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Tuesday, December 15, 2009

# Transgressions club Tiger's career



Tiger Woods

**Woods & his women**

One of the dominant golfer ever, Tiger Woods, has decided to take an indefinite break from his professional life in order to rebuild his personal life after the reports of infidelities linking him to multiple women

NYT NEWS SERVICES

Tiger Woods, one of the most dominant golfers ever, is taking an 'indefinite break' from the sport to try to rebuild his personal life after a flood of reports of marital infidelities linking him to multiple women, he announced on soon.

Woods has transformed golf with a combination of power, touch and tenacious resolve. His astonishing success, often accompanied by his signature fist pump after holing clutch shots, has even placed him on many people's short list of greatest American athletes, alongside figures like Babe Ruth and Michael Jordan.

Woods has captured many of professional golf's most revered records. He is in close pursuit of many of the rest, including Jack Nicklaus's 18 major tournament victories, the most prestigious record of them all. He routinely leads the sport's world rankings, a result of winning more than a quarter of the PGA Tour tournaments that he's entered, a figure unrivaled in modern times.

As a toddler, he sank a putt on *The Mike Douglas* television show. His legend has grown steadily since. He won three straight US Junior Amateur titles and then three straight US Amateur titles, both records. With the simple statement, "I guess, hello, world," Woods turned professional in 1996. A year later, at 21, he became the youngest winner of the Masters, and broke the tournament record for lowest overall score (-18) and margin of victory (12). In 2000, at 24, he became the youngest golfer to have won all four major tournaments.

Early on November 27, 2009, Woods was left unconscious after he crashed his 2009 Cadillac Escalade into a fire hydrant and a neighbour's tree as he was pulling out of his driveway in the gated community of Isleworth, an Orlando suburb where many high-profile athletes live. Woods and his lawyers declined to speak to the Florida Highway Patrol about the crash.

The incident has been accompanied by reports and speculation about marital difficulties between Woods and his wife, Elin. The Windermere, Florida, police chief, Daniel Saylor, said that Woods's wife had used a golf club to break the rear window of the sport utility vehicle to help extricate him. The neighbours who rushed to his aid and called 911 offered their



**TIGER WOODS' FAMILY** (From left) Sam, Elin, Tiger and Charlie Woods.

version of events through a lawyer, saying they believed Woods's injuries were caused by the crash alone. The Florida Highway Patrol said that aside from a \$164 citation for careless driving, Woods would not face further charges.

Allegations of infidelity have dominated news reports. In a widely quoted article in *US Weekly* magazine, Jaimee Grubbs, a Los Angeles cocktail waitress, detailed a lengthy affair with Woods in 2007. Woods admitted transgressions the same day and apologised to his family and supporters in a statement on his Web site. In another statement on December 11, Woods said, "I am deeply aware of the disappointment and hurt that my infidelity has caused to so many people, most of all my wife and children." The unusual admissions by the usually composed Woods have shaken the PGA Tour and prompted his biggest sponsors to reaffirm their support for him.

Born to parents both of mixed race and ethnicity, including African, Chinese and Thai, Woods's rise to stardom was made more noteworthy and barrier-breaking because he is the first non-white to lead a traditionally white sport. At Augusta National Golf Club, for example, which hosts the Masters tournament, the first African-American member wasn't admitted until 1990.

Some tournaments have tried altering course layouts to reduce Woods's advantage, but to little obvious effect. While Woods is among the longest hitters in the game, his putting and creative shotmaking, along with his much-ballyhooed focus and competitiveness, separates him from the competition.

Because of his skill and charisma, golf audiences have grown dramatically and the purses at professional tournaments have increased sig-

nificantly since he joined the PGA Tour. Golf's television ratings are largely dictated by whether Woods enters that week's tournament or is in contention. Huge endorsement contracts for Woods have followed as well. Combined with his tournament earnings, they could make him the first athlete to earn more than \$1 billion in his career.

In 2008, after finishing second in the Masters in April, Woods won the US Open in June with a stirring victory over Rocco Mediate after an extra 19 holes, despite a painfully injured left knee and a fracture in his left leg. The win at the Torrey Pines golf course in San Diego was his 65th over all and his 14th major championship; Woods called it "probably the greatest tournament I've ever had."

Nine days later, he had reconstructive surgery for a torn anterior cruciate ligament in his left knee. He revealed that he had played the event not only on a bad knee, but with a fractured left tibia. He sat out the rest of the 2008 season and the first weeks of the 2009 tour — a nearly nine-month absence — returning in February 2009 for the Accenture Match Play Championships in Arizona.

Woods said that the hiatus had given him the opportunity to reconnect with his wife, marvel at their toddler daughter Sam's development, and attend the birth of their second child, son Charlie, on February 8, 2009.

Woods's significance to the PGA Tour cannot be overstated. His galleries are larger than players drew at many tournaments in his absence, and television ratings for golf tournaments fell while he was away.



Cori Rist



Jaimee Grubbs



Holly Sampson



Mindy Lawton



Jamie Junger



Joslyn James



Kalika Moquin



Rachel Uchitel