



Palmer Prepares for Masters Finale



Four-time champion Arnold Palmer prepares to play a record 50th and final Masters Tournament while the rest of the field found a firmer, faster Augusta National than in the past two years.

The drive down Magnolia Lane remains as exciting now as it was the first time, in 1955. It still gives Arnold Palmer, a western Pennsylvania head greenskeeper's son, goose bumps because of the sheer beauty that awaits him at the end of the road.

It is a place of wonderful, lasting memories, four Masters wins, and many more near misses at victory.

Can it really be 50 years since Arnold Daniel Palmer first played in the Masters Tournament?

Can it really be 40 years since Palmer won the last of his four Masters?

Can it really be the end of golf's most charismatic player at a place he so cherishes?

Those questions rattled through the minds of players and patrons all over the world when the 68th Masters Tournament began.

The 2004 Masters was to be Palmer's adieu, at least in the competitive vein.

Of course, Palmer will enjoy the nuances of the rolling hills and tree-lined fairways as an Augusta National Golf Club member in the future.

But Arnie without the Masters on his schedule seems incomprehensible.

"I guess Arnold has meant more to the Masters Tournament than anyone," said Chairman Hootie Johnson before the Tournament began. "He's meant more to golf. He's an exciting player. He's even exciting at [age] 74 whether he's going off the first tee or playing the 10th hole."

Palmer's patron-friendly demeanor has enamored generations of golfers and non-golfers alike.

Even today's players revere the people's player.

"Just a legend, a living legend," said three-time Masters champion Tiger Woods of Palmer's legacy in the game. "If it wasn't for Arnold, golf wouldn't be as popular as it is now. You know he's the one who basically brought it to the forefront on TV. If it wasn't for him and his excitement, his flare, the way he played, golf probably would not have had that type of excitement."

Palmer's dashing good looks and go-for-broke play on the golf course brought the game to a variety of cultures and countries.





Arnold Palmer strides down the fairway in his final Masters.

That began in 1958, three years after his first Masters Tournament.

It was in 1958 that Palmer, aided by an eagle at the par-5 13th hole, catapulted himself to his first major title and superstardom all in the same four days.

Golf would never be the same, and Augusta National Golf Club would be Palmer's soul mate, a place where he felt most at home.

Palmer may have won 92 times around the world, but none were more cherished than his four Masters wins. He also won in 1960, 1962, and 1964.

"I'm going to miss coming and playing in the Masters as I have for 50 years," said Palmer before his farewell began.

"You do anything that long, it's like getting married. It's been great. It's been 50 great years."

What They're Saying

(MONDAY–WEDNESDAY)

You'll see more guys shooting higher numbers on the back nine than more guys shooting 30 or 31 to win the tournament.

—Three-time Masters champion Tiger Woods on the recent course changes at Augusta National

What's my best [Masters] souvenir? The trophy is special. Can't deny that. It's a beautiful silver replica of the clubhouse. Everybody who played in the tournament last year has their name shrunk down and engraved, not just the name but the actual signature of the person, around the exterior of the trophy.

—2003 champion Mike Weir on his favorite Masters keepsake

I'd like to win this one. I'd like to win a PGA at some time. That would be a perfect world for me.

—South African Ernie Els on his golf hopes in the next 10 years—to complete golf's Grand Slam



Age has been the only foe that Palmer cannot defeat. But, said Palmer, that doesn't diminish his enjoyment of the Masters.

"Thursday and Friday will be fun for me," he said, relishing the prospect of having his family and many friends—in addition to his grandson Sam Saunders as his caddie—at a record 50th Masters.

"I suppose it's a bittersweet-type situation."

Patrons enjoy the golf and the serene surroundings of the Par 3 Contest.



Phil Mickelson

(MONDAY–WEDNESDAY)

As the Masters Tournament began its run-up to the first round, no one was more anxious for play to begin than Phil Mickelson.

Mickelson hoped to become the second left-handed player in as many years to don a prestigious Green Jacket when the week is over, joining Mike Weir.

And who's to argue with the 33-year-old Rancho Santa Fe, California, resident?

His record—particularly in the past five Masters—has been stellar.

Mickelson has finished no worse than tied for seventh over the Augusta National Golf Club since 1999. Moreover, the 12-year professional has finished third each of the past three years, narrowly missing his first major title.

So when Mickelson came to the former Fruitland Nurseries this April, he did so with great optimism.

"I have entered this Tournament the last few years believing that I had very good chances," said Mickelson in the days before the start of play. "This year I certainly feel like I have a very good chance. I think what's been nice is that I've played well week in and week out. I've played very consistently, which is something I certainly didn't do last year, but I was striving to do that this year."

