



WATCHING THE BEST EVER

By Kerry Schmidt

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Before I get into the above, a couple of worthless, but perhaps entertaining aspects in today's very dead sports world.

Many people watch college hoops, especially during March Madness.

Well this year, "hearing" it may be as much fun

A "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest" reject, former coach and legend Bobby Knight will be one of the commentators.

ESPN will give him a chair – which he may well throw - and a mike.

Even though ESPN does not telecast the tournament – CBS does, the real action may just be with Knight.

Personally, I hope he punches out Dick Vitale – he once punched a cop in Puerto Rico after a game.

Regardless, he may be more fun than many of the lopsided contests.

Sad stuff. The heavyweight boxing titles and championship bouts used to be as big as the WS and the SB. Every celebrity and wannabe would attend. But this was "back in the days." From Joe Louis to Rocky Marciano to Ali – Frazier, George Forman to Lennox Lewis, Mike Tyson, Evander Holyfield and few others, it was a huge, mega event.

Today? It's complete trash. Last Saturday night you had two nobodies with names you could not pronounce putting on a horrible excuse for a title fight.

Something called Wladimir Klitschko beat a creature named Sultan Ibragimov. The fight was so bad that the few in attendance at Madison Square Garden booed lustily from the 3rd round on.

Plus, you have about 50 WB or UB or CB or some such organizations that, you could have 25 heavyweight champions, and none of them worth a damn.

Steroids, one more time.

With the huge event coming up, officials are worried about the competitors getting all doped up. But not humans. There is concern that dogs may be doped up for the Iditarod Trail Dog Sled Race, or mushing as it is called.

All we need. Doped up dogs. Maybe congress can hold another hearing.

There have been thousands, perhaps millions of arguments over which athlete is the best at his/her sport.

But right now, we are extremely privileged to watch two individuals, in their prime, dominate their respective sport like no other ever has.

I'm talking about Tiger Woods in golf and Roger Federer in tennis.

Most agree they are the best ever, and yet they still have many years left to annihilate all the records they have not already smashed.

Tiger Woods, in golf.

NOTE: This is not "Kerry Golf," which a couple of my readers have been subjected to. Even with no censorship, I cannot begin to explain Kerry Golf.

Only FORE rules will be mentioned. First, there are no rules. Second, there are many thousand "outdoor" bathrooms on every course. Third, dropping trow (mooning other golfers) before teeing off is optional, and, a baseball bat is one of the main clubs in my bag. Enough.

It would take a hundred pages to boast of all Tiger's accomplishments.

At just 32 years of age, he is already third on the list of total PGA tournament wins with 64, the last coming last Sunday at the Match Play event. He passed someone by the name of Arnold Palmer with win number 64.



OFF THE WALL SPORTS

He trails only Jack Nicklaus in “Majors.” Woods has 13, Nicklaus 18.

He holds approximately 146 records having to do with pro golf.

At age 25, he won his 50th tournament. Never has anyone else come close to that.

He won his 60th just before he turned 27, by winning the BMW Championship with a record 62

He is only 1 of 2 to ever have won all four Majors at least twice, and, he won the career grand slam – winning all four – before his 24th birthday.

He won the masters at 21. At 15, he was the youngest to win the Junior Amateur and likewise the U.S. Amateur at 18.

He has been named the Associated Press Athlete of the Year four times, tying Lance Armstrong.

He has been Golfer of the year 9 of the 13 years he has been on tour and 8 in a row at one point.

He has been the top money winner 8 times.

With a good year this season (starting 4 for 4 is not bad) he could be the first golfer to pass the \$100 million mark in tour earnings.

And, given his endorsements and marketability, it is said he soon could become the first BILLIONAIRE athlete ever.

By 25, he had already become the leading money winner on the Tour.

Twice he has won six straight tournaments and he has started 2008 going 4 for 4.

Questions already abound whether he can win 11 straight, and tie that record set by Ben Hogan.

When asked about it, he said he was only thinking of the next tournament. But showing how competitive and focused he is, he said, “I expect to win every tournament. If you don’t think you can win, why play?”

