

It's about
roadtrips...
without crashes
or injuries



It's about
GPAs...
not DUIs and MIPs



It's about
keeping
our friendships
alive...
not having our friends die



It's about
preserving
our community...
not destroying it



It's about
drinking alcohol
responsibly
or **NOT drinking**
at all....



Office of Student Life
University of Oregon

Overall, golf field still good

■ The elite golfers are not playing in as many matches, but there's still plenty of professionals to watch

By Doug Ferguson
The Associated Press

Hal Sutton's smile turned into a snarl after two questions.

How could a tournament with so much tradition, played on a quality golf course, attract so few of the top players from the world rankings? What does it say for a tournament when Tiger Woods doesn't come?

"Everybody in this field is a bigger star than any of you will ever be," Sutton shot back at a room full of reporters.

Over the past two weeks, complaints could be heard from Greensboro to Houston that the fields were better suited for the Buy.com Dakota Dunes Open than the elite PGA Tour.

Sutton was at both tournaments. He won at Greensboro. But his sharp rebuke came two years ago at the Canadian Open, where the gallery lined the 18th fairway at Glen Abbey Golf Club to watch an amazing finish. Billy Andrade made a 30-foot par putt to force a playoff, then won on the first extra hole by strategically chipping into a bunker to protect par.

All of which proves two things.

One, the PGA Tour rarely lacks great theater from great players, even if they aren't familiar names. And two, complaining about MVPs who are MIA is nothing new.

Jack Nicklaus was the premier player in golf. He won three majors his first three years — then never played more than 22 times a year on tour.

Woods, by the way, played 21 tour events last year.

Tom Watson was a star when he won the Masters and British Open in 1977. He played 24 tournaments the following year and never more than 22 after that.

David Duval played 21 times last year, and is on pace to play a couple of more this year.

"It's always been an issue," commissioner Tim Finchem said Tuesday. "When I became commissioner six years ago, it was Fred Couples and Greg Norman. If a tournament didn't have those players, there was some level of disappointment."

Neither Woods nor Duval, the top two players in the world rankings, were at Greensboro or Houston. Neither is in New Orleans this week.

Somehow, the Compaq Classic will go on without them. Most of the corporate packages were sold long before the field was announced. Tournament director Rick George was busy tending to last-minute details Monday night.

"It's shaping up to be a great tournament," George said. "It doesn't matter who comes. It's still going to be the greatest players in the world."

Sure, any tournament would love to have a Tiger Woods. He not only is the biggest star in golf, but the biggest in sports today. "I'd love to have them all," George said.

If anything, the recent furor over weak fields is a product of the world rankings.