

SPORTS

Five years pro, Woods sets new mark

AKRON, Ohio (AP) — By now it has become almost routine. Tiger Woods hit clutch shots and got a few breaks that always seem to go his way. He left town with his 29th career victory on the PGA Tour, another \$1 million check on its way to the bank.

Who could have imagined such dominance five years ago Monday?

That was the day - Aug. 27, 1996 - that IMG publicist Bev Norwood called tour officials at the Greater Milwaukee Open and dictated a short statement on Woods' behalf that changed the game like never before:

"This is to confirm that, as of now, I am a professional golfer."

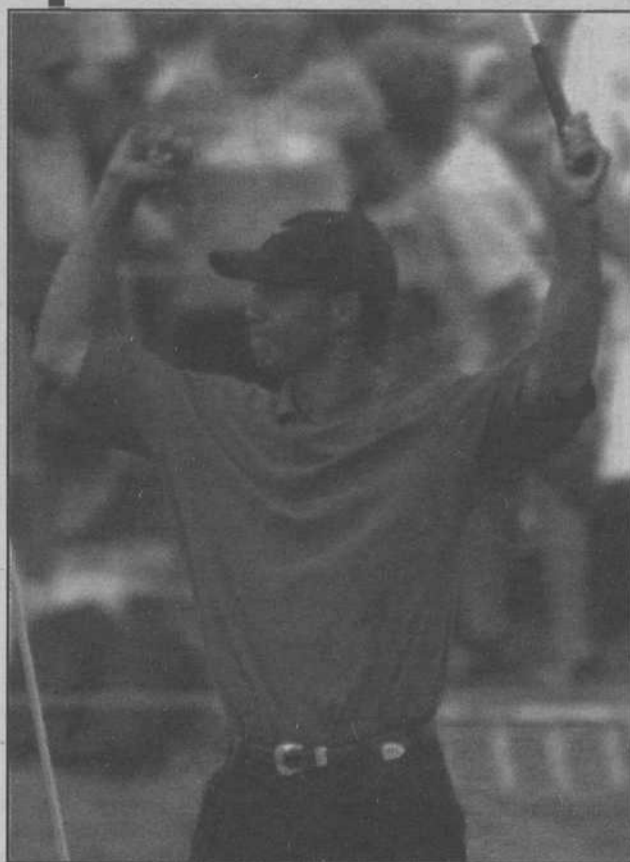
Five years later, the words are chilling.

"I don't think anybody had any idea he would do what he's done, including him," Mark Calcavecchia said. "I know he expects a lot out of himself, but winning as many tournaments as he's won is beyond anybody's expectations five years ago."

Told that Monday was the five-year anniversary of the day he turned pro, Woods stared back in disbelief.

"It seems like a long time ago, a lot longer than five years," he said. "That day was a little different. I was playing golf for a living. That was the start of the rest of my career."

Fresh off becoming the first player in history to win three straight U.S. Amateur titles, Woods arrived at



Tiger Woods celebrates after a birdie on the seventh playoff hole gave him the win over Jim Furyk in the NEC Invitational Sunday at Firestone Country Club in Akron, Ohio.

(AP Photo/Mark Duncan)

Brown Deer Park Golf Club in Milwaukee dressed in swooshes from head to toe from a Nike deal that seemed outrageous at the time.

He swiftly embarked on a career that has led him to staggering feats.

The youngest Masters champion at age 21. The career Grand Slam in only his fourth season, the fastest and youngest of five players to win all four major championships.

Only 15 other players have won more on the PGA Tour than the 25-year-old Woods. He is tied with Jack Nicklaus

for most tour victories before turning 30.

By winning the NEC Invitational in a thrilling seven-hole playoff against Jim Furyk, Woods' career earnings approach \$26 million. He makes nearly three times that amount annually in endorsements alone.

"Look back at what expectations were placed on him as an amateur, and what expectations were placed on him as a professional," said Notah Begay, a former teammate at Stanford.

"He surpassed everybody's analysis of how he

would mature as a player."

That his first five years as a pro ended at Firestone Country Club was fitting.

PGA Tour commissioner Tim Finchem recalled how players would finish their round during the old World Series of Golf, then go into the Firestone clubhouse to eat lunch and watch Woods win the U.S. Amateur with one clutch shot after another.

They knew he was coming. They just didn't know what was coming.

"The question was ... how good was he going to be?" Finchem said.

It didn't take long to find out.

Woods won twice in his first seven tournaments as a pro, beating Davis Love III in a playoff at Las Vegas and Payne Stewart after an 18-hole duel at Disney.

He was a pro for two months and earned not only his PGA Tour card, but a spot in the Tour Championship for the top 30 money-winners.

"His amateur record was second to none, but that doesn't necessarily make you come out and be that successful out here," Scott Hoch said. "He's done something nobody else has ever done, something no one has come close to doing in my estimation."

Woods is measured beyond his 35 worldwide victories and six majors.

He has transcended his sport.

He is identified by only one name, the way it was for Michael, Ali and Babe.

Group calls for bias probe of USF hoops program

TAMPA, Fla. (AP) - A civil rights group is calling for the U.S. Justice Department to investigate racism allegations in the University of South Florida women's basketball program and is warning prospective students not to enroll until the matter is resolved.

The Southern Christian Leadership Conference approved a strongly worded resolution at its board meeting last week in Montgomery, Ala., saying black athletes were subject to "Jim Crow and apartheid treatment" at South Florida.

