

S P O R T S

Woods in no rush to play after wedding

By DOUG FERGUSON
ASSOCIATED PRESS

Tiger Woods always said he had to win a major for it to be considered a great year, but he might have found an exception last week when he got married in Barbados.

"As far as off the course, it is a great year," Woods said Sunday from his yacht, where he and new bride Elin Nordegren have been diving on their honeymoon since their marriage at Sandy Lane Resort in the Caribbean.

Sounding more relaxed than ever, Woods is in no hurry to resurface.

His next tournament is supposed to be the Funai Classic at Disney, which starts Oct. 21 about 10 minutes away from his home in Florida, but Woods did not say whether he was going to play.

"I'm having so much fun on my honeymoon, I don't know if I'll be back or not," he said during a 30-minute conference call. "It depends on how much fun I'm having out here and whether I need to get back. It's so nice to be on the boat. We're diving every day, being by ourselves, away from everybody. It's a lot of fun."

Woods got engaged the day before Thanksgiving at a South African game reserve. He said they settled on Oct. 5 as their wedding date in the middle of summer, and despite living under constant scrutiny, they had no trouble keeping it a secret until published reports surfaced in Ireland a week before the wedding.

"We didn't tell anyone until the last minute," he said.

Woods invited about 120 family and friends, including



Tiger Woods wants to enjoy married life with his wife, Elin Nordegren.

former NBA stars Michael Jordan and Charles Barkley, and PGA Tour players Mark O'Meara and John Cook. Two other tour players couldn't make it — Notah Begay because of a back injury, and Charles Howell III, who was playing in Las Vegas to try to get into the Tour Championship.

He did not divulge any details from the wedding, held at the lavish resort owned by Irish friends Dermot Desmond and J.P. McManus. He also declined to say where he and his bride have been diving — or when he would return.

Woods has played Disney every year since he turned pro, winning in 1996 to qualify for the Tour Championship in just seven tournament, and winning in '99 when he closed the season with four straight victories.

Woods has won only once this year, at the Accenture Match Play Championship in February, and is scheduled to play five more events the rest of this season — Disney, the

Tour Championship, the Dunlop Phoenix in Japan, the Skins Game and his Target World Challenge in December.

Woods held the conference call to announce the 16-man field for the Target World Challenge, which will be played Dec. 9-12 at Sherwood Country Club in Thousand Oaks, Calif.

The 12 players from the world ranking are Woods, defending champion Davis Love III, Vijay Singh, Pádraig Harrington, Stewart Cink, Jim Furyk, Chris DiMarco, Chad Campbell, Kenny Perry, Todd Hamilton, Miguel Angel Jimenez and Stephen Ames.

The four sponsor exemptions are Jay Haas, Fred Couples, Colin Montgomerie and John Daly.

Woods doesn't expect to be any different inside the ropes now that he has a ring on his finger.

"It's not going to change the way I play golf," he said. "I've been living with Elin. ... We've been happy together

the last two years. Nothing has changed in that regard. Just because you're married doesn't change the way a relationship is, it just changes the way it's viewed from the outside.

"I just hope I can get the ball in the hole a little faster."

Woods tied for ninth at the American Express Championship in Ireland, his final tournament as a bachelor. It was his

eighth consecutive top 10 in regular tour events, although he ended his second straight year without a major.

Still, Woods says his game is getting closer.

"The last few tournaments, I've gone up another notch," he said. "I'm showing some great signs for the future. Things are coming together. I don't have to worry about as many things on my [swing] checklist."

Williams, ex-Trojan receiver, gets agent

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif. (AP) - Wide receiver Mike Williams, turned down in his attempt to return to play at Southern California after the courts kept him out of the NFL draft, has hired an agent — again.

Williams, expected to be a first-round draft pick next April, will be represented by Tony Fleming and Mitch Frankel of Impact Sports Management.

"Mike will continue his education at USC, where he will train in preparation for his NFL career," Fleming said in a statement issued Tuesday.

Impact Sports Management has offices in Beverly Hills and Boca Raton, Fla.

Williams caught 95 passes for 1,314 yards and a school-record 16 touchdowns as a sophomore last season to help the Trojans (12-1) win the national championship. He finished eighth in the Heisman Trophy balloting.

After a court ruled last winter that Ohio State's Maurice Clarett was eligible to play in the NFL, Williams left USC, hired Mike Azzarelli as his agent and said he was turning pro. That made him ineligible to play for the Trojans.

An appeals court overturned the earlier ruling in May and upheld the NFL's right to bar players who had been out of high school for less than three years — as was the case with Clarett and Williams.

After the appeals court ruling, Williams severed ties with his agent and began the process of applying to the NCAA for reinstatement. He returned to USC and took summer classes, seeking to have his academic eligibility also restored.

It was all for naught — the NCAA turned down his request Aug. 26 — two days before top-ranked USC's season-opener against Virginia Tech.

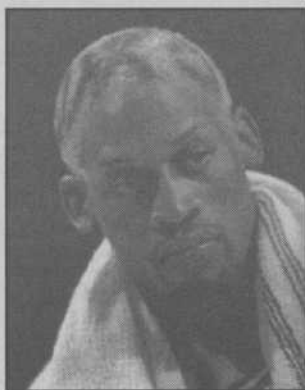
Rodman: Image hurting comeback

MONTERREY, Mexico (AP) - Former NBA star Dennis Rodman said his bad-boy image may be hindering his attempts at a comeback to professional basketball.

"They think I'm uncoachable and I don't know why," Rodman said. "I'm just a free and independent person."

Rodman, 43, hasn't played pro basketball since 2000 when he was waived by the NBA's Dallas Mavericks after a 29-day stint with the team.

Rodman, who is in Mexico to play two games with



DENNIS RODMAN

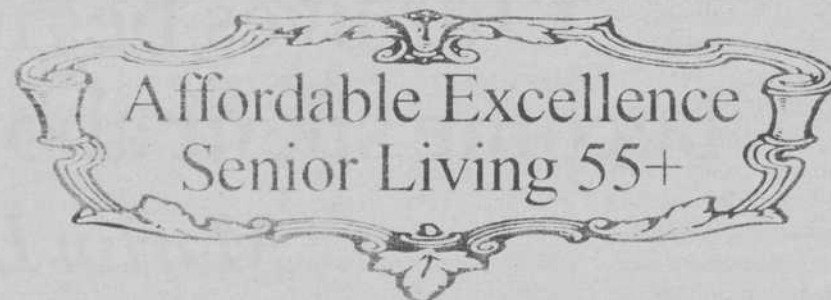
Monterrey's Fuerza Regia team, acknowledged it may be difficult for pro basketball teams to give him a chance.

"I'm not doing what they want me to do," Rodman said.

"I'm just putting it out there. ... I'm ready to come back. I'm in good shape and I know I can do well."

Rodman was in Colorado last month practicing with the Denver Nuggets, but the team's general manager hasn't said whether Rodman will join the team.

Rodman, who was the NBA's leading rebounder for seven straight seasons during the 1990s, has stayed in the limelight recently thanks to his brief marriage to Carmen Electra, wild partying and numerous brush-ins with the law.



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