

# TIGER MUST PROVE HE IS OVER CHIPPING YIPS: JACKLIN

**LONDON:** Former world number one Tiger Woods must prove he has overcome the "chipping yips" in order to fully challenge golf's elite again, according to double major champion Tony Jacklin.

American Woods, 40, made his comeback after an absence of almost 16 months caused by chronic back problems to finish 15th in an elite 17-man field at last week's Hero World Challenge in the Bahamas.

"I thought it was a promising return by Tiger," Jacklin told Reuters in a telephone interview from his Florida home. "It must have been a bit daunting for him after all that time away."

"One comment from Golf Channel analyst Brandel Chamblee attracted my attention. I know he's a bit outspoken at times but he talks a lot of sense as well."

"Brandel maintains he's not seen anybody really come back from the chipping yips," said Jacklin. "He cherry-picked a number of situations from the four

days in the Bahamas where Tiger had delicate shots he didn't do well with.

"If he's ever going to get back to the level of being able to win on the PGA Tour, never mind a major, there's no room for a weakness."

The roller-coaster nature of Woods's form was sharply illustrated by the fact that he led the tournament with birdies (24) and double-bogeys (six).

While he showed flashes of the brilliant golfer he produced in accumulating 14 major titles, he also delivered the inept, often finding sandy waste areas off the tee or with approach shots.

"His putting was sound, he hit the ball nicely and his swing looks fine," said Jacklin, winner of the 1969 British Open and 1970 US Open.

"He also looks fitter but if there's a chink in his armour going forward it's going to make things difficult."

"With the putting yips you can go to a long putter, as long as you don't

anchor it, but you can't do that with chipping yips," added Jacklin, an ambassador for the 2017 farmfests British Par 3 Championship from Aug. 8-11 (british-par3.com).

"Chris Couch won the 2006 Zurich Classic of New Orleans. He overcame them in that event by chipping left hand below right and then disappeared off the scene, that's the only example I've seen of someone who had chipping yips and adjusted his grip."

## PSYCHOLOGICALLY DAMAGING

Jacklin, the most successful European Ryder Cup captain of all time with two wins and one tie from his four matches in charge between 1983-89, knows how psychologically damaging the putting yips can be to a player.

He struggled on the greens at the back end of his career and, even now, when he plays for fun, cannot bring himself to use a conventional putter.

"When you yip you get into outcomes rather than staying in the stroke," said the 72-year-old Englishman. "You start wondering where the ball is going to end up and you can't do that, the mind has got to be in the here and now."

"When you've had a few chipping yips, and Tiger really did because it was for a few weeks in a row, it was nothing to do with his back it was something completely different."

"It's easier said than done in terms of fixing it. There's no hiding place for him, it's hard for him just to shrug things off because he cares so much," said Jacklin.

"He wouldn't be coming back unless he cared. Sometimes you care too much and you don't enjoy it because of that, that's when you put more pressure on yourself and you get into this outcome-over-execution situation."

Jacklin regularly criss-crossed the Atlantic during his playing days and, towards the end of his career, found it

tough to meet high expectations on home soil.

"I putt with a long putter now and I hold it away from my chest," he said. "I don't putt very well but I don't care because I only play charity events and corporate days."

"I've been humiliated often enough over the years using a short putter so I'm not going there again. A lot of people have had it, Sam Snead, Ben Hogan and others, it's not unusual."

"In my case it manifested itself when I was in the U.K. playing in front of British crowds, they expected me to win with one arm tied behind my back and I was trying harder than I was capable of and that made things worse."

"Tiger has to be careful. I'm sure he wants to show the world he's back and win a tournament but the more you want that, the more you put pressure on the weaker elements of your game." —Reuters

## TOMIC HAPPY TO PUT 2016 CONTROVERSIES BEHIND HIM

**SYDNEY:** Bernard Tomic has no qualms wiping his hands of a year he would rather forget and, with a reduced schedule next year, is keen to make a fresh start when he opens his season in Brisbane.

The 24-year-old Tomic, once considered Australia's next great hope in men's tennis, was plagued by an abdominal injury, fined for swearing at a fan, accused of not trying and involved in a spat with the Australian Olympic team chief this year. Despite reaching a career-high ranking of 17, the issues only reinforced a feeling amongst fans and the media that he was not overly interested in playing the sport, though that was something he denied yesterday.

"I'm not the best, I'm not the brightest, but we all have our problems," Tomic told reporters on the Gold Coast ahead of the Jan. 1-7 Brisbane International tournament. "I think the main thing is I'm doing what I love and I really respect the sport."

Tomic said he was now clear of the abdominal injury that blighted a year in which he made just one final, at Acapulco, and two other semi-finals, at Brisbane and the Queen's Club in London.

