

Gi

GOLF INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE

228-PAGE
OPEN ISSUE

ESSENTIAL READING FROM THE BEST IN THE GAME

60-PAGE OPEN PREVIEW

PRETTY AS A PICTURE:
18-HOLE PHOTO TOUR OF
THE OPEN CHAMPIONSHIP VENUE

DUEL IN THE SUN: WATSON & NICKLAUS
WENT BALLISTIC IN '77

STORMIN' NORMAN: WAS GREG'S 63
THE GREATEST ROUND IN HISTORY?

THE PRICE WAS RIGHT:
EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH '94
CHAMPION, NICK PRICE

THE AILSA BITES BACK: HOW THE
COURSE HAS BEEN TOUGHENED FOR TIGERS

TURNBERRY!

THE COUNTDOWN TO GOLF'S OLDEST AND
GREATEST MAJOR CHAMPIONSHIP STARTS HERE

THE BEST INSTRUCTION ON THE PLANET...

IT'S ALL ABOUT PUTTING
Jonathan Yarwood provides a tour perspective

INSTANT GAME IMPROVEMENT
Andrew Hall with the essential lessons

POWER PLAY What you can learn
from the mega-hitting **Alvaro Quiros**

Gi BUSINESS

IN CONVERSATION WITH CHUBBY CHANDLER • PROPERTY • MEMORABILIA • MOTORING

32-PAGE EQUIPMENT BUYING GUIDE

DRIVER TEST WITH TONY JOHNSTONE • CUSTOM FITTING • TOP GEAR

TOP WRITING

PETER ALLISS
ROBERT GREEN
PAUL MAHONEY
DR FELIX SHANK
HUGH McILVANNEY
TOM COX
THE MAJOR!

ISSUE NO. 89 JUNE/JULY '09 • £4.25

www.golfinternationalmag.com



A LEAP OF FAITH

RUNNER-UP IN 1982 AT TROON, AND AGAIN TO SEVE'S SUBLIME MAJESTY IN '88 AT ROYAL LYTHAM, NICK PRICE ALWAYS BELIEVED HE HAD THE GAME TO CAPTURE GOLF'S OLDEST CHAMPIONSHIP. AND WHEN HE FINALLY GOT BOTH HANDS ON THE CLARET JUG AT TURNBERRY IN 1994, HE DID SO WITH A FINISH THAT REMAINS ONE OF THE MOST EXCITING IN OPEN HISTORY. RICHARD SIMMONS TALKED TO HIM

In any ranking of the greatest putts of all time, the weaving 50-footer Nick Price drained across Turnberry's 17th green – the eagle putt that secured him the 1994 Open – is right up there. "Gotta be in my top 1, that's for sure," says the man who was wielding the Bobby Grace 'Fat Lady Swings' mallet. "It was the biggest putt I've ever made in my life, although I'd have to say the 15-footer I made for birdie on 16 was the critical one that set up the victory."

Sweden's Jesper Parnevik (paired, intriguingly, with Jack Nicklaus the first two days and Tom Watson over the weekend) had been three shots in front standing on the 72nd tee, before a poorly judged second to the final green and the histrionics of Price contrived to see him finish in second place, a stroke out of luck.

Having won the US PGA Championship in 1992 at Bellerive, the 37-year-old Zimbabwean would use his victory at Turnberry as a springboard to a hat-trick of majors, with the PGA title at Southern Hills in August, where he obliterated the field with the quality of his iron play and cruised home by six shots from Corey Pavin. Given the sheer consistency of his game, it's hardly surprising to learn that Price topped the PGA Tour money list in 1993 and '94, setting a new earnings record each time, and during that time spent 43 weeks at No 1 in the world rankings. Through the '90s, Price was arguably the best player on the planet, recording 15 PGA Tour wins, a wad of international titles and, of course, those three majors. At the age of 46, he was inducted into the World Golf Hall of Fame in 2003.

