

Is Tiger back?

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Is Tiger Woods for real this time?

Or was Tiger teasing us? Again.

The magic was back when it had to be Sunday at the House That Jack Built, i.e. The Memorial Tournament.

Tiger won for the fifth time at Muirfield, golfing legend Jack Nicklaus' creation.

He had to do it under pressure. He did it by making three birdies on the final four holes. His flop shot birdie on No. 16 was one for the ages.

The Golden Bear himself said so. He called it the best shot he had ever seen at his tournament and considering the circumstances, the finest shot he has ever seen.

There was no margin for error on Tiger's shot from the rough. It came out high, and landed soft as a butterfly. It found the crest of the green and began slowly rolling down the slope.

Flashbacks to Tiger's incredible birdie shot on No. 16 at Augusta National were natural.

The magic was back, if only for the day.

Tiger teased us earlier this year when he won Arnold Palmer's tournament at Florida's Bay Hill. His latest swing change held up through four rounds, just enough to whet every golf fan's appetite.

Admit it. Like him or not, and there are those who clearly don't, golf is a better sport when Tiger plays well.

The old Tiger made everyone realize that when he showed up on the first tee, everyone else was playing for second. The new Tiger does not scare today's young guns. Yet. Maybe never

He still has to prove his third swing change, this one orchestrated by Tennessee State graduate Sean Foley, can hold up round after round, tournament after tournament.

It fell apart after he won at Bay Hill. We'll see how he plays his next tournament, which just happens to be the U.S. Open in San Francisco.

It is in his home state, where at an early age he spun fairytales on fairways and putting greens. He was always reminded of his goals in life every time the young Tiger walked into his bedroom and there was a poster of Jack Nicklaus, winner of 18 major golf tournaments.

It gave Tiger a target. It was something to shoot for -- something to dream about when he turned out the lights.

His focus was always on golf. It left no time for him to grow up. No time for him to learn about life and how cruel it can be at times, crippling even the strongest of men.

He learned the hard way, when his wife learned of a separate life Tiger was living. It was a life filled with wild women anxious to be in his company. It was an expensive life lesson that broke

the family apart, with two young children taken away by their mother.

He fought through it. He parted ways with longtime caddie, Steve Williams. He was the object of derision. Late night comedians had a field day at his expense. Golf fans that didn't like him because of his success, because of his potty mouth on the course, because of his cocky attitude, reveled in his struggles.

At 36 years old, Tiger is a grown man. He still trails Nicklaus, needing to win five more majors to pass Jack. No one knows the future. Will Tiger pass Nicklaus, or come up just short?

It's why the U.S. Open in two weeks will be one of the most watched golf tournaments in history. Like Tiger or not, you'll watch.

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