His performances at the grand slams were inconsistent with fourth round

appearances at the Australian Open and Wimbledon but a second-round exit at Roland Garros and a failure to clear the first hurdle at the US Open.

The Flushing Meadows loss, as world number 19 to 72nd ranked Bosnian Damir Dzumhur, earned him a \$10,000 fine for firing lewd comments at a heckler in the crowd. He also drew heavy criticism in May following his exit from the Madrid Open when, facing match point against Fabio Fognini, he held the racquet by the strings and did not offer a shot. He later ruled himself out of consideration for the Rio Games after the head of the Australian team had warned him that his behaviour, and that of Nick Kyrgios, was being monitored to judge their suitability for the Olympics.

Tomic said few people truly understood himself and his 21-year-old compatriot, who had risen to number 13 in the world. "I think sometimes we do push it more than we should," Tomic said. "But that is our personality, our character. We are young, we are successful. But it turns into a bit of negative energy when we do things wrong. No one is perfect but I think we are doing a pretty good job." — Reuters



MINNEAPOLIS: San Antonio Spurs forward Kawhi Leonard (2) works against Minnesota Timberwolves forward Andrew Wiggins (22) in the second half of an NBA basketball game, Tuesday, in Minneapolis. The Spurs won 105-91. — AP

# SPURS RALLY, ROLL TOWARD HISTORY ON THE ROAD

**MINNEAPOLIS:** Kawhi Leonard scored 31 points and the San Antonio Spurs improved to 13-0 on the road this season with a 105-91 victory over the Minnesota Timberwolves on Tuesday night. Leonard hit 11 of 15 shots after not scoring at all in the first quarter and Patty Mills scored 15 points off the bench for the Spurs (18-4), who played without Tony Parker after he bruised his left knee against Milwaukee on Wednesday night. San Antonio overcame a slow start to shoot 52.7 percent. The Spurs moved past the 1969-70 New York Knicks to take sole possession of the second best road start to begin a season in NBA history. The Golden State Warriors started 14-0 last year. Zach LaVine scored 25 points for the Timberwolves. Karl-Anthony Towns had 11 points and 14 rebounds, but shot just 3 of 16.

## KNICKS 114, HEAT 103

Carmelo Anthony matched a season high with 35 points, and New York beat injury-ravaged Miami for its fourth straight victory. Kristaps Porzingis had 14 points and 12 rebounds for New York, which is three games over .500 for the first time since the end of the 2012-13 season. The Knicks lost Derrick Rose to back spasms in the third quarter. Goran Dragic scored 29 points and Hassan Whiteside finished with 23 points and 14 rebounds for the Heat, who fell to 2-8 at home. The teams were tied at 68 late in the third quarter, when the Knicks went on a 27-13 run over the next eight minutes to take control. Anthony finished 13 for 27 from the field, and Porzingis and Joakim Noah combined for 22 rebounds.

## MAGIC 124, WIZARDS 116

Elfrid Payton scored 22 of his career-high 25 points in the first half and Orlando overcame John Wall's 52-point performance to beat Washington. Wall had the highest-scoring game of his career and kept Washington in it with 33 points in the second half as the Wizards cut the lead below 10 in the fourth quarter. The guard made 18 of 31 from the field and added eight assists. Payton went 8 for 8 from the field and 3 for 3 from the line off the bench in that first half, nearly matching his previous season best of 23 points in the first two quarters alone. Payton finished 9 for 12 and handed out nine assists. Orlando won its third straight game and its 124 points were a season high.

## PISTONS 102, BULLS 91

Tobias Harris scored 22 points and Detroit beat Chicago. Andre Drummond added 15 points and 10 rebounds for the Pistons, who won for the fourth time in five games. Jimmy Butler scored 32 points and Dwyane Wade added 19 points and seven assists for Chicago, which lost its third straight. The Bulls were playing their fourth game in five nights

and struggled in the fourth quarter. Rajon Rondo had 10 points in his return to the Chicago lineup.

## GRIZZLIES 96, 76ERS 91

Marc Gasol had 26 points and 12 rebounds, and Memphis finally put away short-handed Philadelphia. Memphis scored the game's final seven points to erase Philadelphia's lead with less than 2 minutes left, sending the Sixers to their eighth straight loss. JaMychal Green had 13 points and 10 rebounds, including a pair of free throws with 4 seconds left to seal the Grizzlies' fourth straight win and 10th in the last 13. Ersan Ilyasova had season bests of 23 points and 17 rebounds for Philadelphia. Dario Saric scored 17 points, while Nik Stauskas added 12 points, despite missing seven of his eight shots from outside the arc. The Sixers led 91-89 with 1:57 remaining, but Zach Randolph, who had 12 points and 14 rebounds, scored inside and Memphis made enough free throws in the closing minutes.

