

Portland
Observer
Metro/Sports

The eye of the Tiger

BY JOY RAMOS
OF THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

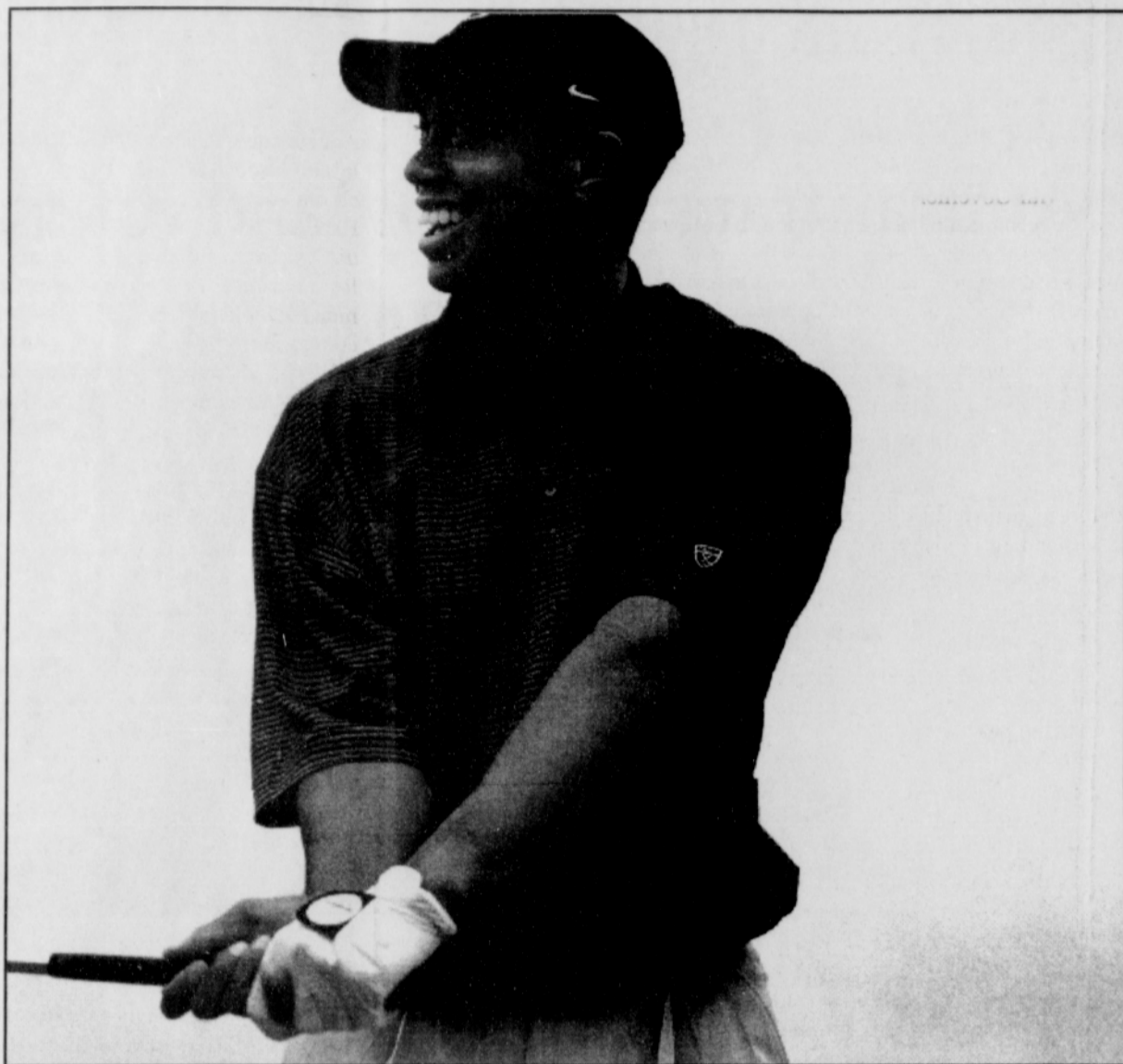
Ever since Tiger Woods came on to the professional golfing scene, his meteoric rise to fame and fortune has been nothing less than phenomenal. He has brought to the sport a new kind of energy with a strong following from fans worldwide. Sports Illustrated Magazine named him "Sportsman of the Year" and promoters have referred to him as sport's next Messiah. Woods is by many people's estimation, all that - a source of pride for minorities, youths, golf enthusiasts, and non-golfers.

