

The Golf Blog: An open letter to golf reporters and commentators who doubted—or “hated” on—Tiger Woods

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The Golf Blog says: Everyone who watches the Golf Channel knows that analyst Brandel Chamblee has been one of Tiger Woods’ harshest critics. Just two summers ago, on July 12, 2017, Chamblee said **Tiger’s competitive career is over**. But Chamblee isn’t the only one. Just a couple weeks ago, golf reporter for Golf Magazine Alan Shipnuck tweeted on April 2, 2019: “There’s an old guy on Tour who has won only one tournament in the last 6 years, hasn’t even played in 3 of the last five Masters and is saddled with very mediocre putting yet is still being touted as a favorite to win the green jacket. Tiger’s cult of personality endures.” This tweet came after Tiger Woods beat one of the hottest golfers playing then, Rory McIlroy, in match play. Was this just a bad (and late) April Fool's Day joke?

Chamblee and Shipnuck aren’t the only golf analysts or reporters who doubted Tiger Woods or the coverage he received. There are plenty other people who get paid good money to comment or report on golf who doubted Tiger, too. Some even “hated” on Tiger.

But why? Each analyst or reporter might be different, but it’s worth raising the question today—after Tiger won his fifth Masters following near misses at the PGA Championship and The Open Championship in 2018—why did some professional golf analysts and reporters—hold so much doubt that Tiger Woods could win a major again? Sure, Tiger had a major dry spell, injuries, surgeries, and a brief bout with the chip yips, all of which would at least raise the question whether Tiger could win. We certainly asked the question. On the other hand, as a professional analyst or reporter, you’ve got to gather all facts, interview experts who may know more than you, and, most importantly, consider the other side. **In other words, try to be objective because you might not have all the information—or, even worse, you might hold an implicit bias against Tiger you are simply not aware of.**

And another thing. If you were one of the reporters or analysts who doubted Tiger Woods, don’t sit here today and act like “we all felt the same way” or “I’m so happy to see Tiger win.” Chamblee, you know what we mean. Do some of your own self-reflection as a professional analyst or reporter. **Try to improve your reporting and coverage to be more objective and accurate.**

We have covered Tiger Woods for over 15 years and we have tried our best to give an objective, accurate assessment of his game. You can read all of our coverage on Tiger [at this link](#). As you will see, we reported how his chances of winning were increasingly improving starting in 2016.

Nov. 29, 2016 The Golf Blog: Can Tiger Woods turn back the clock? [\[link\]](#)

Few prognosticators give him a chance of winning a tournament, much less another major.

Yet don't count Tiger out yet. First of all, he does appear to be healthy—and that is key. His body may not hold up for that much longer, but if Tiger can squeeze out another 5 years of competitive play, he would give himself plenty of opportunities to add more victories to his count. His athleticism, diet, and workout regimen should help him extend his career, provided he gets the proper treatments following each round. He would be wise to follow Tom Brady's routine!

Second, Tiger now—after Nike freed him from his contract—has the freedom to mix and match clubs and ball (playing TaylorMade woods, Nike irons, Scotty Cameron putter, and Bridgestone ball) that could give him an advantage—or, at the very least, give him the clubs that suit him best. If he goes with a new endorsement, the mix and match approach would probably end. But, for now, he has complete freedom to choose the clubs and ball he likes best.

Third, people's expectations for Tiger to win are the lowest they've ever been. So that should give him a little bit of leeway to post a few clunkers on his comeback.

Finally, Tiger has a lot of pride. It's hard to imagine his work ethic won't put him in a good position to win.

Whether it's enough for him to compete (or win) at the majors again is too hard to tell. But it would be great for golf if he did.

Nov. 30, 2016 The Golf Blog: Hank Haney reviews Tiger Woods' swing and likes his chances of winning [\[link\]](#)

Dec. 30, 2016 The Golf Blog: Is Tiger Woods done at forty-one? [\[link\]](#)

Aug. 13, 2018 The Golf Blog: Is the glass half full or half empty for Tiger Woods at the major? [\[link\]](#)

Sept. 24, 2018 Tiger Woods wins 80th victory—is the chase to beat Jack Nicklaus's 18 majors back on? [\[link\]](#)

Short answer: yes. But Tiger will be 43 years old next year. By that age, Jack had reached 17 majors, with his last coming at the historic 1986 Masters. So Tiger is effectively 3-majors behind Jack's pace. Also, keep in mind: only 2 players above age 40 have won 1 major in the U.S. in the past 80 majors. Phil Mickelson won the Open Championship at age 43, but that's the last major he has won.

Of course, Tiger Woods is in a different league, at least historically. He has one true rival: Jack Nicklaus for the title of GOAT. Tiger has a better chance now to make a final run at Jack's record, but, as Brooks Koepka has shown, Tiger will have to beat competition that is now younger, stronger, and who hit it longer than he does. The glass is both half full, and half empty, for Tiger at soon to be age 43.

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