He noted that as an amateur, he won 36 in a row!

In the U.S. Open, Woods has tied or broken nine records with his 15-shot victory in 2000. That was the largest margin of victory since Tom Morris won by 13 strokes – in 1862! Yes, 18..

In 2000, he won the final three Majors and then won the first, in 2001, the Masters, thus creating the “Tiger Slam.”

Four years after he turned pro at the age of 20, he was named the 12th greatest golfer of all time.

He is only the second player to win at least five tournaments in eight different seasons. Sam Snead is the other.

He only plays about 15-18 tournaments a year, but for the past 4 seasons, he has won over 43% of them, finished in the top 5, 80% and in the top 10, 100%.

But it’s not as if golf fans were given no warning.

At age 2, he was on the Mike Douglas show where he putted against Bob Hope.

At age 3, he shot 48 for nine holes! At age 5, he was already featured in *Golf Digest*.

While we all know his black/Asian racial mix, Tiger refers to his ethnic make-up as “Cablinasian,” a term he coined from CAucasian, BLack, American-Indian and ASIAN.

Tiger is a Buddhist, and said his faith was acquired from his mother, that it helps control both his stubbornness and impatience.

He got the name of “Tiger” from his father, Earl. Earl, a sergeant who befriended a Vietnamese soldier while in the Vietnam war, who he nicknamed Tiger. It stuck, so Eldrick became Tiger.

Enough facts.

Besides his great skills, nobody works any harder toward perfection than Tiger. He is relentless, with a killer instinct. His ability to focus on even the minutest detail – all the time, and, as he says, “I always am working to get better. I have a number of things I need to improve on.” Scary. Perhaps a single question may answer many of the other questions on how good he is.

Before last Sunday’s 36-hole final of the Match Play tournament against Stuart Cink, Cink was asked by a reporter: “How does it feel to KNOW that your opponent is better than you and that he KNOWS that you know he is better than you?”



OFF THE WALL SPORTS

Cink opined that if you were to cut him open, you'd probably find nuts, bolts and an engine. Golf fan or not, we are privileged to watch the best ever.

Roger Federer.

He is nearly a mirror image of Tiger, but in tennis.

Roger is only 26 and has already won 12 Grand Slam titles – including 5 consecutive Wimbledon's (2003-2007) (Pete Sampras has 14), and has appeared in a record 10-straight GS finals.

He earned the world's No. 1 ranking on February 2, 2004 and has now held that spot for a record 213 consecutive weeks.

Most say he obviously is the most dominate men's player of this generation, and they add he will most likely, baring injuries, like Tiger, become the greatest ever.

Roger and Tiger are good friends, and attend each others tournaments when possible.

Tiger kids Roger because he has one more major.

In 2004, Roger totally dominated. He won 3 of the 4 Grand Slam titles, did not lose a single match to anyone ranked in the top 10, and won every final he reached!

In 2005, he again won Wimbledon and the U.S. Open.

In 2006, he once again won 3 of the 4 Grand Slams, and his No. 1 ranking was several THOUSAND points greater than his nearest competitor. Never before in tennis history has the No.1 margin been that large.

If he should again win 3 of 4 this year, he would pass Sampras with 15 Grand Slams.

One announcer stated, "He can make every shot possible, and often some that are not."

They also comment on his deadly, 118 MPH serve. He tosses the ball to the exact spot every time, making it nearly impossible for his opponents to guess where it is going, and, he twists his body while serving so that his back is actually to the opposing player, which totally befuddles opponents, they say.

I cannot say I am a big fan of golf or tennis, but when Tiger is playing, especially on the final Sunday, with him in his red-top outfit, he truly is something to watch. I don't know enough to know how hard those shots he makes are, but when I see that no one else can make them, I understand that much, that he is way ahead of anyone else.

Tennis I know less about, but watching Roger making some of the shots he does, I quickly let out a wow!

Anyway, even if you are not a fan of these two sports, it is likely that in my lifetime, at least, that I never will get an opportunity to say I watched the careers of the best that ever was.

And that is something that you rarely get to see.

Hey, don't blame me for this one, nothing else is going on.