



A Historical Upset in the Game of Golf Leads to Life Lessons



By Dr. Brandon Crouch

Last month was a historical month in the world of golf. The 91st PGA Championship was held in Hazeltine National Golf Club, Chaska, Minnesota where a virtual unknown Y.E. Yang who ranked 110th in the world played a solid final round to win against the #1 ranked Tiger Woods and the rest of the field. Only his second year on the PGA Tour, Yang was ranked 478th in the world at the beginning of the year and after winning the 91st PGA Championship by 3 strokes moved all the way up to 34th in the world!

History was made as Yang became the first Asian-born player to win a major while Woods had never lost (14-0) entering the final round of a major when in the lead. Take a moment to think about it. Woods had not lost a major tournament in nine years when leading by two shots. This victory was huge for Yang not because he was such an underdog coming into the tournament, but because of how he came out of the tournament taking over the lead in a dominating fashion against the #1 ranked Woods.

I believe a lot can be taken and learned from Yang's win. In any sport it is not always bad to be the underdog. Less expectation often leads to even greater rewards. When being the underdog the key is being patient and playing your game. Yang was not consumed with watching and following what Woods was doing. He was not in awe of his competition. He was focused on his game and his shots.

On the 17th hole par 3, Yang 3 putt for bogey. For many this would rattle the nerves and make for a shaky final hole. Yang put that theory to rest when using a 3-hybrid he knocked a 210 yard obstructed view shot 6 feet from the pin. This all but secured a birdie putt and the win.

Another key lesson we can get from Yang is to rise to the level of your competition. Yang had to believe he was a winner in order to play in the final round of a major championship with the best in the world. Not only did he play and rise to the level of his competitor, he rose above it. In the final round Yang shot five under Woods to go from a 2 stroke underdog to the 91st PGA Champion by 3 strokes.

The final lesson I think we should take from this historic upset is to never let your background and where you come from determine how far you go in life or in sport. Y.E. Yang became the first Asian-born player to win a major championship. History would tell us that the odds were improbable just for him to be in contention to win. History

would also tell us it would be impossible for anyone to win when Woods is leading into the final round with a two stroke lead. Yang proved the improbable is not impossible.

I have one final thought for you golf historians. This is not the first time Yang has come out victorious against Tiger Woods. At the European Tour's 2006 HSBC Championship Yang won with a two stroke lead over Woods who came in 2nd place. When you go out on the golf course remember it doesn't matter how many times you played against someone and lost. Be the underdog and rise to the level of your competition. Be patient, play your game, and put your best game forward. You may find your golf game take on new heights and it might be your day to come out on top.

[Oh.... and while we are talking about World Golf Rankings.... Kenny Perry's not doing too badly for a local fellow. Perry's currently ranked (at the time of this writing) as the number four player in the world]

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