

Your weekly  
golf lesson  
in the Sun



KEVIN HAIME

# Tee It Up

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# Top tournament tips

## 10 must-do's that will help you play your best under pressure

It's golf tournament season in Ottawa and I am sure there are a lot of nervous players out there getting ready for their biggest rounds of the year.

Players have a hard time taking their best golf to the first tee of a tournament round. You can play great with your buddies, but it's often another story under pressure.

Here are 10 "must do's" if you want to play your best golf under pressure.

### 1. Know your swing

You can't play good golf if you have no idea why the ball goes where it goes. Get your swing videotaped and understand the way your swing works, so you can adjust and be confident on the course.

### 2. Play a practice round

If the tournament is important enough to make you nervous, then you should always play a practice round to check out course conditions and any design characteristics you need to watch out for. Also, make sure to take some notes and come up with a game plan.

### 3. Warm up properly

Give yourself an hour before you tee off to warm up your body, and to develop a rhythm for the day. Make sure to spend at least 10 minutes lag-putting longer putts so you really understand the pace and feel of the greens.

### 4. Maintain your pre-shot routine

Once you're on the course, make sure to keep a nice relaxed rhythm to keep you calm. Pay special attention to your pre-shot routine. Keep it consistent and keep it calm. Don't hit any shots until you are ready to hit them.

### 5. Stay in the present

The only shot that matters is the one you are about to hit. Thinking ahead or dwelling on the past will only derail you. Commit 100% to each shot.

### 6. Maintain your energy

You have to stay hydrated

**No matter what happens on the course, approach each shot with a positive attitude.**

and eat to prevent fatigue. You may not even realize you're losing your focus or making tired swings, but you are. No one can last five hours under pressure on the course without proper nutrition.

### 7. Increase your competitive schedule

The best way to get more comfortable under pressure is to be under pressure a lot. Even when you play with friends, make things competitive so you're used to feeling the pressure of having to hit a shot or make a putt.

### 8. Pay attention to your own game

Don't get distracted or intimidated by other players or any chatter. Other competitors, how other golfers are hitting the ball or even rumours about other players or situations is all just white noise. Just hit your golf ball, focus on what you can control and total up the score at the end.

### 9. Stay positive

There is a lot of luck in golf. You'll get good breaks and bad breaks depending on the day. No matter what happens on the course, approach each shot with a positive attitude or you're in big trouble.

### 10. Keep it in perspective

No disrespect intended, but whether you make your intersectional team shouldn't affect the way you live your life. Unless you're a professional who makes a living playing golf, no matter what you shoot, no one will take anything away from you and your family and friends will still love you. Playing well and even winning is fun, but playing badly is not that big a deal.



KEVIN HAIME PHOTO

Tiger Woods shares a laugh with caddie Steve Williams (left) and coach Hank Haney during a practice round at the U.S. Open. The game's best players are relaxed and comfortable in competitive settings, and actually play better in tournaments than in fun rounds. They are prepared, focused, and get to the first tee with a game plan and plenty of confidence.

## Top 5 pressure players of all-time

All professional golfers can play under pressure and win a tournament. Only a very few can perform under the most pressure imaginable again and again. These players only come along once in a generation:

### 1. Tiger Woods

Woods is probably the best clutch putter and best player in history. He is the only player of this generation who can win a major championship with a birdie on the 72nd hole.

### 2. Jack Nicklaus

Every bit Tiger Woods' equal under pressure. Woods is a more complete player than

Nicklaus, but not a better closer. Nicklaus never missed a putt he needed to make and had a great mind for tournament golf.

### 3. Tom Watson

No player this generation has been able to handle Woods, but Watson took on Nicklaus and beat him on more than one occasion. Watson's pitch-in birdie on the 71st hole at Pebble Beach to beat Nicklaus at the 1982 U.S. Open might be the best clutch shot in the history of the Open.

### 4. Ben Hogan

Hogan won four U.S. Opens

in six years, including a historic victory at Merion in 1950. He hit a one-iron that year on the green to make a par on the 72nd hole on his way to victory. The win came just 16 months after a horrific car crash that almost killed him. When it comes to overcoming adversity, no one has ever matched Hogan.

### 5. Byron Nelson

Nelson won 18 times in 1945, including 11 in a row. He just might have had the best rhythm the game has ever seen. You don't win 11 times in a row unless you're basically immune to pressure.

## GOLF ROUNDUP

wrapup of yesterday's action

## Young Kim gets his shot at Tiger

At Bethesda, Md., Anthony Kim finally gets a crack at Tiger Woods, and when he says he has been practising for a moment like this all his life, Kim isn't kidding.

As a 10-year-old growing up in Los Angeles, in those final hours of twilight as he waited for his father to pick up from the golf course, Kim imagined he was in the final pairing with Woods and had a 10-foot putt for the victory, with the world's No. 1 player watching.

"Man, they were going in a lot," Kim said, laughing.

He can only hope fantasy meets reality today in the AT&T National.

Kim kept his cool after a couple of blunders at Congressional, saving par from 84 yards with a creative chip, then making birdie on the 16th that led to a 2-under 68 yesterday.

Kim, 10-under for the tournament, is tied with Woods, who lost a three-shot lead in a span of two holes with a double bogey on the 11th. But the world's No. 1 player found one last birdie with a putt up the slope of the 16th green to tap-in range that allowed him to salvage a rollercoaster round at 70.

Woods, 33, is tournament host. Kim, 24, is the defending champion.

Told about Kim's tale of trying to beat him, Woods offered a wry smile.

"I'm aging," he said. "That's what that means."

But he has been around long enough to have built a 44-3 record on the PGA Tour when he has at least a share of the 54-hole lead.

### Yi moves Farr ahead

At Sylvania, Ohio, Eun-**jung Yi** had eight birdies and an eagle for a 10-under 61 and four-shot lead at the Jamie Farr Owens Corning Classic. The 21-year-old had the lowest third-round score in the tournament's 25 years.

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