

25 YEARS AGO...



TWICE *&* NICE

Jack Nicklaus becomes first repeat Memorial winner with a heart-pounding playoff victory over Andy Bean

BY DAVID SHEDLOSKI



IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING that Muirfield Village Golf Club represents one of the most cherished accomplishments in the storied and stellar career of Jack Nicklaus, given all that he and his family have poured into the club. It should come as no surprise, then, that his two triumphs in the Memorial Tournament, realized seven years apart, are among the most cherished of his 100 worldwide titles.

Twenty-five years ago, the Golden Bear won for the second time on the course he designed, and the victory over Andy Bean in a playoff couldn't have been more different than the manner in which he won his first. But it was still as satisfying.

Nicklaus was only 37 years old when he captured the second Memorial Tournament in 1977. He already had won twice on the PGA TOUR that year and would contend in all

Above: A billboard congratulates 1984 Memorial Tournament Honoree Sam Snead.

Left: Jack won his first Memorial in 1977.

Right: Jack was 44 years old when he won the 1984 Memorial and two years past his last PGA TOUR win.





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Above: Andy Bean made seven birdies in 11 holes while in the final group on Sunday.

Above right: Payne Stewart shot a record-breaking 30 on the back nine to take the lead in the first round in 1984.

four majors with two seconds (to Tom Watson at the Masters and British Open), a third at the PGA and a tie for 10th at the U.S. Open. He was still the man to beat any week he teed it up, even at the Memorial, where his attention to every detail of the tournament operations was nearly all consuming. In 1984, he became the first repeat winner of the Memorial, but it would not be a stretch to say that it was unexpected, considering he was 44 years old and two years removed from his last PGA TOUR title, the '82 Colonial. Furthermore, Nicklaus was in the midst of his fourth lean season since his last



major title, the 1980 PGA, constituting the longest drought of his professional career, and, in fact, the '84 campaign was his first since 1959 in which he did not have at least one top 10 in a major championship.

The path to those victories also could not have been more different. The first he acquired with the typical Nicklausian steadiness, the second with a brilliant flourish of which he was always capable but seldom needed to summon—and a flourish of which few thought Nicklaus was still capable.

“I don’t want to say I surprised myself, but I was pleased that I could do what it took to win a tournament,” Nicklaus recalls. “In my mind I always felt that way, but you still have to go do it.”

The Golden Bear still had plenty of good golf in him when the ninth Memorial Tournament commenced on May 24, 1984, though it was now obvious even to the man himself that winning golf was eluding him with increasing frequency. Years later in his autobiography, *My Story*, he verified this, writing, “there was no ducking the fact that the Jack Nicklaus of the early 1980s was not the golfer of a decade earlier.”

The '84 season was shaping up much like the previous year—with nothing new for the trophy



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Above: Nicklaus and Andy Bean were tied at 280 going into their three-hole playoff.

Above right: Jack and Barbara with Jack's second Memorial Tournament trophy.

case—when Nicklaus arrived at Muirfield Village that spring. But he put himself in position to change that with his typical truculence and familiar brilliance.

An opening 69 left him two behind the leaders, Bob Murphy, Bob Gilder and Payne Stewart, who shot a record 30 on the outward nine. A second-round 70 was one of just nine rounds under par amid winds gusting to 30 mph. Ben Crenshaw also shot 70, and his 138 total led the Bear by a stroke.

Nicklaus still wasn't in front after a third-round 71. Chip Beck claimed the first 54-hole lead of his career at 68-209, one better than the host. A sparkling 67 allowed Andy Bean, at 213, to join Sunday's final group.

Bean on the final day looked like the man to



beat with a scorching stretch of seven birdies in 11 holes, and he caught Nicklaus at 9-under par with just two to play while Beck fell back. Then Nicklaus did something, well, un-Bearable. He drove out of bounds. His tee shot at the par-4 17th hole strayed so far right that it landed on the cart path and caromed onto the wooden deck of a home adjacent to the course. Undaunted, Nicklaus collected himself, split the fairway with his next drive, hit a 4-iron to 25 feet and buried the putt for an amazing bogey.

One down now, he needed a great drive at 18. Instead, he blocked another tee ball, this one coming to rest in an awkward lie in heavy rough. Conceding nothing, the Bear muscled an 8-iron close to the green, chipped to 5 feet and converted for par. Bean, after knocking his approach to the back fringe, left himself a slick 4-footer for par and the win. He was too firm, however, with the right-breaking putt, and his ball brushed the left edge of the hole. He and Nicklaus were tied at 280.

On the second go around at 17, Nicklaus couldn't coax in a 6-foot birdie putt, but Bean misread again, this time from nary 3 feet. The errant putt allowed the Golden Bear to notch his 70th PGA TOUR victory.

"I don't like to win on somebody else's misses, [but] I played well all week," Nicklaus said in the aftermath. "[The Memorial] is the tournament I dearly love and am proud to win again. It means more to me than any other tournament, including the majors, but in a different way."

In a way that truly goes without saying. MT

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