

Golf Nike to get out of golf equipment business

By DOUG FERGUSON
Associated Press

Nike is getting out of the golf equipment business, a surprising announcement Wednesday that is sure to send Tiger Woods, Rory McIlroy and other players searching for new clubs and golf balls next season.

Nike said it would stop making clubs, golf balls and golf bags, instead devoting its resources to shoes and apparel, longs its strength in the golf marketplace.

"We're committed to being the undisputed leader in golf footwear and apparel," said Trevor Edwards, president of Nike Brand. "We will achieve this by investing in performance innovation for athletes and delivering sustainable profitable growth for Nike Golf."

Woods has been with Nike since he turned pro in 1996 with that "Hello, World" advertisement, and he remains the most famous figure among Nike golfers. The Beaverton, Oregon-based company also signed Rory McIlroy in a splashy announcement in Abu Dhabi to start the 2013 season.

Woods has gone more than a year without playing because of back surgeries, though his agent at Excel Sports Management said he would remain "the iconic ambassador" for Nike Golf, just with a smaller group of products.

"He's been the most loyal ambassador and longest standing for Nike Golf. That doesn't change," agent Mark Steinberg said in a telephone interview. "It just means he'll



Brooks Koepka watches his approach shot on the second hole during the third round of the PGA Championship golf tournament at Baltusrol Golf Club in Springfield, N.J., Sunday, July 31, 2016.

AP Photo/Tony Gutierrez

likely have some different equipment in the bag, whether that's tomorrow, next month or a year from now. Tiger and I have been talking about this the last couple of days. We have a very sophisticated, legitimate plan in place and we're going to see it through."

Brooks Koepka is another Nike client. He tied for fourth in the PGA Championship on Sunday and is in position to make his first Ryder Cup team. His agent, Blake Smith at Hambric Sports Management, said Koepka is happy with his equipment.

"I don't think he'll be in any rush at all to jump ship," Smith said. "He's got a bunch of tournaments coming up that are very important."

Nike also has Suzann Pettersen and Michelle Wie on

the LPGA Tour.

Woods began promoting the shoes and apparel when he turned pro, and he made a switch to the Nike golf ball (which Bridgestone manufactured) in 2000 in Germany, winning the U.S. Open by 15 shots a month later. No other Nike golf ball moment was more vivid than when Woods won the 2005 Masters with a chip-in for birdie on the 16th hole, in which the ball rolled down a slope and hung on the edge of the cup for a full second — the Nike swoosh aimed at TV screens around the world — before falling.

He changed to the Nike irons at the American Express Championship in Ireland in 2002, one week before the Ryder Cup, and then gradually added the fairway metal, the driver and,

finally, the putter in 2010.

During those changes, Phil Mickelson caused a stir when he said in a Golf Magazine interview that Woods had "inferior" clubs and then tried to pay Woods a compliment by saying he was the only player good enough to "overcome the equipment he's stuck with."

David Duval was the first player to win a major with Nike equipment at the 2001 British Open.

Through it all, Nike never took command of any aspect of the golf market, succeeding mainly in shoes and clothing.

Daric Ashford, president of Nike Golf, said in the brief announcement that Woods, McIlroy and Wie "drive tremendous energy for the game and inspire consumers worldwide," and then he went on to mention various apparel and footwear that have "connected strongly with golfers."

"We'll continue to ignite excitement with our athletes and deliver the best of Nike for the game," he said.

Nike did not say how the move would affect its golf equipment staff, either the representatives on tour or at the "Oven" in Fort Worth, Texas, where the clubs were made.

Steinberg said the news was too fresh to get an idea how this would affect Woods or other golfers when it comes to their contracts.

"We have a long-term contract with Nike, and that likely will not change," Steinberg said. "I'm sure we'll have a conversation into what exactly the future looks like with less product."

MLB



AP Photo/Elaine Thompson

Seattle Mariners' Mike Zunino rounds the bases past Boston Red Sox shortstop Xander Bogaerts (2) on his home run during the sixth inning of Wednesday's game in Seattle.