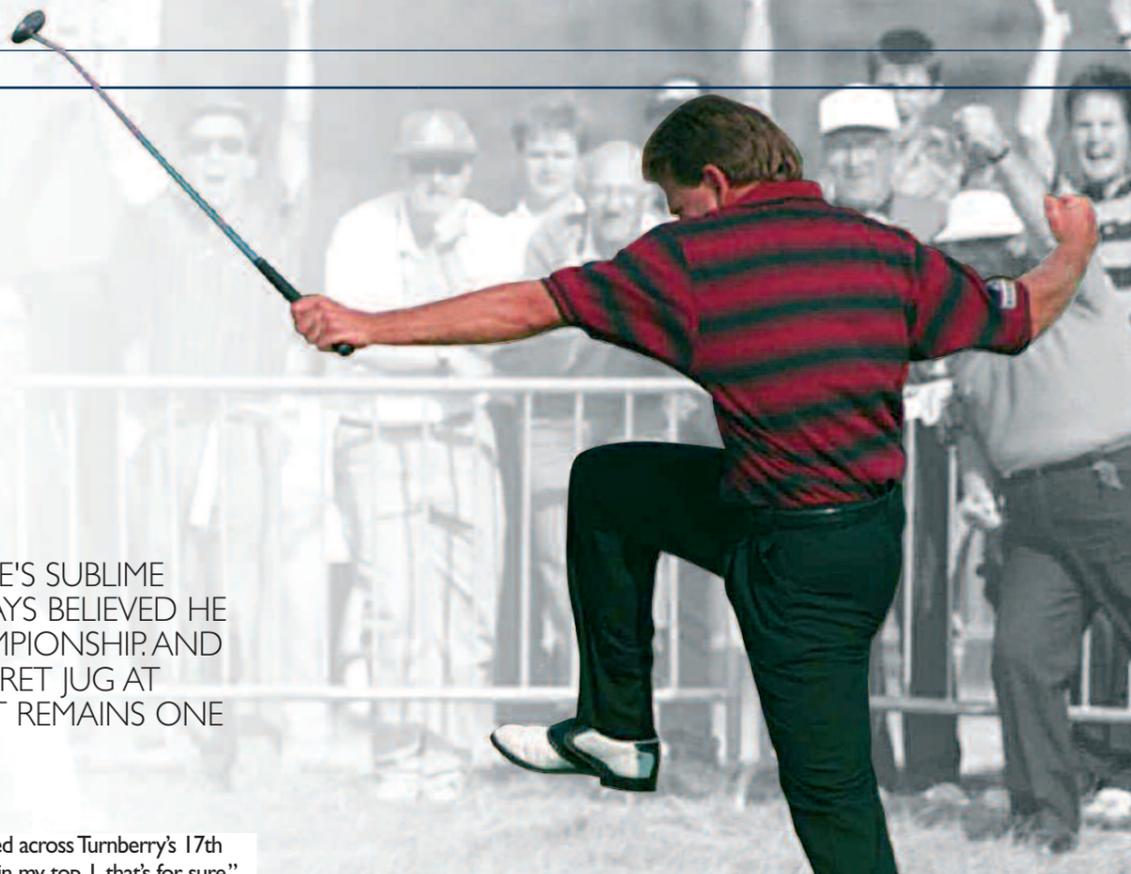
After a spell in the (then) Rhodesian Air Force, the former World Junior Champion had taken his first steps as a pro on the Sunshine Tour in South Africa in 1977, then played for a spell in Europe before heading to the United States in 1983. Having played college golf together, Price became an early disciple of David Leadbetter, and by the time he went head-to-head with Seve at Royal Lytham in '88 he was regarded by his peers as one of the finest ball-strikers in the history of the game.

"You can count Tom Watson and Ben Hogan as being right up there with Nick, but I'm telling you there is no one who was better at his peak," says fellow countryman Tony Johnstone. "The sound of the ball coming off the clubface was just incredible, like a rifle shot. At the USPGA in '94, I can remember going to watch him on the range, and he was just firing these shots down the range. There was a big tree out there, the trunk was four foot across, and Nicky pulls out his driver and says 'Watch this Oves [T]'s nickname among his close friends', and he nails the trunk of the tree dead centre. Then he did it again. And again. The guy was a machine."

Although Price continues to compete (he won his first Champions Tour event in 39 starts at the 2009 Outback Steakhouse in April), family and business interests take priority over touring, and he has declined his place in the field at Turnberry this July. In fact, he's been an absentee since 2005, indicating that he would rather his spot went to a young golfer capable of perhaps "doing a Nicky Price" and enjoying a career-altering moment in the game's greatest championship.

"A lot of people have said, why don't I go back to the Open or the PGA because I won?" he said. "I say, well, I can't win, I would rather give my spot to a guy who might win it. Maybe there's a 25-year-old who sneaks into the championship like I did [at Troon] in '82, and has a week that might change his whole life. I certainly don't want to go to a major championship trying to make the cut. Geez, I would rather go fishing for two weeks, you know."

Those sentiments will surprise no one who knows him. Not only is Nick Price one of the finest players to have graced the game, he is also regarded among his peers as one of the finest ambassadors of his profession. "I put my friendship with Nick way above my professional regard for him as a player," says Johnstone. "As a player he just pissed you off, because he was so good and made you feel so utterly inadequate as a ball-striker. But as a friend he is one of the finest human beings I have had the pleasure to have known."



When you reflect on the happenings at Turnberry in 1994, now 15 years ago, what most sticks in your mind?