SCLC founder Rev. Fred L. Shuttlesworth said the request for a formal investigation will be made in coming weeks by the group's president, Martin Luther King III.

The resolution also tells prospective USF students that blacks are "disregarded and disrespected" by university administration and in state government, a reference to Gov. Jeb Bush's "One Florida" plan which last year ended racial preferences in university enrollment.

Eight former and current members of the women's basketball team have filed a \$10 million federal discrimination lawsuit against the university, USF President Judy Genshaft and former basketball coach Jerry Ann Winters.

The lawsuit contends blacks on the team were segregated, demeaned and retaliated against by Winters and accuses university officials of doing nothing to remedy the situation. Winters adamantly denies the allegations.

University spokesman Michael Reich said Monday school officials intend to answer the SCLC's request with an invitation to visit the campus and view the progress that has been made since the lawsuit was filed last year.

USF notes it investigated the complaints, fired Winters and sought the resignation of former athletic director Paul Griffin, who was accused of mishandling the matter.

The university also has reformed procedures for investigating discrimination complaints.

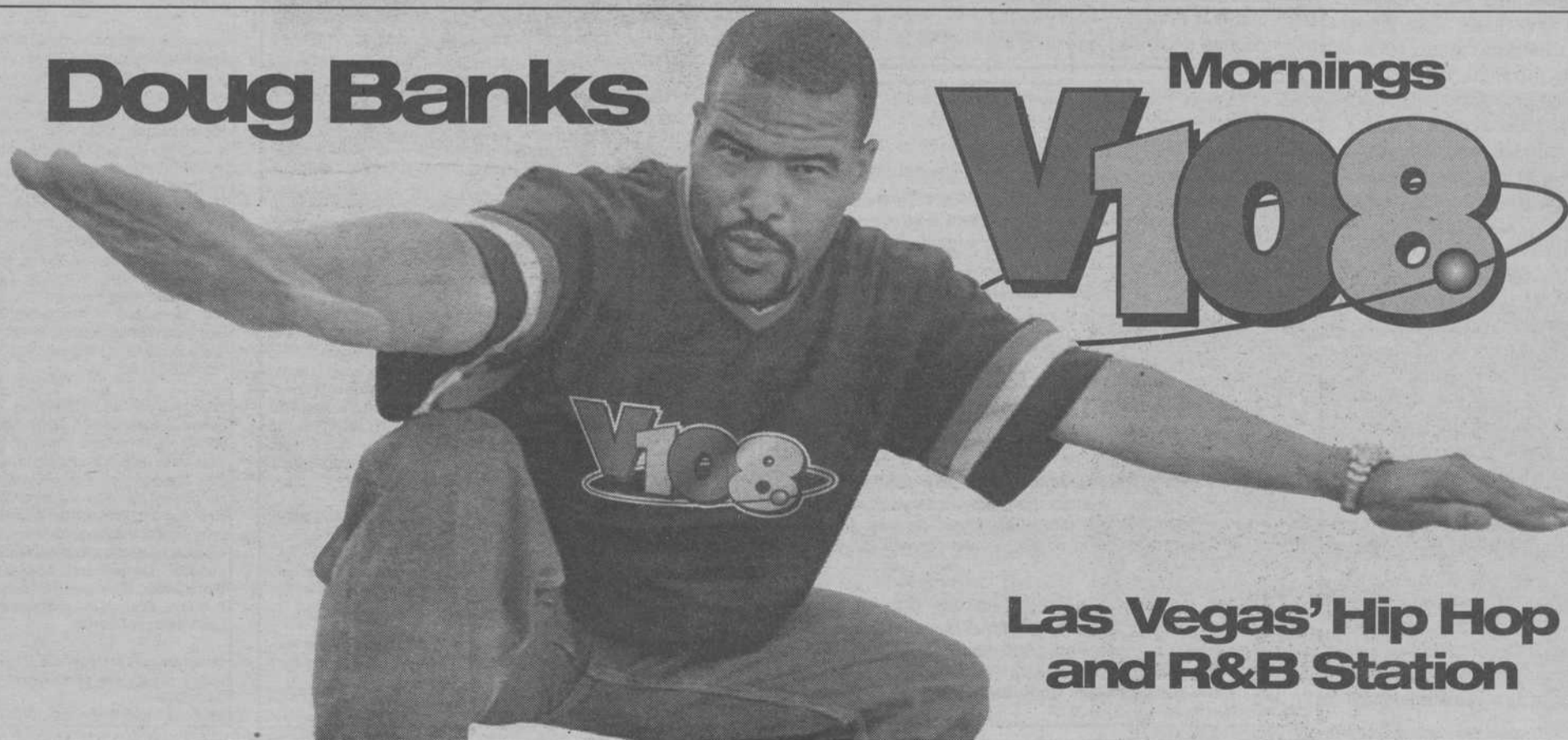
"We believe we are on the right track," Reich said. "However, we would welcome the SCLC to come to USF and to look at our programs and help us ensure we are doing the right things to make sure USF is a welcoming environment to all students."

Jonathan Alpert, the Tampa attorney representing the plaintiffs, said the SCLC's request for an investigation should carry weight with the Justice Department. "They (the SCLC) feel very strongly it has not received the attention from the community and public officials that it should have," Alpert said of the women's claims.

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