



An emotional Tiger Woods, right, walks with his caddy Steve Williams after winning the 135th British Open Golf Championships in Hoylake, Liverpool, England on Sunday. Woods father Earl died earlier this year.

Emotional Woods earns 11th major

HOYLAKE, England (AP) - Tiger Woods bottled up his emotions when he buried his father in May. Even as he stalked the brown, baked links of the British Open on Sunday, his steely focus never wavered. Until he tapped in his final putt. That gave him his third claret jug, his 11th major championship, but the first victory he couldn't share with Pops. And that was all too much for him.

"I saw this coming last night," said Steve Williams, the caddy and confidante who stood with him at Earl Woods' gravesite. "He played at the Masters, and it was the only time I saw him try too hard. Today, there was a calmness about him. No doubt he wanted to win this for him."

Woods plucked the ball from the cup after a 5-under 67 gave him a two-shot victory over Chris DiMarco. His face awash in sadness and satisfaction, he thrust both arms in the air and screamed, "Yes!"

He buried his head in Williams' shoulder, sobbing uncontrollably, chest heaving. Tears streamed down both cheeks as he hugged his wife, Elin, for the longest minute.

The emotions that poured out of him on the 18th green were as inevitable as his victory at Royal Liverpool.

"I've never done that," Woods said. "But at that moment, it just came pouring out. I was pretty bummed out after not winning the Masters, because I knew that was the last major he was ever going to see. That one hurt a little bit. And to get this one ... it's just unfortunate he wasn't here to see it."

It sure would have looked familiar.

Woods was ruthless as ever, running his record to 11-0 in the major when he has the lead going into the final round. And when DiMarco closed to within one shot with a mixture of birdies and a 50-foot par save, Woods fired off three straight birdies to put him away. "He's got an uncanny ability, when somebody gets close to him, to just turn it up another level," DiMarco said.

Woods became the first player since Tom Watson in 1982-83 to win golf's oldest championship in consecutive years. He captured his 11th major at age 30, tied with Walter Hagen for second on the career list, one step closer to the 18 professional majors won by Jack Nicklaus, the benchmark that drives Woods.

"He knows how to win these things," said Ernie Els, who shot 71 and finished third. "And it's going to be tough to beat him now."

It was only the third time Woods has played since his father died May 3 after a brutal bout with cancer. Some questioned whether he could regain his focus after taking nine weeks off, especially after his 76-76 at the U.S. Open to miss the cut for the first time in a major.

Woods finished at 18-under 270, missing an 8-foot birdie putt that would have matched his record (19 under) set at St. Andrews six years ago.

His father was with him for his first taste of links golf in the 1995 Scottish Amateur at Carnoustie, when Woods was a 19-year-old amateur. As he walked up the 18th fairway with a two-shot lead, his ball safely behind the green, memories of Dad poured forth. "After the last putt, I realized my dad's never going to see this again, and I wish he could have seen this one last time," Woods said at the trophy presentation. "He was out there today keeping me

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Jordan wins hush-money battle

CHICAGO (AP) - A judge ruled Friday for Michael Jordan in a legal battle with a woman who claimed Jordan reneged on a promise to pay her \$5 million in hush money when she claimed she was pregnant with his child.

Judge Stuart E. Palmer ruled in Cook County Circuit Court that any alleged agreement between Jordan and Karla Knafel would be invalid, pointing to definitive tests that showed Jordan is not the child's father.

Palmer writes that "as a

result of Knafel's fraudulent paternity misrepresentation or, alternatively, due to a mutual mistake of fact, the alleged settlement contract is voidable... unenforceable."

Jordan has denied ever agreeing to pay Knafel \$5 million.

Jordan's attorney said he considers Friday's ruling a complete victory in the four-year legal fight for the former Chicago Bulls All-Star.

"This is a claim that never should have been made, and we are pleased," Frederick Sperling said.

Jordan sued Knafel in 2002, alleging attempted extortion. In court documents, he contended that Knafel threatened to publicize their affair and had agreed to a \$250,000 payment after paternity tests showed the child was not his.

Knafel argued in a counterclaim that she became pregnant in 1991 and thought the baby was Jordan's. When she told him, the lawsuit contended, Jordan agreed to pay her \$5 million to keep quiet about the affair.

An Illinois Supreme

Court last year refused to hear Jordan's appeal of a ruling allowing the woman's breach of contract claim to go forward, sending both lawsuits back to Cook County Circuit Court.

Friday's ruling applied to Knafel's countersuit, effectively dismissing it, though she plans to appeal Judge Palmer's ruling, her attorney, Blake Hannafan, said. "Certainly we are dismayed by the court's ruling in Jordan's favor," Hannafan said. "We're confident that we will win again (on appeal)."

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