

SPORTING LEGENDS: TOM WATSON

SPORT: GOLF

COMPETITIVE ERA: 1971 - PRESENT

Thomas Sturges Watson (born September 4, 1949 in Kansas City, Missouri) is a golfer on the Champions Tour, who still occasionally competes in PGA TOUR events.



Watson began his golf career in 1971, the same year he graduated from Stanford University with a degree in psychology.

He has won eight major championships on the regular tour - two Masters (1977 and 1981), one US Open (1982), and five British Opens (1975, 1977, 1980, 1982, 1983).

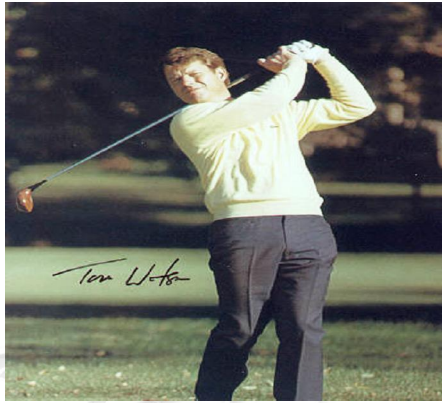
Watson's only US Open win, in 1982 at Pebble Beach, was equally memorable. Nicklaus, playing two groups ahead of Watson in the final round, charged into a share of the lead with five consecutive birdies. When Watson reached the par-3 17th hole the two were still tied, but with Nicklaus safely in the clubhouse at 4 under par 284.

He joined the Champions Tour in 1999, the same year he earned an honorary membership of the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St Andrews in Scotland. Ironically, St. Andrews is one of the few Open venues where Watson did not claim victory.

A memorable moment in Watson's career came at the 2003 US Open, when he shot an opening-round 65 with his longtime caddy Bruce Edwards carrying his clubs. The latter would succumb to ALS on April 8, 2004 at the age of 49.

In total Watson won 39 events on the PGA TOUR between 1974 and 1998. As of the end of the 2005 season he had eight wins on the Champions Tour, including four senior majors. He has also won a number of unofficial and international events.

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Watson's swing has always been highly consistent.

PGA TOUR wins

1974	Western Open
1975	Byron Nelson Golf Classic, The Open Championship
1977	The Open Championship
1978	Anheuser-Busch Golf Classic
1979	Colgate Hall of Fame Classic
1980	The Open Championship, World Series of Golf
1981	The Masters, USF&G New Orleans Open, Atlanta Classic
1982	U.S. Open, The Open Championship
1983	The Open Championship
1984	Seiko-Tucson Match Play Championship,
1987	Nabisco Championship
1996	Memorial Tournament
1998	MasterCard Colonial

Champions Tour wins

1999	Bank One Championship
2000	IR Senior Tour Championship
2001	Senior PGA Championship
2002	Senior Tour Championship at Gaillardia
2003	Senior British Open, JELD-WEN Tradition
2005	Senior British Open, Charles Schwab Cup Championship

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Always a tough competitor, always a winner!

Other senior wins

- 1999 Wendy's Three-Tour Challenge (with Jack Nicklaus and Hale Irwin)
- 1999 Diner's Club Matches (with Jack Nicklaus)
- 2000 Hyundai Team Matches (with Jack Nicklaus)
- 2004 Wendy's Champions Skins Game.

Watson has been one of the most complete players ever to play golf, as evidenced by his competitiveness in the 2009 Open Championship at the age of 59.

Standing 5 ft 9 in and weighing 160 pounds during his PGA Tour years, he achieved abundant length with accuracy, played aggressively, developed a superlative short game, and in his prime was a very skilled and confident putter.

Watson is renowned as an exceptional bad-weather golfer, having displayed this gritty talent best in the difficult and sundry conditions of The Open Championship.

in the pocket, often sliding a step or two to avoid the pass rush.

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Scott Burton's Final Thought

Tom Watson's golfing career is a fantastic success story, and consists of many legendary tournament victories.

His competitiveness and will to win drove him on to win many events that others would have seen as lost causes.

He was one of the first Americans during the 1970s to adopt and popularise the phrase 'refuse to lose'. It certainly worked for him.

His career is sometimes defined by his rivalry and friendship with Jack Nicklaus. They had some epic battles, and Watson more than held his own in the majority of them.

His golfing career will be remembered for a long time to come.



In his early career, Watson generated incredible power with his drive-swing.