Well, strange as it may seem the frustrating thing for me, when I look back, was I really didn't hit the ball as well as I had in the early part of the year. My short game was really, really good, and my confidence was high. I had one of those weeks where you knew that if you could just keep hanging in there, something was going to happen. Although I didn't have the control with my long game that I'd been used to in the previous three months, I just hung in there the whole week. Sunday came along and I was behind the whole day. I was missing greens – I think I missed the 10th, 13th and 14th – and just wasn't hitting it flush. But I up-and-downed it a few times, made pars and kept going. In the back of my mind I knew, going down the stretch, that this was going to be as good a chance as I would have of winning the Open.

Jesper Parnevik has said he was so focused on trying to finish with three birdies he missed the leaderboards. As you headed into those final three holes, I'm assuming you knew the score?

Oh, I had been watching the leaderboards the whole way. And Jesper was playing better than anyone else that day. He had basically taken the bull by the horns and was running. I knew he was going to be the guy to beat. As long as he didn't stumble anywhere, he was playing better than the rest of us and so I knew that when I got to the turn I had to make some birdies on the back nine. I made a really good birdie on 12, which sort of got my hopes up, then scrambled 13 and 14. I had an outside chance of a two at 15, and then birdied 16, which was

really the key. That's what gave me the opportunity to win and gave me the confidence to do so.

That putt at 17...how vividly do you remember it?

The first thing about 17 was I had a good break off the tee, as my ball skipped around that fairway bunker, and then we were in between a 4- and a 5-iron. It was a little downwind, and Squeak [caddie Jeff 'Squeaky' Medlen] and I agreed that because the pin was cut on the front right-hand portion of that green, you really didn't want to wind up short or right, where you can get caught in the swales. So the play was to go long and left, and I hit a beautiful 4-iron in there. When I got to the ball I saw the line so beautifully. It wasn't a complicated putt, it was going to break left to right, down the slope, perhaps six inches outside left edge. It was a question of speed. Nobody ever looks to make a putt of that length. I was trying to leave it dead for a birdie and move on. That was basically all I was trying to do.

What was it, 50 feet?

It must have been all of that. I hit the most beautiful putt, and it was breaking the way I saw it. Then, about three feet out, it hit a spike mark, and it kind of knocked it a little off line. Instead of going in the middle of the hole it just caught enough of the right edge. The worst thing about holing a putt like that is you want it to be on the 72nd hole, not the 71st. You get so excited, and then you still have another hole to play. And I hadn't played the 18th well all week. So I had to suck it up and get disciplined. And I think all of the experiences I had had – previous Opens, winning the PGA in '92 – it all came to the fore when I got over my tee shot on 18. My heart rate was way up there, and I had to calm myself down, choose the right club and play what was, to me, one of the hardest holes all week.

And you played it by the textbook?

I hit the most beautiful 3-iron off the tee that went about 265 yards. I mean I just absolutely killed it. Obviously I

The eagle has landed: As that sensational putt on 17 inched its way to the hole, so Nick Price realised his dream of winning the Open Championship

PHOTOGRAPH BY GETTY IMAGES.COM



“In 1982 I had my left hand on the trophy, and in 1988 I had my right hand on the trophy. Now I’ve finally got both hands on it, and boy, does it feel good.”

was adrenalinized-up or whatever, but I hit it absolutely dead nuts on, with a little draw into the fairway. I played the hole with a discipline that I obviously needed, but also that reflected what I had learned over the years from all of my mistakes and also some of the wins I had had.

Is it possible to put into words how you felt when you knocked in the putt for par?

Just absolute relief, you know. Having come close twice, and to finally break through and win, it’s hard to put into words. I was just ecstatic. The worst thing about 18 was I really wanted to cosy my first putt up there about an inch or two away, so I wouldn’t have to sweat. It ended up about 18 inches, which was about 14 inches longer than I wanted.

