasn't aiming the ball well coming into the event and it showed. If you don't hit the ball well going into a U.S. Open you're going to get exposed, and I certainly did.

This week, I'm hitting it a little bit better than I did then, so hopefully it will continue on Thursday.

KELLY ELBIN: For the record, Tiger finished 12th at the U.S. Open in Southern Hills in 2001.

Q. Along those same lines, do you feel unfairly criticized about this course because you only finished 12th at the Open; some people say this isn't your favorite course, but you finished 69 that year to finish the tournament.

TIGER WOODS: I tend to get that at courses where I played there once and didn't win. Kind of the way it goes. It is what it is.

I like the golf course. I like the layout, but I just wasn't hitting the ball well. As I said going into a U.S. Open, if you're not hitting the ball well and

not hitting precise, you're going to get exposed, and I did that week. The only thing I did well was I putted well to keep myself in the Championship.

Q. You've talked about your training regimen to prepare you for weeks like this, the running; is there something that triggered that and when did that start? Did you have an experience early in your career where you had some effects of heat or being worn down?

TIGER WOODS: No, I started doing it back in high school. I ran track and cross-country. We had no choice but to run, and a lot. I just got used to it, got used to lifting weights, training, but we trained differently. It's all about speed and over a long period of time.

It started there but it's a different training regime than I do now. It's more golf-specific; and back then it was trying to get myself physically fit where I could run basically five-minute miles.

Q. As well as you hit the driver last week, are you going to have to scale back on this course because of the doglegs? How many drivers do you perceive to be hitting around here?

TIGER WOODS: Not many. I didn't hit a whole lot back in 2001, and probably not going to hit a lot this week. The ball's flying forever. I mean, it's going a long way.

A couple of times, like today, I hit -- Bubba hit 6-iron off of 10 and I hit 5-iron. The ball's just going a long ways. Both of those shots went about 230 and 240.

So depends on obviously the wind, and obviously the temperature is not going to go down; so the ball is going to continue to fly, which means a lot of the doglegs in the spots that you want to get to are going to be long irons or even fairway woods.

Q. The difference between the setup in 2001 for the U.S. Open and here this week, can you enumerate what is a little bit different about it?

TIGER WOODS: Actually, it's interesting. The fairways this week are narrower than they were for the Open, but the rough is not as deep. The greens, all 18, are the same speed. (Smiling) So that's nice.

But overall, I think the golf course is very similar, except for I think some of the landing areas

have been pinched in just a touch. But the rough is still penal because if you get the ball in there, as I said it's marginal whether you can get it to the green or not; and if you can get to the green, you can't control it.

Q. How would you assess your year to this point, and given how you measure a year, what's at stake for you this week in terms of how you define your performance for a year?

TIGER WOODS: Golf-wise it's been pretty good, but not great. I just think the major championships are valued that highly, and I've come close. Just haven't got it done yet.

Q. Going back to I guess '99 with Sergio and then Bob May, Rich Beem, you can state a case that this tournament has produced the most consistently exciting case of the four majors, notwithstanding your run last year; what do you suppose it is, a lack of amateurs and invitees to the field or it's a traditional Tour-type setup or the combination? Any thoughts on that? It seems like it's been a pretty good TV ride for the viewers who have tuned in.

TIGER WOODS: Well, each and every year, this is the deepest field we play in all year. Generally it's about 98,97 out of the Top-100 or so that are here.

On top of that, I think Kerry does a great job of setting up the golf course and making it fair. He makes it very difficult, but he makes it fair. I think that lends itself to more guys being in contention, and more guys at the top of the board, which makes for good theatre.

KELLY ELBIN: For the record, 98 of the Top-100 are in the field at the moment.

Q. A little bit of a provincial question but the Amateur comes to the Olympic Club later this month in San Francisco. Given your success in that event, how different is an event like that, the Match Play, the mental strain and how much more aggressive you are and how it affects your strategy?

TIGER WOODS: Well, the U.S. Am; one, you have to get in, qualify for stroke play and that's probably the harder part.

It's one of the largest fields, I forget the exact number of how many, 212 --

Q. 312.

TIGER WOODS: 312, it's not exactly easy, you just have to play one guy at a time and whether he shoots 80 or he shoots 69, you've just got to beat him by one.

I think that's -- well, that's the way I've always looked at it. I only have to beat one guy, not the whole field, the Top-64. You're going to have tough matches all the way through, but somehow all you have to do is beat one guy. You don't have to go out there and shoot 65 every day. You just need to squeak by and get to the final and from there, anything can happen.