## JAZZ 112, SUNS 105

Gordon Hayward scored 28 points and Utah held on to beat Phoenix for its seventh victory in eight games. Rudy Gobert scored a career-high 22 points and had 11 rebounds and blocked four shots for the Jazz, who recovered after the Suns erased their big lead to tie it at 103. Hayward had 11 third-quarter points to reach 20-plus points for the ninth consecutive game - the first Jazz player to do so since Carlos Boozer in 2007-08. The Jazz sprinted out to a 25-10 lead thanks to an 8-0 run and never trailed. They led 65-45 at halftime after Hayward's pull-up 3-pointer highlighted a half-closing 11-2 stretch. The 65 points matched a Jazz season high for a half. Devin Booker scored 21 points for the Suns. — AP



SALT LAKE CITY: Phoenix Suns guard Eric Bledsoe (2) passes the ball as Utah Jazz forward Gordon Hayward, rear, defends in the first half during an NBA basketball game Tuesday, in Salt Lake City. — AP

## DJOKOVIC HAS NOT WORKED HARD ENOUGH, SAYS BECKER

**BELGRADE:** Novak Djokovic lost his momentum in the second half of last season and was toppled as the world number one by Andy Murray because his work-rate dropped, the Serbian's former coach Boris Becker said yesterday.

Speaking a day after the two terminated their cooperation by mutual consent, German Becker said Djokovic's need to spend more time with his family had derailed him on the court.

"He didn't spend as much time on the practice court in the last six months as he should have and he knows that," said Becker, who helped Djokovic to six grand slam titles after they teamed up in December 2013.

"Success like this doesn't happen by pushing a button. Success like this doesn't just happen by showing up at a tournament. You have to work your bottom off because the opposition does the same," he told Sky News.

"The profession of a tennis player is probably the most selfish one in sports because it has to be about you and he is the first to say he is a family man, so of course his wife and the rest of his family had to take back seats."

"They don't spend enough time together. I had it too, 20 years ago. It is just the nature of the beast, being a tennis player."

Having completed a career slam when he won his maiden French Open title in June, Djokovic suffered an astonishing loss of form. He crashed out of Wimbledon in the third round to American Sam Querrey and made a first-round exit at the Rio Olympics at the hands of Argentine Juan Martin Del Potro. Djokovic then lost the U.S. Open final to Swiss Stan Wawrinka, a defeat six-times major champion Becker said was a massive psychological blow to the Serb.

"I know the U.S. Open loss in the final against Stan hurt," he said. "I think that is what he needed maybe in a funny way was to lose a little bit, to realise what it is like to lose, because he hasn't been losing for two and a half years. I am sure the fact that he lost the number one ranking to Andy Murray is going to hurt."

"But he has got to go back to work. He has to go back to the office and practice these hours and refocus on what made him strong in the first place." — Reuters



MELBOURNE: In this Jan. 14, 2016, file photo, Serbia's Novak Djokovic, right, walks with his coach Boris Becker during a training session on Rod Laver Arena ahead of the Australian Open tennis championships in Melbourne, Australia. Djokovic says he and coach Boris Becker are splitting up after three seasons together. Djokovic posted a statement on Facebook on Tuesday, saying the duo "jointly decided to end our cooperation." — AP

## NBA Results/Standings

Utah 112, Phoenix 105; Memphis 96, Philadelphia 91; San Antonio 105, Minnesota 91; NY Knicks 114, Miami 103; Detroit 102, Chicago 91; Orlando 124, Washington 116.

Eastern Conference				Western Conference				
Atlantic Division				Northwest Division				
	W	L	PCT	GB				
Toronto	14	7	.667	-	Oklahoma City	14	8	.636
Boston	12	9	.571	2	Utah	14	9	.609
NY Knicks	12	9	.571	2	Portland	12	10	.545
Brooklyn	5	15	.250	8.5	Denver	8	13	.381
Philadelphia	4	18	.182	10.5	Minnesota	6	15	.286
Central Division				Pacific Division				
Cleveland	14	5	.737	-	Golden State	18	3	.857
Milwaukee	10	9	.526	4	LA Clippers	16	6	.727
Chicago	11	10	.524	4	LA Lakers	10	13	.435
Detroit	12	11	.522	4	Sacramento	7	13	.350
Indiana	10	11	.476	5	Phoenix	6	15	.286
Southeast Division				Southwest Division				
Charlotte	12	9	.571	-	San Antonio	18	4	.818
Atlanta	10	12	.455	2.5	Houston	14	7	.667
Orlando	10	12	.455	2.5	Memphis	15	8	.652
Washington	7	13	.350	4.5	New Orleans	7	15	.318
Miami	7	14	.333	5	Dallas	4	16	.200