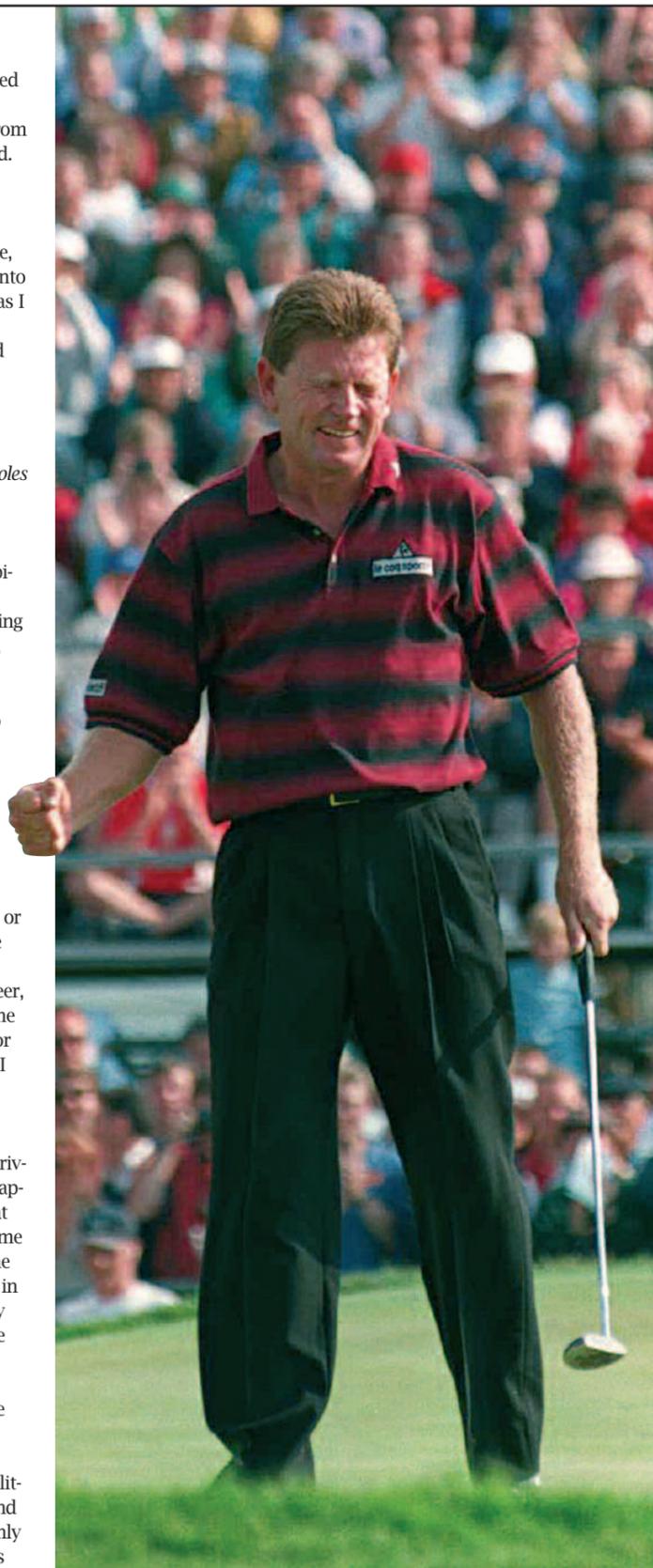
You first came to our attention in the 1982 Open at Troon, where, at 25, you led by three strokes with six holes to play. How much do you remember of that shoot-out with Tom Watson?

Yeah, that was totally different. I was inexperienced. I had played beautifully for 67 holes or so of the championship and I was so confident that day I was going to win. I birdied 10, 11 and 12, and I can remember walking off the 12th green, I said to my caddie, ‘Right, that’s it, we’re going to win this now. We’ve done all the hard work’. Famous last words. You learn over a period of time that you can never be too cocky and never be too sure.

You later said second place was right for you in ’82, that you didn’t think you could have handled the pressure had you won. Do you still believe that? Are young players today better able to cope with the pressure?

It all depends on the individual. If you look at a Sergio or a Tiger, for them to win at 25 is not a big deal because they have already accomplished so much and won a number of tournaments. At 25, where I was in my career, I think I had just three victories to my credit, one on the European Tour and two in South Africa. To win a major at that stage would have been a huge leap for me and I think it would have taken a long time to recover.

In hindsight that experience in ’82 did you a lot of good? Absolutely. And I can remember, the next day I was driving back to London from Troon, and I turned that disappointment into a positive. I said to myself, OK, look, at 25 there are not too many golfers around with the game to win a major – you had a chance, you blew it. But the positive was I knew then that I had the quality to win in a major championship. And also the confidence in my ability to win. But that one didn’t sting as much as the loss in 1988. That really hurt me, because I played so beautifully all week, and the difference was – and he would be the first to tell you – is that Seve made more putts than me in the last round. Tee to green I outplayed him. In hindsight, had I won the Open in ’88, I think that could have sparked my run of great play a little earlier. You know, in the early ’90s I was on fire, and I could well have extended that period, because the only thing that was lacking in my game in the late-’80s was



confidence. I had everything else.

You’ve said that after you and Seve made eagle threes at the 7th (leaving a three-putting Faldo behind) it was as well as you’ve played in a major championship and the remaining 11 holes gave you memories to savour forever. Every professional golfer relishes and looks forward to the final day at a major championship when you are going toe to toe with one of the world’s best players. And I was just loving it. I was in control of my emotions, I was in control of my golf swing. And Seve knew that if he made a mistake, I was going to pounce on it. And I knew that if I made a mistake he was going to pounce on it. So it was a wonderful day of punch and counter-punch. And I still to this day think he hit one of the prettiest shots I’ve ever seen under the circumstances, the 9-iron he hit to four inches at the 16th.