Q. I believe this is your 50th appearance in a major counting Amateur appearances. How have you seen majors change, especially the degree of difficulty?

TIGER WOODS: Quite a bit. The golf courses -- it seems like every golf course we go to has been lengthened to some degree. They change pars around. If they can change Pebble Beach to a par-71, they can pretty much do anything.

I think the fairways overall have been narrowed. The rough has been pretty consistent over the years. Some years it's been unbelievable like Congressional in '97, that was tough, but granted, it rained.

Overall, I think what you've seen is a lot of the landing areas, about 280 or so, have been pinched in. The carries -- the guys are now able to carry the ball pretty easily now with 3-woods and drivers. So want to make it a little bit more of a premium on getting the ball in play; but you look at it, the ball is going further with narrower fairways. So they have become even harder to hit.

Q. Two questions, one real quick, what can you say about the Cliffs, and are you doing a course there and will you do a press conference next week?

TIGER WOODS: I'll be there, yes.

Q. So you are doing a course?

TIGER WOODS: I'll be there.

Q. What can you talk about that project at all?

TIGER WOODS: I'll be there. (Laughter).

Q. When it comes -- yesterday David Feherty was talking about how you had played at Hoylake and the strategy you used there and how that might help at a course like this where you talk about earlier, you don't have to hit a driver and you can kind of plot your way around with 2-irons and such and less clubs, and that what you did at Hoylake was the new Tiger. What's your opinion on playing this course?

TIGER WOODS: You just do what the course allows you to do. I'm hitting the ball in the same spots I did in 2001. Some of the tees are longer but basically the same spots and probably a little bit less club because it's warmer.

The ball has certainly changed since 2001. Balls are going further now. Yeah, those two factors, there's probably maybe one or two clubs less, but that's about it. But I'm playing the same spots that I did strategy in '01, but it's just with different clubs.

Q. How are you going to deal with the heat this week? Also, how much farther exactly is the ball traveling in this kind of heat for you?

TIGER WOODS: As far as the heat, it's not that bad. Just sweating a little bit.

But as far as the ball traveling, it depends on how high you're going to hit it; probably a half club to a full club.

Q. Going back to the end of last year and into the beginning of this year, you were hitting the ball really well, you were winning. Obviously the Masters is disappointing, and the U.S. Open is disappointing, British Open; do you feel like the swing deserted you or do you feel like there was something about the swing you couldn't get all of a sudden, and how did you get it back last week, and do you feel now that you've got it?

TIGER WOODS: You never feel like you have it. That's one of the great things about this game of golf.

But as far as this year, it's been very interesting this year. You know, if I've hit it well, I haven't putted well. And if I've hit it great, or if I've hit it poorly, I've made everything. It's just like, can I get the two together, somehow. It just hasn't materialized for some reason consistently enough.

You know, I think a prime example of that was at Charlotte this year, I did not hit the ball very well but I made everything. And then at the U.S. Open, I hit it really well and didn't make anything.

So, you know, it's just one of those weird things. Welcome to golf, eh.

Q. Because you seem to define things so much by what you do as a major and this is your last crack at a major this year, can you speak to the psychological and mental challenges of handling that and knowing this is the last one this year and not wanting to put too much on it and just kind of how you handle that?

TIGER WOODS: Yeah, you know, this is your last opportunity to win one if you haven't gotten one yet. This is the deepest field we play in all year, and it's a great challenge. It's fun. I've been in this position before where I haven't won one, and was able to get the last one, so hopefully that will happen this year.

Q. Looking at your scorecards from 1996 and 2001, the holes that have been most problematic have been 9 and 18, and to some degree 17. Can you talk about that a little bit?

TIGER WOODS: I don't remember '96 a whole lot, that was find of a fog.

'01 I remember burying that ball into the bunker on 9 and making double. I might have -- I might have just psyched myself out on 9 and 18 last time with the green speeds being different. I should have just played it like I normally would, but if you leave the ball below the hole it ends up being slower or probably equal, overthought it probably. Consequently, I played the holes pretty poorly.

Q. How has your routine for this week been altered by the fact that you obviously had to play last week?

TIGER WOODS: The only thing that's changed of late, starting last year's British Open, I played on Sunday. And I played on Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, on the golf course that I'm playing on, and take Wednesday off and basically just kickback and relax.

This year I played Sunday, but just not here at this venue. So I'll probably do the same thing, just take tomorrow off, just chill out and just be ready for Thursday.

Q. You said that the heat is just about having to sweat a lot, but is there a risk of losing concentration; is there opportunity for more mistakes? Do you have to be aware of changing gloves every hole? Can you elaborate on the heat factor and how it changes routines?

