

Koepka holds off Woods to win PGA Championship

By DOUG FERGUSON
Associated Press

ST. LOUIS — The roars were unlike anything Brooks Koepka had ever heard, and he knew exactly what they meant.

They got louder for each birdie by Tiger Woods that moved him closer to the lead Sunday in the PGA Championship, and Koepka could hear a ripple effect of noise. First, real time. Seconds later, another burst from patrons watching on TV in chalets. Then, distant cheers from every corner of Bellerive when the score was posted.

“We knew what was going on,” he said. “It’s pretty obvious when Tiger makes a birdie. Everybody on the golf course cheers for him.”

Koepka knew exactly what to do.

Amid relentless pandemonium, Koepka ran off three straight birdies to end the front nine and seize control. When he was tied with Adam Scott through 14 holes, with Woods one shot behind, he delivered back-to-back birdies.

The last one was a laser of a 4-iron from 248 yards that settled 6 feet away, sending him to a dream finish of a year that began with the 28-year-old Floridian wondering if a wrist injury that kept him out for four months would ever allow him to compete again.

“That will probably go down as probably one of the best shots I’ve ever hit under pressure,” he said.

He closed with a 4-under 66 for a two-shot victory over Woods and took his place among the elite in golf. Koepka became the fifth player to win the U.S. Open and PGA Championship in the same year, joining Woods, Jack Nicklaus, Ben Hogan and Gene Sarazen.

It will be impossible to overlook him now, not with the Wanamaker Trophy to go with his back-to-back U.S. Open titles. Koepka won two of the three majors he played this year, and three of his last six. Not since Woods won four in a row through the 2001 Masters has anyone won majors at such an alarming rate.

And yet it still felt — and certainly sounded — as though he played second billing to Woods.

The crowd was enormous, louder than anything in golf this side of Augusta National or a Ryder Cup, and Woods looked closer than ever to capping his comeback following four back surgeries with another major.

Even with two bogeys, Woods shot 64 for his lowest final round in a major. He finished at 266, beating by three shots his best 72-hole score in a major.

At this major, it wasn’t enough.

“I played hard,” Woods said. “I made a bit of a run. It looks like I’m going to come up a little short.”

Koepka was responsible for that.

After wasting one chance to put it away by missing consecutive birdie chances



AP Photo/Charlie Riedel

Brooks Koepka lifts the Wanamaker Trophy after winning the PGA Championship.

from 7 feet, Koepka kept attacking flags and ran in birdie putts of 10 feet on No. 15 and 7 feet on No. 16 to end the drama. He tapped in for par on the final hole to set the PGA Championship scoring record at 264. It also tied the major championship record that Henrik Stenson set at Royal Troon two years ago in the British Open.

He joined Jordan Spieth, Woods, Nicklaus and Tom Watson as the only American players with three majors before turning 30 since World War II.

“Three majors at 28 — it’s a cool feeling,” said Koepka, who five years ago was toiling in Europe’s minor leagues.

Scott hung around by making big putts, just like

he hoped, and was tied for the lead until Koepka’s birdies. Scott missed a 6-foot birdie putt on the par-5 17th that would have pulled him to within one shot — right after Koepka missed from the same range — and then made bogey on the 18th for a 67 to finish alone in third.

The only knock on Koepka is that he doesn’t win enough elsewhere — the Phoenix Open on the PGA Tour, the Turkish Airlines Open on the European Tour, and two victories at the Dunlop Phoenix on the Japan Golf Tour.

“He’s won three majors now, so he’s definitely winning the right ones,” Scott said. “If I was him, I wouldn’t change much at the moment. I’d just keep doing what he’s

doing because he’s showing up at the right moments in the biggest events. There’s something inside his brain that makes him believe that that’s what he’s destined to do.”

The St. Louis fans waited 17 years to see Woods — he last was at Bellerive when the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks canceled a World Golf Championship — and he delivered a performance that took golf back in time.

Woods was relentless, pumping fists, raising the putter in his left hand, making birdies and charging toward a finish that caused pure pandemonium among one of the largest and noisiest crowds at a major.

Without hitting a fairway on the front nine, Woods cut

the four-shot deficit to two.

Dialed in on the back nine, he dropped an approach into 4 feet on No. 12, got within one shot with a 10-foot birdie on the par-3 13th and, after a bad drive led to bogey, he answered with another approach that hit a foot from the hole.