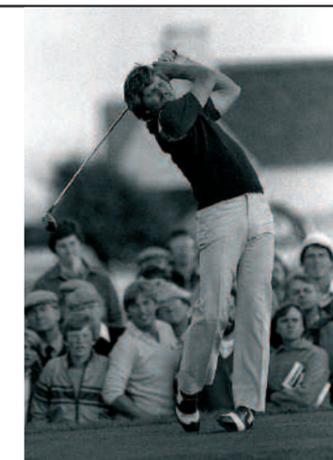
It was a turning point in your career that you left Lytham vowing to work on your putting?

That was when it really slapped me in the face, you know. I thought about it and if I had putted like he did I would have won that Open by four or five strokes. I knew then that was the only thing lacking in my game, under pressure, was a good putter, so I went out to revamp my whole stroke and revamp everything with regard to my putting. It was a learning experience.

Turnberry has a reputation of being one of the easier Open layouts – do you agree with that?

Well, it all depends on the weather. If the weather’s bad at Turnberry, it’s probably one of the hardest. If you look

‘Sheer relief’ is how Price describes the immediate feeling he experienced upon holing for a four at the 72nd to become the Open Champion in ’94. “The worst thing about 18 was that I wanted to cosy my first putt up there dead, to within inches. But I left it 18 inches away, which was about 14 inches longer than I wanted!” (Right): At just 25, Price led by three with six holes to play at Royal Troon. “I told my caddie as we left the 12th green that we had it in the bag,” he says. “Famous last words. In this game you learn that you can never be too cocky and never be too sure.”



PHOTOGRAPHY BY GETTYIMAGES.COM

at the three Opens, with the exception of the one that Greg won in ’86, where they had some bad weather the first couple of days and he shot that amazing 63 in the second round, with the exception of that the weather has been beautiful. We had great weather – maybe a little wind and drizzle one day – but otherwise short-sleeve weather all week. Perfect conditions for scoring, like it was in ’77 with Nicklaus and Watson.

You shot 12 under and have said since that you are amazed how low you went. What was the key to scoring?

My short game was just so sharp that week. I drove the ball OK, I didn’t hit my irons particularly well that week, didn’t have the control I usually have, and I felt like I was always behind – which I was, pure and simple. And one of the most gratifying things was to win from behind, which I had never really done. I was always a good front-runner. Once I poked my nose in front I could manage my game properly and strategise really well. I was never a great charger, but to come charging from three shots down with five holes to play, or six holes to play, was huge for me. Especially when you consider my previous track record in the Open.

How do you rate the Ailsa Course among Open venues?

Of all the golf courses on the rota, on a summer’s day with the sun shining, Turnberry is the most beautiful venue by far. When you look up at the hotel and then out to sea there’s Ailsa Craig and the lighthouse, a lot of holes on the ocean. It’s so picturesque. Above all, I think it’s the prettiest. The fact that it’s a par-70, people tend to look at it as the easiest one, but I don’t think it is. I’d hate to put my finger on it but the records have all been made at St Andrews, so history would say St Andrews yields itself to lower scoring when the weather’s good. But it has an ambience and a presence that is very hard to find in other links courses.

Have you seen the changes that have been made and what are your own thoughts?

I’ve heard that a few tees have been lengthened, a few fairway bunkers added, and I know they’ve played with 16. Putting on a few yards isn’t exactly unusual in this



PHOTOGRAPHY BY GETTYIMAGES.COM

“The loss in 1988 really hurt me, because I played so beautifully all week, and the difference was – and he would be the first to tell you – is that Seve made more putts than me in the last round. In hindsight, had I won the Open in '88, I think that could have sparked my run of great play earlier...”

day and age – with the modern equipment, that's what was needed to be done. The way the guys hit the ball now they have to do things like that. If you're a long hitter of the ball you can cope with the changes, but if you're on the shorter side, like I am and players like Mark O'Meara, it's very hard to compete.

If you were to compose an 'identikit' image of the perfect golfer to win an Open at Turnberry, what would be the order of importance in terms of driving, irons play, short game, putting?

Look no further than Tiger Woods! [laughs]

Taking Tiger out of the equation, what are the qualities you look for in a winner?

I'd look for a player who can strategise really well. Because that's what you have to do on an Open Championship course. It's not a question of hitting driver all the time – look at Tiger at Hoylake. If it's firm and fast and fiery, you have to control the distance you hit the ball off the tee.