Trio of homers enough as Seattle beats Boston

By TIM BOOTH
Associated Press

SEATTLE — Nelson Cruz, Mike Zunino and Adam Lind hit solo home runs and the Seattle Mariners beat the Boston Red Sox 3-1 on Wednesday night, handing Rick Porcello his first loss since May.

Cruz hit his 27th homer of the season leading off the seventh inning, Zunino hit his fifth leading off the sixth and Lind capped Seattle's scoring with his 16th of the season with two outs in the seventh. They were the only three hits allowed by Porcello until Zunino's single in the eighth, but enough to hand the right-hander his first loss since May 17 against Kansas City. Porcello (14-3) had won his past eight decisions.

Seattle made runs stand up because of a stellar performance from starter Hisashi Iwakuma (12-7). The right-hander rebounded from a season-worst performance against the Chicago Cubs, allowing five hits in 7 1/3 innings.

Before the stumble against the Cubs, Iwakuma had won his previous five decisions. He was dominant from the start against the Red Sox, striking out four of the first five batters. One baserunner managed to reach second base in the first seven innings against Iwakuma, that coming in the third when Andrew Benintendi got his first major league hit and advanced to second on Brock Holt's two-out single. Benintendi was stranded when Xander Bogaerts fouled out to end the inning.

Iwakuma struck out

seven and walked none, leaving with one out in the eighth after Benintendi's second hit. Mookie Betts greeted reliever Drew Storen with a single to advance Benintendi to second but he was stranded there again after Bogaerts flew out to the warning track in left to end the inning.

Rookie Edwin Diaz gave up a run in the ninth on Travis Shaw's RBI ground out, but got Sandy Leon for the final out and his second save.

The three home runs by Seattle accounted for the three mistakes Porcello made in an otherwise strong start. Cruz's homer was estimated at 441 feet and reached the second deck in left field. Zunino's homered 427 feet to center field on a night swirling wind appeared to be knocking down fly balls to that part of the outfield. And Lind kept his fly ball fair down the right field line to give Seattle a 3-0 lead.

Porcello struck out eight and walked one

TRAINER'S ROOM
Mariners: Seattle RHP Nick Vincent (back strain) will begin a rehab assignment with Single-A Everett. Vincent's been on the disabled list since June 29.

UP NEXT
Red Sox: Drew Pomeranz (0-2) makes his third start since being acquired from San Diego. Pomeranz gave up five earned runs in his last start against the Angels.

Mariners: Ariel Miranda (0-0) makes his Seattle debut after being acquired last weekend in a trade that sent Wade Miley to Baltimore.

BYLENGA: 'It was kind of like my legs had this nervous feeling'

Continued from 1B
Bradley said.

Bylenga followed that finish up by winning the regional meet in just his third time racing the hurdles to earn a berth in the national championships on July 25-31 in Sacramento, California.

"I think it was good for me in a way," he said. "There were no expectations. I just go out there and run. It was kind of good to get away from the pressure of the 800."

Bylenga didn't stop competing in the 800, though. Since he was already going to the meets anyway, he figured entering the event couldn't hurt.

"I was mainly going to do the hurdles originally," he said. "Then I looked at past results in the 800 and thought I might as well try to get there and see how I feel."

He must have felt pretty good, because Bylenga placed second at the state meet and third at regionals to give him two events at the national championships.

Racing in triple-digit temperatures, Bylenga blazed through his preliminary heats on the first day of individual events in Sacramento. His time in the 800 was still three seconds off his PR,



Photo courtesy of Herman Bylenga

Nolan Bylenga, left, and coach Ben Bradley, both of Pendleton, pose after Bylenga placed fifth in the 800 meters and earned All-American honors at the Junior Olympic National Championships on July 31 in Sacramento, California.

but an anxious confidence started to set in that evening.

"I felt tight running, but I still ran a decent time," he said. "I kind of just got a feeling and every time I've got this feeling is when I've run my best races."

"I think I even texted (Pendleton track and cross country coach) Nicole (Stewart) the day before that I'm ready to run a PR."

The next day Bylenga arrived at the track for his 800 semifinal as a ball of energy.

"I was super nervous," he

said. "It was kind of like my legs had this nervous feeling. I don't know quite how to describe it."