Tiger's emergence has opened golf's doors to all minorities. "He wants to be an ambassador of change in golf," said a Nike spokesman. His visibility as a young professional of mixed-race heritage has served as an asset in getting people to see past stereotypes and be willing to change them. Through Nike, Tiger has campaigned against the discriminatory practices of some golf courses. A TV commercial shows him saying, "There are still golf courses in the United States that I cannot play because of the color of my skin. I'm told I'm not ready for you. Are you ready for me?"

As a tribute to Tiger Woods for winning at the Masters Game in April of 1997, the chairman of Augusta National, Jack Stevens, stood up and led a standing ovation for him during the ceremony. His gesture was atypical in a setting with a dark history of banning Blacks from playing at the higher levels. Jack Feinstein, sports author and commentator said, "Usually during those ceremonies, the members of Augusta don't get off their chairs, but I think they felt that it was the right thing to do, to say not only are you now an honorary member of our club as a Masters champion, but we welcome you."

Many still remember Woods when he

showed his form on the "Mike Douglas Show" at age 3 and "That's Incredible" at age 5. Even as an infant, his father remarked that "Tiger knew how to swing a club before he could walk." Now at 24 year old, Tiger is a powerful lure to a young, urban demographic group who have not flocked to golf. He often stresses to youths the values that underlie any sport: do your best, play fair, embrace every activity with integrity, honesty and discipline. His foundation offers golf camps to inner-city kids such as the one in Portland hosted by Heron Lakes Golf Course which he sponsors annually. America's love for Tiger Woods is evident in his ratings where his seventh-straight win in the Buick Open in February was seen by more people than the NBA All-Star game that same day. This year's U.S. Open pulled in 19 percent more homes than last year's event. The only two other African American athletes that compare to Tiger Woods in being able to draw in fans outside their sport is Muhammad Ali and Michael Jordan. Being a dominant force in the golf world, Tiger is favored to win at this week's British Open in St. Andrews, Scotland. He is by many critics, the standard for the modern golfer. According to Ron Sirak, managing editor of *GolfWorld*, after Tiger's numerous winnings so far since turning professional, "Tiger has only one opponent - history. He works harder, is more focused and concentrated. He's trying to be the best ever." This was evident during the Memorial Tournament in Dublin, Ohio last month where Tiger shot 63 in a round which left him dissatisfied. After signing his scorecard, he called over his coach Butch Harmon to say, "Meet me on the practice range in 15 minutes. We have work to do." They returned later that day to the range practicing for hours til dark. With his widespread appeal, companies like Wheaties, Buick, and American Express have wooed him



with multi-million dollar endorsement contracts. Reports uncovered that Nike has sweetened the deal for Woods with an offer of \$100 million or more to promote their apparel and golf ball called Tour Accuracy produced and designed specifically for Tiger Woods. He has won the last two tournaments with the ball. On top of all money, he has earned through his tournament winnings, over \$5 million. Woods is clearly on his way to becoming the biggest money-making athlete in history. So what's a young man whose already won several

Major tournaments, loved by fans the world over and garnered millions do for an encore? Thomas Bonk of Los Angeles Times wonders just the same. "Now that Tiger Woods has completely wrecked Pebble Beach and

made a joke out of the 100th U.S. Open, he clearly needs new worlds to conquer."

"So what does he do next? Put Microsoft back together? End drought? Putt with his shoe?"