That's where I think links courses differ and hold themselves above all other major championship golf courses, because the game starts on the tee. And I'm not just talking about the ability to hit it straight down the middle – you can hit it straight all day and if you've got the wrong club you'll be in pot bunkers and end up shooting five or six over par. It's about controlling the distance that you hit off the tee and hitting it straight. The US Open courses, and on a lot of the other ones, it doesn't matter how far you hit it as long as you

hit it straight. At the Open, you have the wind from one direction one day, carrying it 30 yards over a pot bunker, the next day you are into the wind and a driver now runs into it.

They have added 20-odd fairway bunkers?

So they have tightened up that aspect of it, which is a good thing. You have to play a links golf course from the fairway.

Why have you chosen not to return to the Open at Turnberry again this year?

Well, first and foremost, my summer time with my family is of the utmost importance to me. My kids are at an age where this will probably be the last summer that we'll have as a family together. My son will be off at college next year. And to be honest, the last one I played in, 2005 at St Andrews, I really knew that I couldn't win it. And I'm the kind of person that, if I don't feel I can win, I'm not going to play. So it's a twofold decision – no, maybe threefold, because they have changed the golf courses, too. If the courses were the same I could have memories of playing the way when I did in '94, which is not going to be the case. But you know, I'd be hitting clubs into those greens – well I don't even want to think about it. I'd rather give another spot from qualifying to a young guy who might do a 'Nick Price', as I did in '82. But the main reason is I want to spend the summer with my family.

You have said 'Golf is more than a game. It's an endeavour steeped in history and deserving of every respect.' Do you think that those looking after the interests of the game today show it that respect?

Well, first of all they let the cat out of the bag with the equipment, and so what's happening to golf courses – this constant tinkering and lengthening – is a reaction to the advances in equipment. This could have been very easily resolved if they had addressed the equipment issue correctly several years ago. Since around '96 and

'97, we have seen the equipment overpower the old golf courses. People say 'Yes, but players are a lot fitter and a lot stronger these days'. That's absolute BS. Greg Norman, Seve, Nick Faldo, myself – we were all strong and fit guys, we all hit the ball a long way when we were using wooden clubs and soft balata balls. If Greg had these big-headed drivers and the modern ball in his prime, he would have hit the ball as far as Tiger and Phil Mickelson and any one of those guys. The equipment we were using just didn't allow you to swing and hit the ball as hard as these guys do now. So for people to suggest it's all about fitness is absolute crap. It may account for 3-4%. Norman and Faldo were Olympic-calibre athletes. It's all about the equipment today.

So what should be done?

First, I'd restrict the size of the driver heads, and make sure there was no 'trampoline' effect on them. I would like to see the clubhead smaller, back to a traditional size, 180cc, which would make the sweetspot smaller, and then the guys wouldn't be able to swing at it so hard, because if you miscued it you would go off the planet. I'd make sure the shafts that were used were heavier. Basically, the equipment we were using in the '60s, '70s and '80s would be my standard. No square grooves, no more than 56 degrees of loft on any wedge. Get the

artistry back in the game. Think of Seve with a 56-degree sand-wedge: he was an absolute magician with that club. Then the 58- and 60-degree sand-iron came out and all of that talent he had was nullified, as they can play the same shots with a 60-degree. Bunkers that were ferociously deep in the '70s and '80s are now a doddle for guys to get out with a 60-, 62- and even 64-degree sand-wedge. The fear factor of missing greens is not there any more, particularly with square grooves where the guys can spin the

ball out of light rough.

Will the new Rules coming in January change that at all?

Well, I just hit the new grooves and they don't make a whole lot of difference. Maybe 5% loss of spin, 10% at a squeeze. It's not going to make a huge amount of difference.

I suppose the manufacturers will make a ball that counteracts the rule change anyway?

No, because what happens with the box groove? If you look at the face, there's a 90-degree angle where the groove comes up and meets the clubface. It's that sharp angle, the squared-off shape, is what does all the damage, not the depth of the groove. So what will happen with the new grooves is that players will go through sand-wedges quicker so they always have the sharpness of new grooves. You'll see guys using new sand-wedges every week.

So are the authorities losing out to R&D budgets?

