



TIGER WOODS COMMITS TO THE HONDA CLASSIC

Tiger Woods, a new resident of Martin County, has committed to compete in the 2012 Honda Classic, a PGA TOUR event that will be played February 27-March 4 just 20 minutes from his Jupiter Island home at PGA National Resort & Spa.

It will be Woods' first appearance at The Honda since he competed in the event as an amateur in 1993 and his first professional appearance in the Palm Beach County / Treasure Coast area of Florida that he now calls home.

"I have heard great things about The Honda Classic," Woods said. "Now that I live here, I want to play whenever possible. Jack's involvement in the tournament and the benefits to the local community are also important."

Woods' game has been resurgent in recent weeks as he seeks his first PGA TOUR victory since September 2009. After winning the Chevron World Challenge at Sherwood Country Club in Thousand Oaks, CA in December, Woods finished third in his first event of the new year – the Abu Dhabi HSBC Golf Championship.

Then he was in contention in his 2012 PGA TOUR debut at Pebble Beach until he struggled with his putting in Sunday's final round.

"I feel very at peace where I'm at," Woods said at Pebble Beach. "I had to make some changes and that took time. And I'm starting to see the results of that now, which is great. My last four events I've played really well. So I'm just building on that. Everything is headed in the right direction."

Woods' commitment is a huge endorsement for The Honda Classic, which has steadily been rising in stature with TOUR players since its move to PGA National in 2007. Rory McIlroy and Lee Westwood, currently ranked No. 2 and 3 in the world, are already part of an international field that also includes defending champion Rory Sabbatini, major winners Charl Schwartzel and Darren Clarke, Ernie Els, Graeme McDowell, Mark Calcavecchia, Stewart Cink, Rickie Fowler, Louis Oosthuizen, Camilo Villegas, 2007 champion Mark Wilson and 2005 champion Pádraig Harrington.

"We obviously are thrilled to have Tiger Woods play in The Honda Classic," Executive Director Ken Kennerly said. "We have worked hard for five years to make this one of the premier events on the PGA TOUR. This is a testament to where the tournament has come and a testament to Honda's 31 years as the longest-standing sponsor on the PGA TOUR."

“We are once again going to have a great world-class field. We have been extremely pleased with the growth of our field. Now to have Tiger not only as a local resident, but as a leader in the world of golf is a tribute to all of our partners -- American Honda, PGA National for having a fantastic facility, PGA of America, Palm Beach County, the City of Palm Beach Gardens. It is so gratifying to see improvement made year after year and to have Tiger commit this year is a further acknowledgement of our growth and success.”

Woods, now 36, has had an unprecedented career since becoming a professional golfer in the late summer of 1996. He has won 95 tournaments, 71 of those on the PGA Tour, including the 1997, 2001, 2002 and 2005 Masters Tournaments, 1999, 2000, 2006 and 2007 PGA Championships, 2000, 2002, and 2008 U.S. Open Championships, and 2000, 2005 and 2006 Open Championships. With his second Masters victory in 2001, Tiger became the first ever to hold all four professional major championships at the same time.

In winning the 2000 British Open, Woods became the youngest to complete the career Grand Slam of professional major championships and only the fifth ever to do so, following Ben Hogan, Gene Sarazen, Gary Player and Jack Nicklaus. Woods also was the youngest Masters champion ever, at the age of 21 years, three months and 14 days, and was the first major championship winner of African or Asian heritage.

Woods holds or shares the record for the low score in relation to par in each of the four major championships. His records are 270 (18-under par) in the 1997 Masters, 269 (19-under par) in the 2000 Open Championship, and he shares the record of 270 (18-under par) with Bob May in the 2000 PGA Championship, which Tiger won by one stroke in a three-hole playoff. He held the U.S. Open records of 272 and 12-under par (set in 2000) until 2011.

The U.S. Open and Masters victories came by record margins, 15 strokes and 12 strokes, respectively, and the U.S. Open triumph swept aside the 13-stroke major championship standard which had stood for 138 years, established by Old Tom Morris in the 1862 British Open. The record margin for the U.S. Open had been 11 strokes by Willie Smith in 1899. In The Masters, Woods broke the record margin of nine strokes set by Nicklaus in 1965. Tiger won the Open Championship by eight strokes, the largest margin since J. H. Taylor in 1913.

He is the career victories leader among active players on the PGA Tour and is the career money list leader. He is third in PGA Tour career victories, trailing only Sam Snead (82) and Jack Nicklaus (73).

Tiger increased his record total on the PGA Tour career money list to \$94,817,542 through 2011, and had won \$115,618,045 worldwide.

He is a worldwide icon with 2.2 million followers on Facebook and 1.5 million on Twitter.

“Every year this tournament has gotten better and better,” Kennerly said. “Now the fans of South Florida and Palm Beach and Martin counties have the chance to come watch Tiger compete live against the other top players in the world. We are looking forward to another great event.”