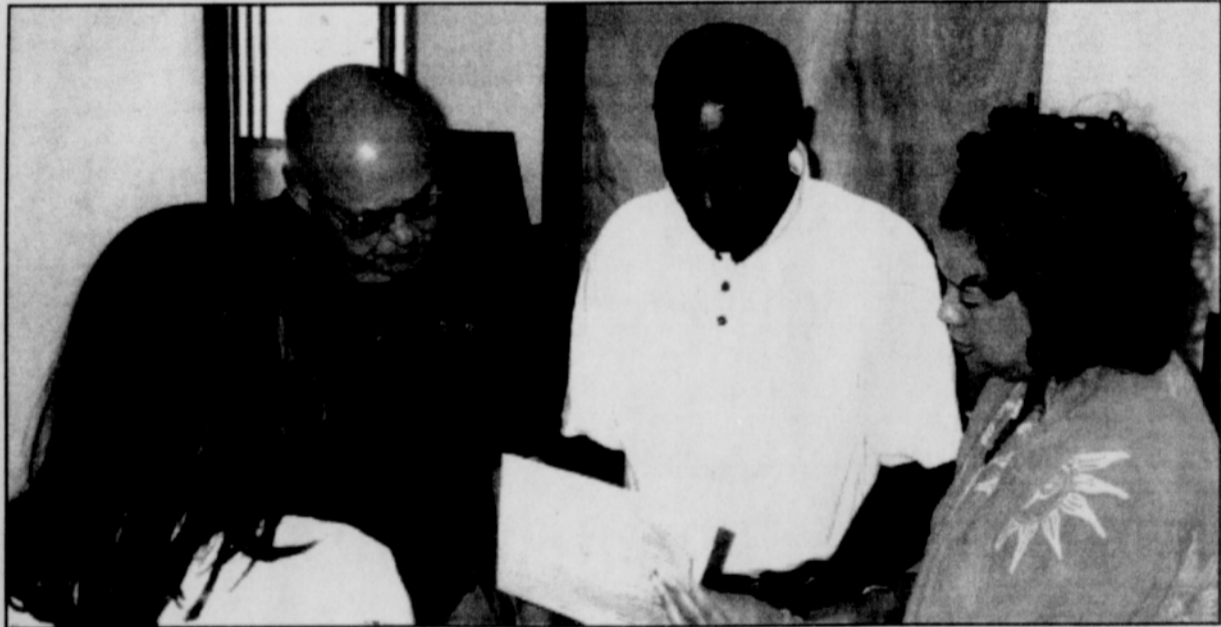
Fred Meyer Challenge promotions to benefit children's charities

CONTRIBUTED STORY
FOR THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Golf may be name of the game, but it's local children's charities that are the big winners at the annual Fred Meyer Challenge/Washington Mutual Pro-Am golf tournament. In support of the tournament's aim to contribute funds to select charities, in separate promotions General Mills and local FM radio station Rosie 105 FM have stepped up to help the cause. General Mills has produced more than 30,000 special Fred Meyer Challenge Double Packs of cereal that will be sold during the month of July exclusively through Fred Meyer stores in Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and Alaska. From those sales, General Mills, in conjunction with Fred Meyer, will donate \$7,500 or approximately twenty-five cents a pack to Fred Meyer Challenge Children's Charities.

Tickets for the 2000 Fred Meyer Challenge are on sale now at Fastixx locations (503) 224-TIXX (8499), at www.fastixx.com, and at Washington Mutual branches in Oregon and SW Washington. Information call (503) 526-9331.

Blazers aid Loaves and Fishes



On Thursday, July 13, the Portland Trailblazers and front office staff as well as volunteer community builders served meals to Loaves and Fishes clientele and helped assist with clean up and other duties in North/Northeast Portland. It was their way of reaching out to Portland's communities. Members of the program are (from left to right) Nicole Hubbard, Blazer intern; Harry Hutt, Blazer Senior Vice President of Marketing Operations; Nick Jones, Blazer Community Ambassador; Tyese Campbell, Organizer for "Loaves & Fishes" Meals on Wheels.



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