

The Great White Shark's Journey

By Stephen Bryant



Unlike many contemporary players who grip a club before they learn to walk, nobody knew where Greg Norman, the young man with a thirst for adventure, striking blond hair and bronzed skin was headed.

As a youth and early teen, Norman's attention was on everything but golf. The water captivated his imagination, and when he wasn't swimming, boating, fishing or surfing, he was on the rugby and Australian Rules fields in Townsville, Australia, playing two of the most physical team sports possible and excelling at both.

After he and his family moved to Brisbane, he chose one day to follow his mother Toini to the Virginia Golf Club a few miles from their home.

It was 1970, and like all active 15-year-old boys, he couldn't sit still. He was looking for something to fill his time after caddying for his mom in a morning round with her friends. Following her round, he asked if he could borrow her clubs and set out on his own.

"So while Mum and her playing partners retired to the clubhouse for their after-match social time, Greg wandered onto the course to start unraveling the mysteries of golf. A few went straight, a few went over the fence and a few more were badly miss-hit. But every now and then, he managed to make proper contact. He wanted more of those."

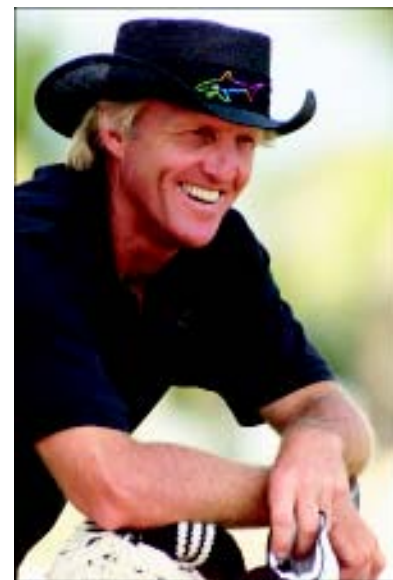
Two years removed from that day at Virginia Golf Club, he was a scratch player.

For the next few years, he spent time working as an Aus-

tralian PGA trainee, playing amateur and open tournaments throughout Australia before turning professional in 1976 — just six years after caddying for his mother.

His professional playing career began in 1976 in a \$15,000 tournament at Bateman's Bay. He finished third, and the following week finished third again in the \$18,000 Australian Open in Keperra. His third entry earned him yet another top-10 finish in the New South Wales Open. But it was his fourth event that would begin to define his career.

The 1976 West Lakes Classic in Adelaide was the first of the "big money" titles on the Australian circuit that year. The East Course at The Grange Golf Club in Australia's cathedral city is where Greg Norman became a household name, and it's also a spot on Norman's golfing resume where he went from being merely confident in his abilities to knowing that he could compete with the world's best players. In the event were David Graham, Graham Marsh, Bruce



Crampton, Bruce Devlin and many other internationally-known players. Norman was paired with Crampton in the opening round, and the two drew a late starting time, well after the rookie Norman learned of fellow Australian John Clifford's course-record 67.

What was Norman's thought process regarding Clifford's outstanding play? "That's a pretty good score," he recalls telling himself. "I'll have to go out and beat it."