That was as good as it got.

Facing the most important drive of the day on the par-5 17th, Woods sent it sailing to the right and it embedded in a hazard along the banks of a creek. He did well to advance it but had to save par from a bunker. Behind him, Koepka holed his two birdie putts.

Woods and Koepka played nine holes of a practice round Wednesday, and the 14-time major champion knew what he was up against.

“It’s tough to beat when the guy hits it 340 down the middle,” Woods said. “What he did at Shinnecock, just bombing it, and then he’s doing the same thing here. ... And when a guy’s doing that and hitting it straight, and as good a putter as he is, it’s tough to beat.”

Koepka never imagined a year like this. He missed four months at the start of the year with a partially torn tendon in his left wrist, causing him to sit out the Masters. He outlasted good friend Dustin Johnson at Shinnecock Hills to become the first back-to-back U.S. Open champion in 29 years.

And now this.

The only downer is having to wait eight months for the Masters.

SCOREBOARD

Baseball

MLB				
AMERICAN LEAGUE				
East Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	85	35	.708	—
New York	74	44	.627	10
Tampa Bay	60	58	.508	24
Toronto	53	65	.449	31
Baltimore	35	84	.294	49½
Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Cleveland	67	51	.568	—
Minnesota	54	63	.462	12½
Detroit	50	69	.420	17½
Chicago	42	76	.356	25
Kansas City	36	82	.305	31
West Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Houston	73	46	.613	—
Oakland	71	48	.596	2
Seattle	69	51	.575	4½
Los Angeles	60	60	.500	13½
Texas	53	68	.438	21

Colorado	63	55	.534	1
Los Angeles	64	56	.533	1
San Francisco	60	60	.500	5
San Diego	48	73	.397	17½

Monday's Games
 Atlanta 9, Miami 1, 1st game
 N.Y. Mets 8, N.Y. Yankees 5
 Cleveland 10, Cincinnati 3
 Atlanta 6, Miami 1, 2nd game
 Texas 5, Arizona 3
 St. Louis 7, Washington 6
 L.A. Angels 6, San Diego 3, 10 innings
 San Francisco 5, L.A. Dodgers 2

Tuesday's Games
 Milwaukee (Cinacín 11-4) at Chicago Cubs
 (Quintana 10-8), 11:20 a.m.
 Boston (Johnson 3-3) at Philadelphia
 (Pivetta 7-9), 4:05 p.m.
 N.Y. Mets (Vargas 2-8) at Baltimore (Cashner 3-10), 4:05 p.m.
 Cleveland (Kluber 14-6) at Cincinnati
 (Romano 7-9), 4:10 p.m.
 Miami (Richards 3-7) at Atlanta (Sanchez 6-3), 4:35 p.m.
 Arizona (Corbin 9-4) at Texas (Gallardo 7-1), 5:05 p.m.
 Colorado (Marquez 9-9) at Houston
 (Verlander 11-7), 5:10 p.m.
 Pittsburgh (Taillon 9-8) at Minnesota
 (Odorizzi 4-7), 5:10 p.m.
 Toronto (Borucki 2-2) at Kansas City
 (Fillymer 1-1), 5:15 p.m.
 Seattle (Paxton 10-5) at Oakland (Fiers 7-6), 7:05 p.m.
 L.A. Angels (Barria 7-7) at San Diego
 (Kennedy 0-1), 7:10 p.m.

WNBA				
EASTERN CONFERENCE				
	W	L	Pct	GB
x-Atlanta	22	10	.688	—
x-Washington	20	11	.645	1½
x-Connecticut	18	13	.581	3½
Chicago	11	20	.355	10½
New York	7	23	.233	14
Indiana	5	26	.161	16½
WESTERN CONFERENCE				
	W	L	Pct	GB
x-Seattle	24	8	.750	—
x-Los Angeles	18	13	.581	5½
x-Phoenix	17	14	.553	6
x-Minnesota	18	14	.564	6½
Dallas	14	17	.452	9½
Las Vegas	13	18	.419	10½
x-clinched playoff spot				

