

Victory Impresses Locals

By JEROME RICHARD
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Tiger Woods roared into golfing lore with his come-from-behind, 2-up victory over Trip Kuehne in the U.S. Amateur last Sunday, but his victory means more to black golfers in Winston-Salem than the milestones the 18-year-old from Cypress, Calif., accomplished by winning the world's most prestigious amateur golf tournament.

Woods, whose real first name is Eldrick, became the first black man to win the U.S. Amateur. He is also the youngest person to ever win the event and is the first person to win both the U.S. Junior and U.S. Amateur. His rally from six strokes down in the match-play event is the biggest comeback victory ever in the 99-year history of the event and gave him automatic berths in the Masters, the U.S. Open and the British Open.

Unprecedented achievements are becoming ordinary for Woods, who will be a freshman at Stanford in the fall. He was, at 15, the youngest winner of the U.S. Junior Amateur, which he won three consecutive years starting in 1991 — a feat never before accomplished or duplicated. Those accomplishments have left an impression on local golfers. "I'm happy he won," said Robert Scales, a tutor in the Winston Lake Senior Golf Association's After School Tutorial Program. "It puts him in an elite crowd with Nicklaus and some others and it may serve as an incentive for youngsters to get involved with golf to see if they like it or not."

Winston Lake Golf Course assistant pro Jim Payne feels Woods' victory will have an influence on the young players at his course.

"I have heard the kids that play here in the Junior Golf Association talk about Tiger, so I think his victory will have an impact on them and their attitude toward golf," he said.

At times during the 36-hole title match at the TPC Sawgrass Stadium Course, Woods played like nothing more than a weekend hacker as he hit shot after shot anywhere but the fairway to fall six shots behind Kuehne — an Oklahoma State junior from McKinney, Texas, after the first 13 holes. Woods drew within four shots after the morning round before rallying to win six of the last 10 holes. He finished with a 68 in the afternoon round. Kuehne shot a 74.

"I've never been 6 down and won," said Woods, 19-1 in match play this year. "But you've always got to keep positive. I knew if I just hung in there, sooner or later those putts were going to go in. And they did. Coming back from 6 down means the most."

Woods took the lead for the first time by putting off the fringe for a birdie from 12 feet on the treacherous par-3 132-yard No. 17 island hole. He just missed the water surrounding the green on his tee shot.

The victory was sealed on No. 18 when Kuehne, needing a long putt for a birdie, sent the ball six feet past the cup and missed coming back. He then conceded the hole to Woods, who was ready to putt from four feet for par. Four-time Forsyth County Invitational champion Lester Kimber knows the pressure Woods was under, especially at the 17th when Woods switched from a 9-iron to a pitching wedge when the wind started to swirl. The only thing between Woods and the disastrous water surrounding the green was the backspin Woods put on the ball that kept it from sliding into the water.

"Everything was on him at the 17th," said Kimber. "The golf purist could understand what he was going through. You have to stand up and be counted sometimes and he did that on the 17th. He went for the jugular. You practice for moments like that." Kimber has bent over many a treacherous four- or five-foot putt with a title on the line, and his victories aren't on the U.S. Amateur, he can never relate to the pressure Woods was under.

"The levels of competition are different. You can be nervous and feel the pressure at my level, but to be under his kind of pressure, well..." Kimber said chuckling as his voice trailed off.

Black males have traditionally shunned golf and migrated to sports such as football and basketball. The consensus among golfers interviewed by the Chronicle for their reaction to Woods' victory is that it

would inspire blacks to learn more about the game, much like Arthur Ashe did for tennis.

"The kids have been talking about Tiger all morning," Hill Middle School teacher Harden Wheeler said Monday. "But it's been mostly white kids. I don't think black kids have been exposed to golf and the interest level is not as high. Probably most of the black kids' attention was on the football game (Sunday). Golf needs to be exposed to more black kids." Wheeler thinks Woods' victory will do just that.

"Anytime you have a role model, it will stimulate interest and I think Tiger will do that like Arthur Ashe did for tennis among blacks," Wheeler said. "I got my Godson, Eric Wilson, involved in the Junior Golf Association and now I can't keep him away from the golf course. He is wearing me out. I think black kids think golf is aissy sport, but they see Tiger have success and pull in the big bucks and it will turn some heads." Scales views Woods' victory in terms of exposure.

"In the past, blacks have never been exposed to golf because of the lack of courses and role models, and at the same time golf was traditionally been suited to white males instead of black males," he said. "That has changed and I think Tiger's win will attract black youngsters to the game."

Miller Time: Tables Are Turned, Now It's Miller's Turn to Push Dominique Dawes

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — Dominique Dawes has been pushing Shannon Miller for the last two years. Now it's Miller's turn to push for a while.

Dawes of Gaithersburg, Md., became the first gymnast to sweep the national championships since Joyce Tanac Schroeder in 1969, finishing 1-2 with Edmond's Miller the entire weekend.

"She made history," said Steve Nunno, one of Miller's coaches. "Dominique Dawes was just on fire all weekend, and she just would not be deterred. Shannon helped push Dominique as Dominique has pushed Shannon."

Dawes' sweep was announced as the first by an American gymnast, but Schroeder pointed out to USA Gymnastics that she had been there first, sweeping the 1969 AAU Nationals.

Dominating never entered Dawes' mind.

"I tried to treat every event like the first event and not be too overwhelmed by everything around me. (But) I thought about it before the last event, and I was a

bit nervous," she said.

Miller, winner of five Olympic and seven World Championship medals, said that her 1992 Olympic teammate took advantage of her mistakes.

"I've been on top a long time, since the (1992) Olympics,

coaches posed the challenge of tumbling back and forth without hitting a wall.

Miller now plans to take a break from competition. She said she will head back into the gym and work at making her routines more difficult.

added golds in the still rings and high bar to his collection.

Keswick, 24, of UCLA, won his first national title Thursday and had chances in five of the six individual finals Saturday. He medaled in three, winning the still rings with a score of 9.625 and the high bar with a 9.525.

But even he admitted this year's event finals weren't as exciting as 1993 with the men's field hit by injuries and a stomach virus that claimed several competitors, including Bill Roth of Temple, who had finished second in the all-around.

A stomach virus forced Roth to pull out of three events. He tried to defend his title in the vault but stumbled into the judge's table on the landing of his second vault and finished fourth.

"It's been a long summer. After the all-around, it's not easy to get back in the gym," Keswick said. "We did have some great performances, but the level was not where it could've or should've been."

"Shannon helped push Dominique as Dominique has pushed Shannon."

—Steve Nunno

and it shows I can make mistakes," Miller said.

Dawes and Miller were 1-2 in the all-around and finished the unique finish with respective sweeps in the vault, uneven bars and balance beam, then the floor exercise.

Dawes clinched her sweep with an up-and-back tumbling pass to open her floor exercise that helped earn her a 9.925. She learned how to do the pass while working in a small gym where her

Dawes also isn't satisfied. She figures she has to learn a real release move from the uneven bars and pump up the difficulty in her routines before the world team trials qualifying meet in October.

"I could've had a better difficulty on the bar. I don't really have a real release on the bars," Dawes said.

The women's performance overshadowed the men's individual event finals even though all-around champion Scott Keswick

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