He pushed himself to an aggressive opening pace knowing he would be unable to maintain it, and hoped to leave just enough energy in reserve to kick with Washington state-champion Devan Kirk and his 1:51 PR down the back stretch.

The plan worked flawlessly, and Bylenga finished with the second-fastest semifinal time and a new personal

record of 1:52.68. He fell short of the 400 hurdle finals with a time of 55.65, but also finished 18th in the nation after competing in the event just five times.

Bylenga would go on to finish fifth in the 800 finals with time of 1:55.23.

The newly-minted All-American begins the next stage in his life on Aug. 16 when he reports to Tallahassee for athlete orientation. "It's the end of one chapter and the next chapter I'm going across the country for," said Bylenga, who likes to punctuate his social media posts with #greateriscoming. "I feel like at Florida they've got a great program and I'm going to have some really good guys to train with."

Bradley knows the Gators are gaining a dedicated training partner as well.

"Nolan knows what it will take to accomplish his goals and I feel that he is very ready to do what it takes," he said. "This whole summer season was a great experience for him, especially that national meet, and I feel that those experiences will help him thrive at the collegiate level."

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SCOREBOARD

Olympics

TV Broadcast Schedule TODAY

NBC — Olympic Preview Special, 8-9 p.m.

NBCSN — Men's Soccer - Iraq vs. Denmark (LIVE), Brazil vs. Russia (LIVE), Portugal vs. Argentina (LIVE), Fiji vs. South Korea (LIVE), Nigeria vs. Japan (LIVE), 12:30 p.m.-11 p.m.

USA — Men's Soccer - Honduras vs. Algeria (LIVE), Mexico vs. Germany (LIVE), Sweden vs. Colombia (LIVE), 2-8 p.m.

NBC SOCCER CHANNEL — Men's Soccer - Iraq vs. Denmark (LIVE), Iraq vs. Denmark Encore, Brazil vs. Russia (LIVE), Portugal vs. Argentina (LIVE), Fiji vs. South Korea (LIVE), Nigeria vs. Japan (LIVE), Honduras vs. Algeria, Mexico vs. Germany, Sweden vs. Colombia, Noon-3:30 a.m.

TELEMUNDO — Men's Soccer - Honduras vs. Algeria (LIVE), Mexico vs. Germany (LIVE), 2-6 p.m.

NBC UNIVERSO — Men's Soccer - Brazil vs. Russia (LIVE), Portugal vs. Argentina (LIVE), 3-7 p.m.

Baseball

MLB EASTERN LEAGUE

Team	W	L	Pct	GB
Baltimore	61	45	.575	—
Toronto	61	47	.565	1
Boston	58	48	.547	3
New York	54	53	.505	7½
Tampa Bay	43	63	.406	18

Central Division

Team	W	L	Pct	GB
Cleveland	60	45	.571	—
Detroit	59	48	.551	2
Kansas City	51	56	.477	10
Chicago	51	56	.477	10
Minnesota	43	64	.402	18

West Division

Team	W	L	Pct	GB
Texas	62	46	.574	—
Houston	56	51	.523	5½
Seattle	54	52	.509	7
Los Angeles	49	58	.458	12½
Oakland	47	60	.439	14½

Wednesday's Games
Baltimore 3, Texas 2
N.Y. Yankees 9, N.Y. Mets 5
Minnesota 13, Cleveland 5

NATIONAL LEAGUE East Division

Team	W	L	Pct	GB
Washington	64	44	.593	—
Miami	57	51	.528	7
New York	55	52	.514	8½
Philadelphia	50	59	.459	14½
Atlanta	38	69	.355	25½

Central Division

Team	W	L	Pct	GB
Chicago	66	41	.617	—
St. Louis	57	50	.533	9
Pittsburgh	53	52	.505	12
Milwaukee	48	58	.453	17½
Cincinnati	43	63	.406	22½

West Division

Team	W	L	Pct	GB
San Francisco	61	46	.570	—
Los Angeles	59	48	.551	2
Colorado	54	53	.505	7
San Diego	47	61	.435	14½
Arizona	43	65	.398	18½