Soccer

MLS					
EASTERN CONFERENCE					
	W	L	T	Pts	GF GA
Atlanta United FC	14	4	6	48	50 28
New York	15	6	2	47	45 23
New York City FC	14	5	4	47	48 31
Columbus	11	7	6	39	31 29
Philadelphia	9	11	3	30	32 39
Montreal	9	13	3	30	31 41
New England	7	8	9	29	38 38
Orlando City	7	15	2	23	37 57
Toronto FC	6	12	5	23	39 44
Chicago	6	14	5	23	45 49
D.C. United	5	9	6	21	33 38
WESTERN CONFERENCE					
	W	L	T	Pts	GF GA
FC Dallas	12	5	6	42	37 30
Sporting K.C.	11	6	6	39	42 30
Portland	10	4	7	37	34 27
L.A. Galaxy	10	8	6	36	46 40
Los Angeles FC	10	7	6	36	45 39
Real Salt Lake	10	9	5	35	34 41
Vancouver	9	9	6	33	38 47
Seattle	9	9	5	32	26 26
Minnesota United	9	13	2	29	38 48
Houston	7	10	6	27	39 34
Colorado	6	12	5	23	29 38
San Jose	3	13	7	16	33 43

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

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Sunday, August 11
 Columbus 1, Houston 0
 Philadelphia 3, New England 2
 New York 1, Chicago 0
 Colorado 2, San Jose 1

Montreal 1, Real Salt Lake 1, tie	67-66-72-69—274	-6
Minnesota United 2, LA Galaxy 2, tie	70-67-71-70—278	-2
Sporting Kansas City 2, Los Angeles FC 0		
Vancouver 2, Portland 1		

Sunday, August 12
 New York City FC 3, Toronto FC 2
 D.C. United 3, Orlando City 2
 Seattle 2, FC Dallas 1

Tuesday, August 14
 Atlanta 6, Miami 1, 2nd game
 Texas 5, Arizona 3
 St. Louis 7, Washington 6
 L.A. Angels 6, San Diego 3, 10 innings
 San Francisco 5, L.A. Dodgers 2

Wednesday, August 15
 Portland at D.C. United, 5 p.m.

Auto Racing

NASCAR CUP SERIES
Consumers Energy 400 Results
 Sunday
 At Michigan International Speedway
 (Start position in parentheses)

- (3) Kevin Harvick, Ford, 200 laps.
- (18) Brad Keselowski, Ford, 200.
- (2) Kyle Busch, Toyota, 200.
- (15) Austin Dillon, Chevrolet, 200.
- (8) Ryan Blaney, Ford, 200.
- (12) Kurt Busch, Ford, 200.

Sunday's Games
 Atlanta 86, New York 77
 Washington 95, Dallas 80
 Connecticut 82, Chicago 75
 Seattle 81, Minnesota 72
 Phoenix 86, Los Angeles 78

Monday's Games
 No games scheduled

Tuesday's Games
 Dallas at Connecticut, 4 p.m.
 Chicago at Minnesota, 5 p.m.
 New York at Los Angeles, 7:30 p.m.

Golf

PGA CHAMPIONSHIP

Sunday
 At Bellerive CC; St. Louis
 Purse: \$11 million
 Yardage: 7,316; Par: 70

Final Leaderboard

Brooks Koepka	69-63-66-66—264	-16
Tiger Woods	70-66-66-64—266	-14
Adam Scott	70-65-67-267	-13
Stewart Cink	67-69-66-67—269	-11
Jon Rahm	68-67-66-68—269	-11
Francesco Molinari	68-67-69-67—270	-10
Thomas Pieters	67-66-71-66—270	-10
Justin Thomas	69-66-68-68—270	-10
Gary Woodland	64-66-71-69—270	-10
Rafa Cabrera Bello	64-68-69-64—271	-9
Tyrrell Hatton	71-67-69-64—271	-9
Daniel Berger	73-65-66-68—272	-8
Rickie Fowler	65-67-69-71—272	-8
Kevin Kisner	67-64-72-69—272	-8
Shane Lowry	69-64-69-70—272	-8
Chez Reavie	71-68-67-66—272	-8
Jordan Spieth	71-66-69-66—272	-8
Brandon Stone	68-68-70-68—272	-8
Jason Day	67-68-67-71—273	-7
Zach Johnson	66-70-71-66—273	-7

Notables

Baseball

Montreal 1, Real Salt Lake 1, tie	67-66-72-69—274	-6
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