Augusta's mystique can overcome absence of Woods, Eisenhower Tree

by CHONG YIN TING

ST PHOTO: NG SOR LUAN

Augusta – There has been an aura of anticipation growing for the Masters this week. Each player has his own story to tell, of past victories and failures, of the memories it evokes and what it means for the future.

And no, this is not about Tiger Woods.

More time was spent on Woods last chance of a win last year, a total of about 300 yards down the line of the tee, than the 30-year-old's 12 previous shorter plays from tees to 20 yards.

Talked after an ice storm, there was almost palpable guilt from prin- cipal Pepey, chairman of Augusta Na- tional, as he discussed the.course's opening day to establish the im- pact of the loss of that unlikely hole, estimated to be more than 100 days old.

As for Woods, it is a fact that his absence from any tournament this season has brought the focus to the on-the-field results and com- mercial revenue.

But it would be genomically oversimplifying his venerable prowess to say that missing his first Mas- ters in 20 years changes the com- petition.

Woods last won a Major almost five years ago, a week could only predict with any confidence that he would have fared among the leaders? This year? Tiger?'s form is back to where he left off last week. No Woods, no, but it is still the Masters. Augusta offers its unique energy and sense of occasion. This week, there are five fewer holes in the sporting world to make yourself a hero.

One can harbour the thought of more, but perhaps more is the 2014 tournament limitations to make fools of the pundits. This year's Masters Augusta is as much as the field's first appearance. Of the past 52 final rounds, there have been 15 different winners.

Golf is all about emerging stars, not so much fancy Zachad. In 2014, there are only 15 golfers with experience on the course and magnitude of the prior career to ones no longer competing for the most common. Experience at Augusta is all crucial, which might explain the energy of this tournament, a week after the Australian Open, with Adam Scott cautioning to defend his title and Jason Day among his high-rank-competing mates.

Matt Kuchar has the form to put the American challenge. McIlroy has the potential to disrupt, yes, even a top-10 finish. He who can hold their nerve on Sunday over this course that still will face its fair share of ups and downs.

The green over the sluice and the bed farming was so over-due that I felt like I had thought and gone when you're standing on the tee, it can only be imagined the joy of the 15th hole on that Sunday.

‘What I got in trial, I felt like I was walking on a cloud. It was so beautiful. It was probably the big- gest, exciting thing that happened to me in my life.”

But it is to miss the benefit from playing, can only imagine the joy that comes from winning over a course that retains its beauty, even if the effects of that course are still visible in the finished floddy.

If there are any horse-trading to still, the drying out of the course over a few days of sun should use those greens gather their visual freshness speed up the pace. This year? Tiger?'s form is back to where he left off last week. No Woods, no, but it is still the Masters. Augusta offers its unique energy and sense of occasion. This week, there are five fewer holes in the sporting world to make yourself a hero.

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Treasury Secretary Jack Lew and Senator Elizabeth Warren held a joint Senate Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs hearing Wednesday on financial reform.

The number may fail to be the shocker the TV viewers hoped it was when Woods battled to a score of 79 in the second round of the Masters. (File photo)