I think they are in a hole, put it that way, when you look at these huge corporations and the money they spend. I think I heard that one year one of the big manufacturers had a \$60 million dollar R&D budget, while the USGA are struggling along on a budget of \$5 million. So who's going to win? I'm not saying the average guy should have

All eyes on Seve: the Monday playoff at Royal Lytham in '88 was all about one man, as Seve produced a brilliant 65 to claim his third Open. Price left Lancashire vowing to work on his putting – for which he would ultimately be rewarded with two USPGA titles, this being the first, at Bellerive, in 1992

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MARC SEROJA/GETTYIMAGES.COM



Price made a happy return to the winners' circle at the Outback Steakhouse event on the Champions Tour in April. (Below): Up close and personal with the man Price regards as the greatest player in the history of the game — and, by a margin, the man to beat at Turnberry

all these clubs taken away — they make the game more fun for average players. But for the pro's, we need to rewind. Look at cricket. One of the great things about cricket — and baseball to a certain degree — is that they use the same equipment as the legends did in years gone by. W.G. Grace was using the same sort of bat, the wickets were the same size and the pitch was 22 yards long. The bats may last a little longer these days, the ball may be more consistent, but just imagine giving Ian Botham a titanium cricket bat three times the size of the old one, four inches longer and three times

lighter! They'd never get the guy out! The bowlers would go berserk, because that ball would come back at them so fast it would kill him. Can you imagine?! They need to do something with the ball, too, bring it back a little. They can sell the big-headed drivers and game-improvement irons all week long for amateurs. But when it comes to the pro game, and the protection of our great old championship golf courses, why don't the R&A and the USGA start putting restrictions on clubs to protect the integrity of our golf courses.

Is it true that in trying to hit the ball further to keep up with the young players you lost your groove towards the end of the '90s?

Absolutely. I played OK and managed to keep going into early 2000, but each year the number of golf courses I felt I could win on just kept on diminishing. And so in an effort to try and hit the ball further and keep up, my game just went awry. Only in the last year and a half has it begun to come back. But it feels like I haven't played properly for five or six years. You know, it's impossible to keep on playing against guys for four days when you're

hitting a drive and 4-iron and he's hitting 8-or 9-iron.

Which aspect of all this new technology has most helped your game?

I wish I could find something! [laughs]. Trying to match the ball with the driver is where I've gained the most. I'm maxed out now with the driver and the ball, and I couldn't hit it any further without sacrificing control. I use a TaylorMade driver and play a Bridgestone ball, and I hit it as far if not further than I ever did. I think when you look at the guys who managed to handle the transition, the Vijays the the Ernies, they were 30 or so when all this new gear came out, and they could adapt to it. When you're in your later 40s when all this happened, it's much harder to adapt to it.

You have just won your first title on the Champions Tour — how do you rate individual aspects of your game today as opposed to when you were at your peak?

That's a hard question. I'm still capable of playing really well in spurts. I can play 27 holes as well as I ever could. But the other 27 holes, and we only play 54-hole tournaments, is sort of like a lucky dip — I never know what's coming out next, as exemplified by the last round recently when I won. Three double-bogeys on my card in the last round! I just don't recognise that sort of inconsistency. I feel like my game is in good shape but I don't work on it the way some of these guys do. There are a lot of players out here whose kids have grown up or gone to college, and they travel with their wives just like they did on the regular tour. And they have nothing else to do other than play golf. They work hard at the game. I just can't do that. I try and do as much as I can but it's limited. It's tough to have the focus when you have a lot going on in your life. I still love playing golf, and I'll always keep on playing while I still enjoy it. I'd play a tournament every week if there was one here at home, but you have to travel and that takes me away from my family. It's hard to be away for any length of time.

Do you get a kick out of competing on the Champions Tour? Is there a special camaraderie?

Yeah, absolutely. The Champions Tour is everything I wanted it to be. You're playing golf with your peers, guys you've respected and admired throughout your career, but it's great fun. Generally speaking guys have an absolute blast out there. They are a few who are grumpy and complain, but generally we are grateful to have this continued opportunity to play golf and compete.

What's a typical day in the life of Nick Price today?

I get up, take my daughter to school. Then I'll go to the golf course we built here, Macarthur, go to the office. Sort out whatever needs sorting out. I'll then either hit golf balls for a bit, or go fishing for the afternoon, until 3.30 when I'll go and watch the kids play sport in the afternoon. And then head home for dinner with the family. Very simple really!

Back in the early '90s, your were one

of a group of players Greg Norman sought out with his plans of a World Tour. What became of all that and why did Greg's plans fall flat then?

[Pauses] I can't really speak for anyone other than myself, but for me at that time I was dead keen for us having a World Tour. That idea was great. For me, all my contracts were coming to an end at the end of 1994, and the World Tour was due to start in 1995, so I had to go to the manufacturers not really knowing what exposure I might get. I was No. 1 in the world, just won two majors, and yet when it came to negotiations with the manufacturers, when I asked them "What are you going to pay me?", it was an unknown. I spoke to Greg about this when he mentioned it to us. I told him it was a roll of the dice. He had just come out of making a lot of money with his Cobra deal, and now this was my opportunity to maximise my earning potential, having played myself into position, and so a crucial time for me. And I couldn't roll the dice by saying yes I'll play the World Tour, but not knowing how much TV time we might get. But the whole concept was a brilliant idea, and we've seen a sort of connotation of it today with the World Golf Championships and so on. It just wasn't the right time for that to happen.