TIGER WOODS: I just change gloves more often. That's about it. As far as your concentration waning, I don't see how that can ever be a problem.

Q. Do you like what they have done to 9 and 18? How differently are they playing now than they were in 2001?

TIGER WOODS: Well, you drive the ball on 18 middle of the green, it had a good chance of rolling off the green. And this year it's different, they are landing off the face and you are able to roll it to a flat spot; and if you putt it, it doesn't come back 60, 70, 80 yards off the green.

Well-struck shots off the middle of the green last time we played could roll all the way off the green. And even with the greens being slow, the guys didn't like that very much. And by the end of the week they kept changing speeds on us and making it a little slower and we saw a lot of things happen on Sunday on 18, I think, because of that.

Q. Is there any explanation other than coincidence that there have been three first-time major winners this year and what did you think about the finish of the British Open this year?

TIGER WOODS: The first part of your question, does it surprise me? No. The fields have gotten so much deeper now, and we've seen this before. I believe it happened like '03. It's happened recently. The guys have -- we're all improving, we're all getting better, and the fields are getting deeper on top of that. So it makes it even more challenging to try to win major championships. You don't have the same collection of guys at the top of the board anymore. We're seeing newer faces that are springing up and this year is an example of that.

As far as the finish of the British Open, it was very interesting to see it, because you know, I thought Andres was just like in the perfect position after -- I think he birdied, what, 16, and all he had to do was probably go 5-4 or 4-5 on the last two

holes and more than likely he would have won, but that didn't happen.

Then Paddy looked like he was going to win it and then didn't look like he was going to finish the hole. (Laughter) then ends up making a great putt for 6 and looks like he was going to lose the Open, and Sergio is in great position and looked like he was going to win the Open and hit a great putt and didn't go in.

From there, I didn't catch the end of it from there, I was on the way home. So that's what happens when you finish early. (Laughter).

Q. Now that this European voodoo or jinx or whatever you want to call it has ended, do you think there's any reason, psychological, that other Europeans will get over the line first more easily than they managed to between '99 and 2007?

TIGER WOODS: It's strange, I don't know why that hasn't happened before, you know. That's so -- there's so much talent on the European side. It just hasn't happened.

You know, for a while there, your top players were from America, Fiji and South Africa. It seemed like the five of us were winning a lot of the majors there for a while.

Just hasn't happened. Hard to explain why, but Europeans certainly have been there. It just hasn't happened till this year. But I don't think that psychologically it will change just because one person has won. You've got to look at your own game and see how you're doing as an individual. Unlike the Ryder Cup, this is an individual format. So I don't really think the Europeans look at it as a collective whole, and we as Americans don't look at it as a collective whole. We look at it individually and trying to win the major championships for ourselves.

KELLY ELBIN: For the record, the last European to win the PGA Championship was Tommy Armour in 1930.

TIGER WOODS: Where did you pull that one out of? (Laughter).

Q. Last week it seemed like you had everything in control, the swing, the putter and everything; just wondering, what's your philosophy on momentum and even though it's a completely different venue from this week to last week, can you bring that over?

TIGER WOODS: Well, I just think that winning gives you confidence no matter what. I feel good about the way I played and the way I managed my game and made some nice putts on Sunday. It felt good to win.

You know, that golf course has always -- I don't know why, just given me a sense of confidence every time I go there. It did again this year. Hopefully I can carry what happened last week into this week.

Q. Any holes set up out there that have you kind of licking your chops, can't wait to get to them on Thursday?

TIGER WOODS: Yeah, all 18. (Grinning).

Q. There's a perception that exists, funny you should answer that last question that way, that the courses with a lot of movement, doglegs or narrow ones like say, Hilton Head, Colonial, places you haven't visited in years, if ever, that you don't like those courses; that they don't set up well for you. I wonder how you would counter that and whether you would include this course under that characterization; or if you think that's a fair characterization. Everybody's got their favorites.

TIGER WOODS: I understand that. I just think that -- you know, I don't -- I like this golf course. It certainly does have some movement to it. But you know, we're all basically playing the same spots anyways. Whether the golf course -- people tend to forget, Augusta has a lot of movement, too, from both ways. You have to shape the golf ball both ways; this week you'll probably be shaping it with less club. That's about it.

Q. Question calls for a little bit of an immodest answer, various publications regard you, whether it be cover stories or business magazines, as the most influential athlete in and out of your athletic venue in the world. What's your reaction to coming up time and time again as the guy ranked No. 1 in any kind of poll, whether it be "Who's Now" or another one?