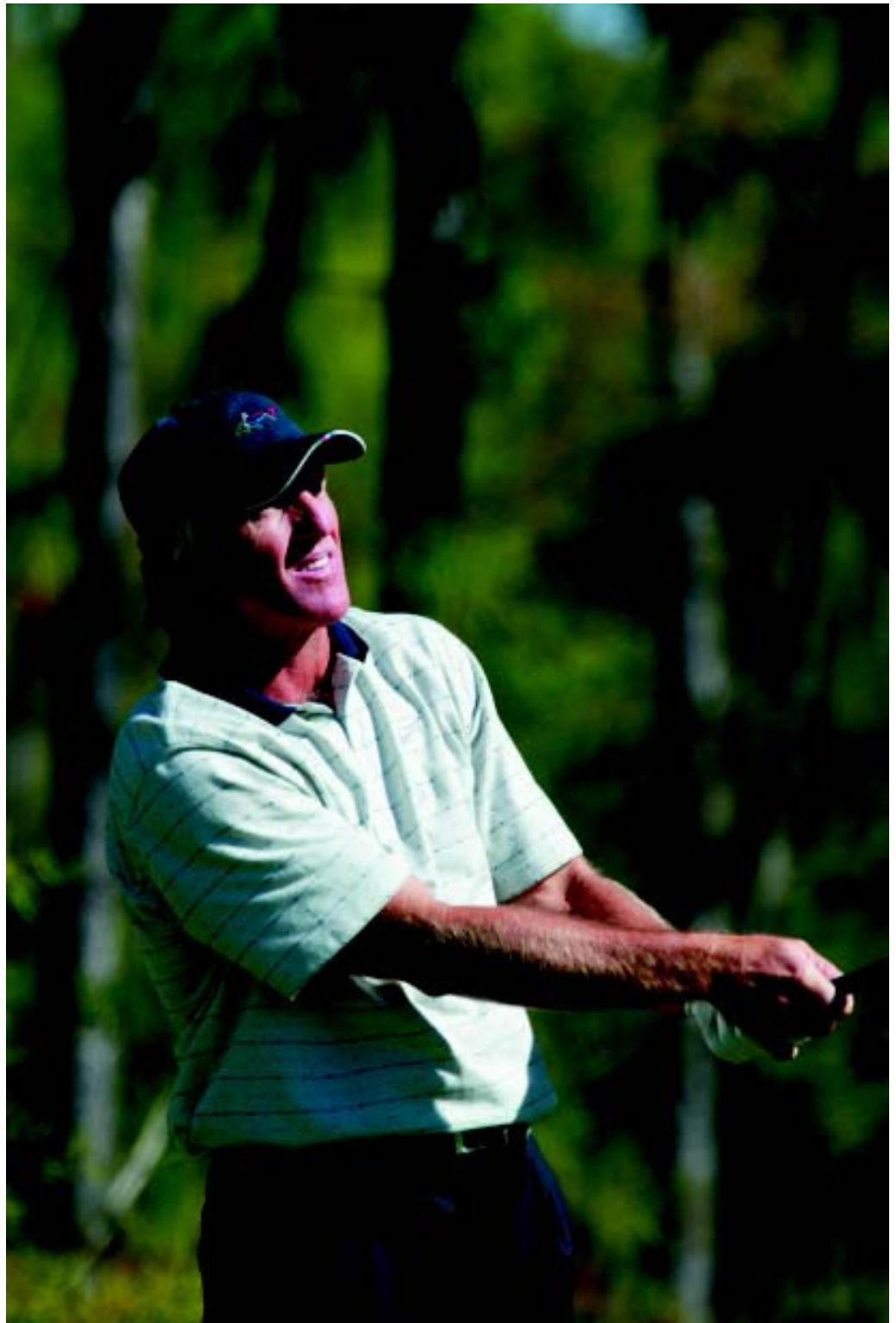
He did exactly that. His 64 destroyed the hours-old record and thrust him into national newspaper headlines. It also firmly positioned him in a situation that he was completely unfamiliar with — protecting a three-shot lead over three more days against a field the caliber of which he had never faced before.

Not only did he protect the lead, he held off a hard-charging David Graham in the final round, finishing with 74 to win by five over the highly successful veteran. His first-place check of \$7,000, coupled with the \$2,000 he had won in the previous three weeks, not only amounted to the largest sum of money Norman had ever seen, but it also allowed him to travel from tournament to tournament without worries of covering his expenses.

In 1977, Norman's second year as a professional, he won twice — first in Italy at the Martini International and next in Japan at the Kuzuhz International. His foray into the world of major competition came in an event that he would eventually capture twice, but this time his performance in the British Open at Turnberry he shot 78-72-74, 14 over and missing the cut.

He closed the 1970s with 10 victories in far-flung places like Fiji and Hong Kong, in addition to triumphs in his native-Australia and Europe.

The 1980s would be particularly rewarding for Norman. He became a household name, and he married Laura Andrassy, who 15 months later give birth to their first child Morgan-Leigh and three years later to Gregory. As the Norman family grew, so too did the family trophy case. Norman won an average of five tournaments a year he got the nickname of the Great White Shark, which made him one of sports most recognizable icons.



It was 1981 and Norman's first appearance at Augusta National Golf Club for The Masters Tournament. His opening-round 69 made him the leader in the clubhouse, and while the assembled American scribes searched through their media guides and quizzed their European counterparts as to who this kid from Australia was, they somehow were inadvertently led to believe that Norman's hobby back home was shooting sharks.

From that, an editor with the Augusta Chronicle wrote the following headline: "Great White Shark Leads at Augusta."

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An image was born.

As history shows, Norman would not win at Augusta — and never has — but he played the last two rounds in the last group of the day, paired with Jack Nicklaus and eventual winner Tom Watson.

The 1981 Masters was special to Norman because of the nickname but also because at the conclusion of the final round, he proposed to Laura.

Though he would win 50 times around the world in the 1980s, clearly, one win stood out above the others. Nine years after missing the cut in his first major championship at Turnberry in Scotland, the man now known as the Great White Shark returned and captured the 115th British Open Championship, primarily on the strength of his second-round 63. He won seven times on the U.S. PGA Tour in the 1980s, and won three Australian Open championships.

As great as Norman's decade of the 1980s was it was the 90s that defined his career. He started early in 1990 with a victory at the Doral-Ryder Open, firing a 62 on Sunday, and then defeat Mark Calcavecchia, Paul Azinger and Tim Simpson with an eagle on the first playoff hole. He won 11 times in the 90s on the PGA Tour, and again captured the British Open Championship in 1993, this one at Royal St. George's.

In 1994 at The Players Championship on the demanding Pete Dye-designed Stadium Course at TPC Sawgrass, Norman annihilated the field by recording rounds of 63, 67, 67 and 67 to set a tournament record that hasn't been beaten, or even approached.