Was his vision pretty much what we have today with the WGC events — or certainly what the top players have given they can pick and choose to play wherever they want?

Here was the thing that was frustrating, for me coming to play from Zimbabwe. The perfect example is the Masters. We never had the world ranking. In 1980, I played my tail off and if there had been a world ranking and/or WGCs, I would have got invited to the Masters and maybe the US Open and the USPGA, through the way I'd played in 1980. But because American golf was so insular, they didn't look at foreigners very much. When I went to my first Masters dinner there were seven of us [International players] — now there are 37 or more. It was so hard to break in. Now, what the WGC events and the World Ranking have achieved, is that guys from Australia, South Africa, Asia, Japan can at least get in to those tournaments and make ranking points and get into these events.

Is there too much money in golf? By that, I really mean is it just too easy for the top players to make so much money quickly that the lure of chasing the big titles has, to some extent, disappeared?

Every generation they say that. They said it in the 1980s and again in the 1990s. You're always going to get the winners winning. Pure and simple. The guys who want to win are going to win. If a guy finishes second and makes a lot of money doing that, he was never going to be a winner anyway. The money is nice and rosy, but it's not going to detract a winner from winning, trust me.

You were one of David Leadbetter's original pupils, and known as one of the finest ball-strikers of your generation. Has ball striking itself become less important than distance, pitching and putting?

Driving the ball now is just so easy compared to what it used to be, with the result there are a lot of good drivers of the ball out there. And subsequently it's now all about how close you hit your irons and how well you putt. Times gone by, the difficulty of the game started on the tee. They've made it a lot easier with these drivers now, to keep the ball in play. Even if it does go in the rough it's not across three fairways — you just don't see those horrible snap-hooks now that you would see in the '70s and '80s when guys would get under pressure. That's

why I say they should reduce the size of the driver.

Not only was it your withdrawal from the '91 PGA that earned John Daly his place at Crooked Stick, he also borrowed your caddie, Jeff (Squeaky) Medlen. It must sadden you to see the way Daly has let that incredible talent go? You know, I always say that in my time of playing golf, from late '60s as a junior to the present day, I saw four people who had more talent in their little finger than I was ever given. Tiger Woods, Seve Ballesteros, Phil Mickelson and John Daly. Those four had so much talent it was ridiculous. And the sad thing is that only three of those players have made the most of their talent. You can say OK, Daly's won two majors, but outside of that how many that he's not won a handful of tournaments worldwide. As far as I'm concerned, he's frittered that talent away, and that's very sad.

What does he need to get back on track?

Discipline. His own discipline. No one else is going to be able to tell him what to do. He has to do it himself. He has to curb his eating, curb his drinking, curb his behaviour. You know, I really like John, he is fun to be around, he is funny and entertaining. You can have a hundred guys telling him what to do, but in the end it's going to be him that makes the decision. But he is wasting his talent.

What are your thoughts on where Tiger is now with Hank Haney and coming back from knee surgery?

I was surprised he won as quickly as he did. I thought it was going to take him three or four months to get going. Having said that, I guess you're never really surprised by Tiger. He's just going to get stronger and stronger. Every tournament he plays, his swing will get better, and his short game will get sharper. It's frightening. He will continue to get better.

Jack Nicklaus or Tiger Woods — who is better?

Unfortunately, I never played with Jack when he was in his prime. I first played with him in 1983, and that was three years after he won at Baltusrol. Jack was 43, and you could see he wasn't as motivated as he was. So I never really got to see him at his best. But I've played with Tiger many times. I was fortunate enough to play with him in a lot of majors — the first two rounds at St Andrews in 2000, when he won, then again two rounds at the USPGA Championship, so I played with him in four of the 16 rounds of major championship golf that year. I don't think there's ever been a golfer like Tiger. A guy who can drive it that far, hit the variety of shots he can, who has the powers of recovery he has. Jack had the focus, and he had a lot of other things, but he didn't have Tiger's short game. Jack could putt really well, but he couldn't chip or play bunker shots like Tiger. In terms of major championships, when you get over 10 you're splitting hairs talking about who's the best in the world. What does Tiger have? 14? I think he'll make it to 18 within the next two or three years.

So the identikit of a winner at Turnberry?

Like I said, look no further than Tiger. ☑

"Since the mid-90s, we have seen the equipment overpower the old golf courses. People say 'Yes, but players are a lot fitter and stronger these days'. That's absolute BS. Greg, Seve, Nick, myself, we were all strong fit guys, we hit the ball a long, long way when we were using wooden clubs and soft balata balls..."

PHOTOGRAPHY BY SCOTT HALLERAN/GETTYIMAGES.COM

