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OPINION

editorials, letters, commentary and perspective

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CHRIS HUTCHINSON/Emerald

The Year of the Tiger

OUR OPINION:
Tiger Woods not only brings new enthusiasm to the golf world, but to all sports as well

Look out world, here comes Tiger. Tiger Woods, the 21-year-old golf sensation, is America's newest obsession after his record-breaking victory at the Masters last week.

For the people who still don't know what Woods has accomplished, here's a quick breakdown. Last week, in his first year as a professional golfer, Woods achieved victory in what may be the most prestigious tournament in golf — the Masters.

Actually, he didn't just beat the competition at the Masters, he dominated, setting or tying nine records including lowest score, youngest winner and widest margin of victory (12 strokes). Not to mention the fact that he became the first non-white champion in a tournament that not so long ago (unfortunately) wouldn't even let minorities play.

While golf fans had known Woods was something special from his days as an amateur, now the entire world has caught on to Tiger-mania. Nike is already off and running with a series of Tiger Woods commercials similar to Gatorade's "Be like Mike" series. A new generation of golfers (and non-golfers for that matter) are quickly developing a "Be like Tiger" mentality.

And why not? After all, Woods isn't just a really good golfer. He's a whole new kind of golfer. The typical image most people have of golfers is middle-aged, white, rich guys. Perhaps that can help explain golf's limited appeal to most of society.

But with Tiger Woods, those barriers have been broken. At only 21, Woods looks more like your typical college student than

a world-famous athlete. And of course, he's not white, which separates him from almost every other famous golfer today. More importantly, it gives a whole new group of people someone in the golf world they can actually relate to.

The fact is, right now America badly needs a Tiger Woods. In an era where football heroes are charged with murder, baseball players act more like business executives than athletes and basketball players spend more of their time doing shoe commercials than signing autographs, an athlete like Tiger Woods is a breath of fresh air.

He seems to represent everything that's right with sports. He challenges stereotypes and competitors alike, while still demonstrating a clear love for the game of golf. We all know Woods will make a lot of money at golf before he's through, but just the same, he seems to be in it for the sport, not the business.

Perhaps the hysteria over Tiger Woods is getting out of control. After all, he hasn't dominated the golf world yet. But people like Tiger Woods don't show up on the scene very often. And when they do, it's only natural that people will put them on a pedestal of admiration.

It's fitting that Tiger's victory at the Masters came two days before the 50th anniversary of Jackie Robinson's major league debut. Both men represent everything that a sports hero should be. Determined. Talented. And having an unapologetic love for the sport at which they excel.

It's way too soon to tell if Woods will go down in history like Robinson. One thing is for sure, however. He's off to a pretty good start.

This editorial represents the opinion of the Emerald editorial board.

All thumbs



High speed rail
Crammed, nightmarish trips in a Greyhound bus could be a distant memory with this proposed railway from Eugene to Seattle. For the sake of Portland natives without cars everywhere, let this train please become reality.

OPS
Representatives from the Office of Public Safety made good last week, correcting an egregious error. At first, officers ticketed cars that parked in spots near Mac Court where permit signs were missing. After being informed of their error, they removed all the tickets and replaced the signs, making campus safer for drivers everywhere.



Last minute taxpayers
Many people who waited until Tuesday's deadline to file their tax returns complained about the complicated government forms and figures. It probably wouldn't have been so difficult, or as stressful, if they had started a bit earlier... like a few months ago.

Sen. Robert Byrd
The hard-line Democrat senator from West Virginia filed a complaint last week when an aide for Sen. Ron Wyden tried to enter the Senate chamber with her guide dog. Byrd is a notorious stickler for Senate regulations, but a guide dog?

LETTERS

Virtues forgotten

I would like to respond to your article concerning alcohol-free fraternities (April 14, *ODE*). First of all, they are called fraternities, not frats. Your cover picture appeared to be an attempt to make the Greek system look bad. The picture was a complete contradiction of what you were reporting and had absolutely nothing to do with the article. The paraphernalia in the front yard of Sigma Nu was placed there as a decoration for a theme party.

The two fraternities, Phi Delta Theta and Sigma Nu, going dry should be commended, not ostracized. They are taking a big risk being the first. Greeks live by certain nation-

al rules they must obey, whereas, most college students do not have any regulations concerning alcohol in their homes.

Why not focus on the positive aspects such as the brotherhood, sisterhood and traditions? Greeks provide a majority of funds and services for local and national charity organizations. They play a big part in events such as the Munchkin Run, Special Olympics, Dance Marathon and individual chapter philanthropies. They not only aid the community, but also in the University. I challenge you to report these positive events in your paper more often.

Danielle DeBussey
Undeclared

Empty dryness

This whole policy of creating dry fraternities may create a safe and healthier atmosphere within the fraternities' walls, but it will only take the drinking elsewhere. Others involved have made this point, but it should be looked at more carefully.

College students are not going to stop drinking, and there should be nothing wrong with that. It is when students have to deal with all the restrictions and laws that drinking becomes such an issue. I am currently doing an internship in London where the drinking age is 18. Going to a pub is not a big deal, they don't have to sneak in and drink large amounts in a short period of time like many end up

doing before they go to a "dry" event.

Speaking from experience, students tend to drink a lot more before dry functions than they probably would during the actual event if alcohol was involved. Going "dry" may improve a fraternity's usual image of being a bunch of beer bonging, keg standing guys, and lower insurance rates, but it certainly won't solve any drinking problems among members or participants of parties. The parties will move elsewhere — golf courses, houses, places people have to drive to. This is stupid, but the whole Greek system seems to be so caught up in politics and its image that the "higher-ups" don't tend to look at the reality.

Natalie Montgomery
London, England