TIGER WOODS: No, the comments, it's pretty funny, actually. I don't see how -- as far as world athletes, I don't see how Beckam didn't beat

me. As far as global figures, he's probably far more global than I am.

You know, golf is not truly played all around the world, played in most places, but not like soccer or football is. I think that whole "Who's Now" was just about in America. If it had gone globally, it would have been probably different.

Q. If you don't mind reiterating, will you play all four FedEx Playoff events, and will you use this year to see how it goes, or have you already decided what you will do for the Playoffs in the future years?

TIGER WOODS: My intent is to play all four, but this year and subsequent years, we'll see how it all pans out. No one has ever played this before. I think if you asked most of the players, they probably don't know what the point structure is once you qualify; what's the breakdown, where do you start at. If you're at 1, the first is 132 or whatever it is, what's the points breakdown? We don't really know. We've never done this before.

I think next year, we'll have a better feel for it and it will be interesting to see what happens. I know we're trying to build a lot of excitement towards the end of the year where it's been a dull period, and this might do it.

Q. You and Verplank made a friendly exchange when you were coming in and he was leaving; can you talk about your relationship with him and where he's at in his career?

TIGER WOODS: Scotty is a great guy. I've gotten to know the Scotty over the years, and especially when he was on the Ryder Cup Team and we played at the Belfry. He's one of the good guys out here. And for what he's had to battle through with the diabetes and, you know, people have no idea -- I've had a couple of friends that have had to go through the same thing and had to use the pump; it's a tough way to live.

But his attitude has been tremendous, and you know, proud to call him my friend.

Q. On Monday, the captains will make their picks for the Presidents Cup team and finalize it. Traditionally they don't usually look at guys who are first-timers in international competition for those picks. Do you think that maybe that kind of philosophy has changed or ought to change a little bit to give more people

experience in that kind of format and do you see some young guys who might be worth giving it a shot?

TIGER WOODS: If you look at it from our perspective, the U.S. side, it's hard to name someone who is in their 20s who is up there that really deserves a pick who has been playing well and who is not quite on the team yet; it's hard to say.

The international side, you've got a bunch of players, really. Their side has always been the deepest of the American teams or the European teams, the International Team for the Presidents Cup, I believe as a couple of weeks ago, you had to be in the top 20 just to get in for all 12 slots. That's pretty impressive.

Q. Just going back to the swing a little bit, when you were at the British Open, and you're not hitting like you want to hit it, are you like everyone else and you go through in your head, like, "What am I doing here? What's going wrong?" Or have you gotten to the point of the swing where you've nailed down a number of areas which you could work on or fix while you're actually on the course?

TIGER WOODS: Both. (Laughs) First you have to try to analyze your ball flight and how it felt, and trace it back to what flaw might have led to that shape of shot and rectify it for the very next one.

It's really not that hard to do. But the hard part is actually now trusting it when you've got bunkers, cross-wind, high rough, gorges, burns, tough pins. That's the hard part. If you're on the range, you hit a bad shot; okay, I can fix it next one, no big deal. But now in competition, you have to shape a shot, hit it the exact distance, precise distance; at the British Open you have to control your trajectory just right, and if you don't, you're going to get penalized.

That's probably the hardest part is applying what you know you have to do and it doesn't feel comfortable but you have to do it anyways.

Q. In a teleconference yesterday, Jim Nantz said given your performance last weekend, he thinks you already have a four-shot lead psychologically over the field going into this week. What's your reaction to that?

TIGER WOODS: I think we are all at even par right now.

Q. It may sound a bit odd but we know getting back to Nicklaus's record, it would be spectacular for you, but however, he also has a record for second in majors. Having not won this year, having finished second a couple of times and experiencing that, how do you feel about second? Can you ever be satisfied with that?

TIGER WOODS: No.

Q. With that. (Laughter) when you go into a tournament, do you still think when it's the last day, "This is mine, I have to win this"? Or have you gotten to a point where you can relax out there?

TIGER WOODS: Relax off of what?

Q. Off of having to win. We asked other guys, is it Tiger and everybody else; do you feel that way, that you're as dominant and you're the main guy?

TIGER WOODS: Well, the whole idea is to win. That's why you go to an event is to win. You don't go there to show up or I'm here to work on my farmer tan, shed a couple of pounds. (Laughter) you go out to win, period. That's why I'm here, and I give it everything I have to do that.

When it doesn't turn out to be the case, which in our sport is far more likely to be the case where you don't win, yeah, it's disappointing, it's frustrating, and you have to learn from it and apply it to the very next one so that you can go ahead and get it done.

The whole idea is to win. That's it.

KELLY ELBIN: Tiger Woods, thank you very much.

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