The eventual winner of 87 worldwide tournaments, Norman has racked up many accomplishments. Among them are:

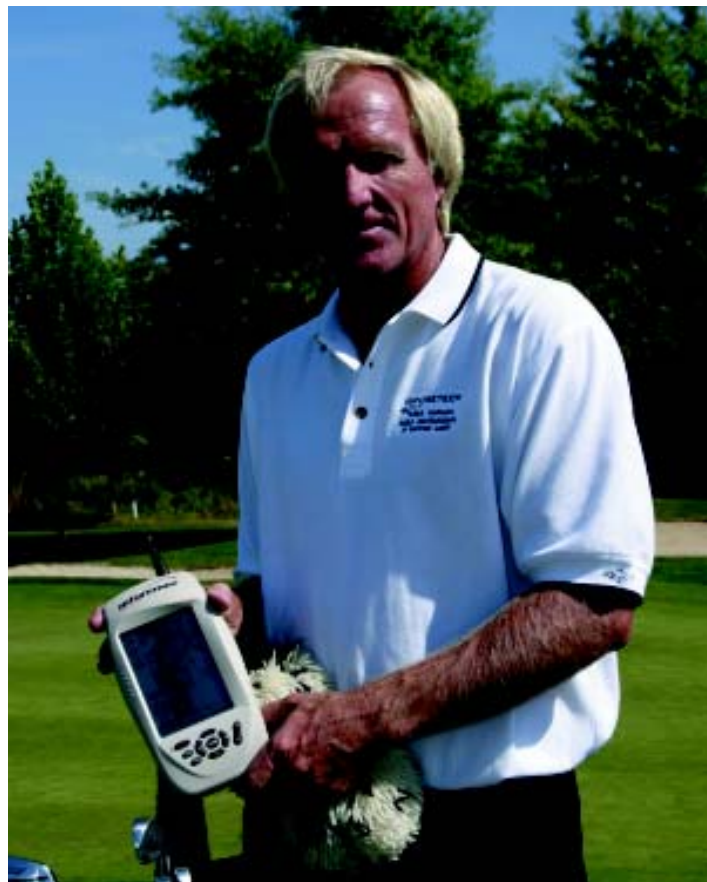
- * 331 weeks as the World's No. 1 ranked player
- * Two-time British Open Champion (1986, 1993)
- * Top 10 finishes in 29 majors (36 percent)
- * 20-time U.S. PGA Tour winner
- * Five-time Australian Open Champion
- * Five-time Byron Nelson Award winner (88, 90, 93, 94, 95)
- * Three-time Vardon Trophy Award winner (1989, 1990, 1994)
- * Three-time Arnold Palmer Award winner (1986, 1990, 1995)
- * 1995 Player of the Year
- * 1995 PGA Player of the Year
- * First \$10 million winner in PGA Tour history

Norman continues to work at both his game and a business that promises to succeed long after his playing days are behind him.

He is chairman and CEO of Great White Shark Enterprises, a multinational corporation with business ranging from golf course design, community development, apparel, wine, event management, licensing and merchandising.

Norman course design currently has 41 courses open for play with 26 additional projects in various stages of development throughout the world.

Norman recently accepted a seat on the Board of Directors of GPS Indus-



Greg Shows his Inforemer hand held GPS Unit

tries Inc., a provider of GPS-based system that will offer its product to many Norman-designed courses.

Surrounding several Norman-designed courses are Medallist Developments, a joint venture of MacQuarie Bank and Great White Shark Enterprises. Through the development of golf course driven real estate communities, Medallist further represents Norman's creativity and diversity. With expertise in the permit-

An Inforemer hand held GPS unit clipped to Greg Norman's Golf Bag





ting, design, zoning, construction, marketing and sales processes, Medallist manages all aspects of development.

Also included in the diverse corporate portfolio is Greg Norman Collection, a leading worldwide marketer and distributor of men's sportswear, golf apparel and accessories. Established in 1992, Greg Norman Collection is inspired by Norman and reflects his adventurous spirit and confident, independent style. The Collection began with a golf-inspired knitwear line and has since become a complete lifestyle collection, identified with the four-color shark logo.

Greg Norman Estates wine is a manifestation of Norman's position as a lifestyle icon. In its first year, Greg Norman Estates exceeded expectations. Wine Spectator awarded top ratings to all of the Greg Norman Estates wines it reviewed, including three 90-plus point ratings, the most recent being a 94 for the 1998 Reserve Shiraz. Greg Norman Estates has grown to be the leading Australian wine, accounting for three out of every five bottles sold in the premium category.

Great White Shark Enterprises also counts among its core competencies an award-winning Internet site, Shark.com.

And while Norman gained his fame by playing in golf tournaments, he is well versed in managing them. He is host of the Franklin Templeton Shootout, which was founded in 1989 for the benefit of children's charities. The Shootout has raised nearly \$10 million for charity including the National Childhood Cancer Foundation, of which the Normans are patrons.

