

I'm not a bot



1997 masters golf tournament

The 1997 Masters victory of Tiger Woods marked a pivotal moment in golf history, as witnessed by players, officials, and journalists who were present that year. After two relatively unimpressive amateur appearances at Augusta in 1995 and 1996, few could have predicted the phenomenal performance that followed. Tiger's transformation from amateur to professional was nothing short of remarkable, with three PGA Tour wins and a U.S. Amateur title win just seven months prior. Tiger's presence alone had a seismic impact on the game and the Masters tournament, which had only invited its first black competitor, Lee Elder, in 1975. The expectations surrounding Woods were immense, but doubts still lingered among some, including Brad Faxon and David Fay of the USGA. Faxon recalls that "nobody saw the domination coming," while Fay feared that the jump from amateur to professional champion was too wide. Ron Sirak, then with the Associated Press, predicted that Tiger had no chance, stating that the Masters required a track record and experience. However, all these opinions were proven wrong in hindsight. Tiger's first round as a professional at Augusta didn't start like history in the making. He played poorly, but his caddie, Mike "Fluff" Cowan, kept things simple, telling him to "hang in there." The turning point came when Tiger striped his drive down the fairway and made his first birdie on the 10th tee. A blistering comeback ensued, with a 6-under-par 30 on Augusta's back nine. Sirak notes that having a man of color like Tiger Woods competing in the tournament was significant, and the black club employees were eager to see him play. However, when Tiger struggled on the front nine, Sirak felt good about his prediction that he would struggle. The turning point came when Tiger made that chip on 12 for birdie, changing the momentum and making him look like the best player in the world. Tiger's opening holes were all over the place, with fans staring at him like he'd just landed from another planet. However, what impressed Brad Faxon most was Tiger's ability to identify and correct his mistakes. It was a breezy day and the greens were particularly tough, but Mike Cowan reminded Tiger that it's about playing a good nine holes and then going from there. Nick Price noted that anyone can look good scoring 65 or 66, but turning a potential 75 into a 71 is what makes a true champion, and Tiger never took the easy way out. The turning point came when he turned his game around on the back side, as Pete McDaniel recalled. Tiger's aggressive putting style was tempered by advice from Butch and Earl to "die putts at the hole," which is why he didn't have a three-putt all week. Tom Callahan pointed out that one pivotal shot, a birdie chip-in at 12, changed everything for him. Steve Scott learned that Tiger can flip the switch like Superman, turning his game around in an instant. Mike Cowan noted that shooting under par at the Masters is always a good sign. The leaderboard after round one showed J Huston leading with a 67, followed closely by P Stankowski and P Azinger. However, on Friday, Tiger took control of Augusta National like it was his personal playground. He played fearless, explosive golf, hitting five birdies, one eagle, and only one bogey in his second-round 66, which put him at the top of the leaderboard with a three-stroke lead. The crowd was amazed by his shots, with one patron describing them as "like lightning strikes." By day's end, Woods was leading by three strokes, and by the weekend, he'd be out of sight. Even after his strong first round, no one gave him much chance to win, but over the next three days, Tiger showed us all what a new era in golf looked like. I saw him as an exceptional player, regardless of whether he's from a minority group or not. I was simply a fan who recognized his greatness. To see his talent and flair up close was amazing. It was cool to watch him play. MASTERS 1997 LEADERBOARD: ROUND TWO T Woods 70-66=136 -8 C Montgomerie 72-67=139 -5 C Rocca 71-69=140 -4 F Couples 72-69=141 -3 Woods and I were paired together in the third round. I shot a 74, while he shot a 65, increasing the gap between us to nine strokes. Colin Montgomerie: "He was nine-under par when we started, and I was six-under. I thought I had the experience to handle it. But then he showed me his focus. There was no small talk or chat; it was game on from the first tee." "By the time we got to the second hole, he was 11 yards ahead of me. He shot a 65, while I shot a 74. His focus was incredible - I'd never seen anything like it before." Colin Montgomerie: "I hadn't seen golf like that before - none of us had. He was 50 yards longer off the tee than anyone else at the time, straighter, and his iron shots were impeccable. And his mind was incredibly strong." Tom Lehman: "You knew he was something special, but as a competitor, you want to hold off admitting it as long as possible because you don't want to give an inch. But eventually, someone proves they're cut from a different cloth." Pete McDaniel: "Earl always used to chuckle at people who were amazed by Tiger's dominance. Earl had predicted it and wasn't a braggart. He believed that Tiger had dominated as a junior and would do the same at another level." Ron Sirak: "Tiger was an athlete who not only lived up to the hype but exceeded it. He was better than advertised. Once he got past the 40 on the first day, he never hesitated or showed any indication that the moment was too big for him." Bernhard Langer: "Augusta played into his hands. He was hitting the ball so far off the tee and is a great putter - those are the things you need to do well at Augusta. He just took the course apart." "Nick Price noted that there are golfers who can hit shots and those who can win majors, but Tiger Woods was unique even among the greats. He not only delivered on his hype but did so in a way that left everyone stunned, including us." Tiger's talent and mental maturity set him apart from other golfers, said Dave Anderson of The New York Times. "He had an unwavering confidence on the course, which was evident even when he reacted with shock to missing a makeable putt." Tom Callahan recalled a moment during one of the rounds where Tiger's focus was unshakeable, not even acknowledging his mom's call as he walked by her on the fairway. David Duval, who faced Tiger at the Masters, said that witnessing him play at such an elite level was rare and almost unimaginable for anyone else to surpass. The 1997 Masters leaderboard showed Tiger leading with a score of -15, followed closely by other top golfers like C Rocca and P Stankowski. Ben Crenshaw observed that there's little strategy left in the game at Augusta, but Tiger proved this wrong with his dominant performance. Despite bogeys on holes 5 and 7, he still managed to win by a record 12 shots. Tiger's victory was historic for several reasons: he became the youngest-ever winner at Augusta and the first black golfer to wear the Green Jacket. The event also marked a significant moment in golf history, as Renee Powell noted that it gave people hope and represented a breakthrough for diversity in the sport. Woods brought his A game to the Masters, and everyone else was playing for second place. Renee Powell, a pioneer for African-American players on the LPGA Tour, recalled the excitement surrounding Woods' historic win. "It was the first time my father and I had been to the Masters," she said. "Tiger started strong, then played like he owned the course." The victory wasn't just significant because it was by 12 shots - but also because of the impact on minority golfers. Powell explained, "For him to win there, being a person of color, would not have had the same effect if it had been the US Open or PGA Championship." Ben Crenshaw, Woods' Masters opponent, remembered the moment as an earth-shaking experience. "It was a combination of power and finesse that nobody had seen around there," he said. Pete McDaniel shared a story about Woods' humble demeanor after the win, revealing his softer side. The legendary golfers Tom Kite, Tommy Tolles, and Tom Watson rounded out the top 5 finishers behind Tiger's dominant performance. Tiger Woods' 1997 Masters Victory Paraphrased \$13,230 - Scott Hoch (297) \$12,690 - Jack Nicklaus (298) \$11,610 - Sam Torrance, Ian Woosnam, Jumbo Ozaki (299) \$10,530 - Corey Pavin (300) \$9,720 - Clarence Rose (301) \$8,910 - Ben Crenshaw (302) \$8,370 - Frank Nobilo (303)