Wednesday's Games
Chicago Cubs 5, Miami 4
San Diego 12, Milwaukee 3
Washington 8, Arizona 3
N.Y. Yankees 9, N.Y. Mets 5
Philadelphia 5, San Francisco 4, 12 innings
Atlanta 8, Pittsburgh 4
St. Louis 5, Cincinnati 4
Colorado 12, L.A. Dodgers 2

Thursday's Games

St. Louis (Leake 8-8) at Cincinnati (Finnegan 6-8), 9:35 a.m.
San Francisco (Moore 7-7) at Philadelphia (Velazquez 8-3), 10:05 a.m.
N.Y. Mets (Colon 9-6) at N.Y. Yankees (Eovaldi 9-7), 4:05 p.m.
Pittsburgh (Vogelsong 1-1) at Atlanta (Jenkins 5-2), 4:10 p.m.
L.A. Dodgers (Maez 9-7) at Colorado (Chatwood 10-6), 5:40 p.m.

MLB NORTHWEST LEAGUE

North Division

Team	W	L	Pct	GB
Everett (Mariners)	5	1	.833	—
Vancouver (Blue Jays)	3	3	.500	2
Spokane (Rangers)	3	3	.500	2
Tri-City (Padres)	1	5	.167	4

South Division

Team	W	L	Pct	GB
Hillsboro (Dbacks)	4	2	.667	—
Salem-Keizer (Giants)	3	3	.500	1
Boise (Rockies)	3	3	.500	1
Eugene (Cubs)	2	4	.333	2

Wednesday's Game

No games scheduled

Today's Games

Spokane at Salem-Keizer, 6:35 p.m.
Hillsboro at Everett, 7:05 p.m.
Vancouver at Eugene, 7:05 p.m.
Boise at Tri-City, 7:15 p.m.

Soccer

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Team	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
NYC FC	10	7	6	36	40	40
Toronto FC	9	7	6	33	29	23
New York	9	9	5	32	38	30
Philadelphia	8	8	6	30	36	35
Montreal	7	5	9	30	36	31
New England	6	8	8	26	28	36
Orlando City	5	11	26	35	36	36
D.C. United	5	8	8	23	20	26
Columbus	3	8	10	19	26	35
Chicago	4	10	6	18	19	27

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Team	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
FC Dallas	13	6	5	44	37	31
Colorado	10	3	8	38	24	19
Los Angeles	9	3	9	36	35	20
Sporting K.C.	10	4	4	34	28	25
Real Salt Lake	9	7	3	32	33	37
Vancouver	8	9	6	30	32	33
Portland	7	8	8	29	33	34
San Jose	6	6	9	27	23	24
Seattle	6	12	3	21	21	28
Houston	4	9	8	20	24	27

NOTE: Three points for victory, one point for tie.

Today's Game

Toronto FC 1, Real Salt Lake 0

Friday's Game

New York City FC at San Jose, 8 p.m.

Saturday's Game

DC United at Philadelphia, 4 p.m.
Montreal at Houston, 4:30 p.m.
Toronto FC at New England, 4:30 p.m.
Colorado at Vancouver, 6 p.m.
Real Salt Lake at Chicago, 7:15 p.m.

Motorsports

NASCAR Sprint Cup

Points	Standings
1	Kevin Harvick 709
2	Brad Keselowski 687
3	Kurt Busch 658
4	Kyle Busch 634
5	Carl Edwards 626
6	Joey Logano 612
7	Jimmie Johnson 577
8	Martin Truex Jr 577
9	Denny Hamlin 576
10	Matt Kenseth 569
11	Austin Dillon 549
12	Ryan Newman 537
13	Chase Elliott 533
14	Jamie McMurray 517
15	Kyle Larson 508
16	Kasey Kahne 488
17	Trevor Bayne 480
18	Ryan Blaney 470
19	Ricky Stenhouse Jr. 472
20	Dale Earnhardt Jr. 469
21	AJ Allmendinger 441
22	Greg Biffle 414
23	Paul Menard 403
24	Danica Patrick 392
25	Clint Bowyer 374
26	Aric Almirola 365
27	Stow Tenart 353
28	Casey Mears 330
29	Landon Cass