In eight events leading up to the Masters, Mickelson had won the 2004 Bob Hope Chrysler Classic, and finished in the top 10 seven times.

He would like nothing better than to make the 2004 Masters his first major championship after a series of near misses.

"I've really enjoyed the challenge of trying to win a major," said Mickelson. "Although I haven't broken through and won, I enjoy all the challenges in my life. It is a fun challenge to play a course that is so penalizing under such tough conditions, to try to shoot the lowest score, manage your game the best, be patient, all those things that are necessary to win. I know I haven't done it yet, but I've been close a number of times, and I think that when I finally do break through, it will be that much more rewarding for going through the difficulties of the last 10 years of trying it and not doing it."

The 2004 Tournament may be Mickelson's best chance for victory.

He comes to Augusta National Golf Club in, perhaps, his best playing form ever.

And Augusta National has been kind to him in the past.

His record only reinforces his position as a Masters favorite.

His scoring average is 71.14 in 11 previous outings. He's a cumulative 36 under par and has 13 rounds in the 60s.

In each of the past three years, the 12-year professional has been within a whisper of victory.

A break here or there and Mickelson might already have been a Masters champion.

"I have a lot more confidence that I'll be there come the weekend or that I'll have an opportunity," said Mickelson of the 72 holes of golf ahead.

"I'm playing well enough to get into contention without having to do anything extraordinary."





First time Masters invitee Stephen Leaney of Australia blasts from a bunker during a practice round.

Numbers tell only a part of Palmer's Masters success. But after 49 appearances, they must be noted.

He's played 148 competitive rounds, finishing 72 holes 25 times.

There are nine top-five finishes on his resume, totaling 11,012 strokes over 2,664 holes played. Total up the distance Palmer has walked at the Masters, and it's nearly 600 eye-popping miles coming into 2004.

Yet his legacy will be measured in more than simple numbers. Palmer's legacy is what he leaves behind for the game.

His peers know it only too well.

"There's many, many great players before

Did You Know?

(MONDAY–WEDNESDAY)

The 2004 Masters was the 10th for Tiger Woods. The three-time champion played his first two Masters as an amateur, and since turning professional, Woods, 28, has won an impressive 42.8 percent of the time at Augusta National Golf Club.

Former champion Fred Couples holds the longest active cut streak at the Masters, beginning in 1983. In 19 Masters appearances, Couples has not missed a cut. He won the title in 1992.

No golfer has ever scored four rounds in the 60s in the same Masters, although nine players have scored under 70 in the first three rounds. Three players have shot a final round of 70, missing the mark by one stroke, and two went on to win. They include Fred Couples (1992), Arnold Palmer (1964), and Phil Mickelson (2001, 3rd). Gary Player also won the 1961 Masters with a final round of 74, and Seve Ballesteros won in 1980 with a 72.

Last year, Masters rookie Jonathan Byrd finished T8, but no first-time player has won since Fuzzy Zoeller 25 years ago. Zoeller defeated Tom Watson and Ed Sneed with a birdie on the second hole of a sudden-death playoff.

Arnie," said Northern Ireland's Darren Clarke, "but the following he had and the support he had brought a lot of people into the game of golf. It certainly helped make the game grow bigger and bigger. You know, [it's] sad to see him playing his last one, but he's been an amazing man for a long, long time."

"Great champion that he is, he's kept coming back," said South African Ernie Els of Palmer's impact not only at the Masters but also in the game of golf. "You know he's put a lot of majors and a lot of golf tournaments right on the map in the world. He's been a great ambassador for the game."

That attitude, said Palmer, has served him well and came from his father, Deke.

“What he taught me was manners, to be polite and to treat other people like I would like to be treated,” Palmer said.

Be a gentleman, Deke Palmer told his son, in a gentleman’s game.

Ask any amateur player, past or present, who they most enjoy playing with at the Masters Tournament and a likely answer is “Arnold Palmer.”

“Every amateur . . . when they get in the field, the first call they make is to his representatives trying to get a practice round with him,” said Phil Mickelson of his 1991 Masters practice round with Palmer.

“What I remember about that was we had a little competition with our two playing partners. One of them was against Lanny [Wadkins] and Tom Watson. And boy, on 8 and 9 Arnie made birdies. He gave it the Arnie fist pump, gave that grin to the crowd, and people loved it. I think that was a glimpse in his eye of the competitive Arnold Palmer when he used to make the charge and win. It was an awesome sight to behold.”

Palmer still has the twinkle in his eye on the golf course, and Augusta National is no different. He is still a dreamer, someone who believes he can catch lightning in a bottle someday, and today may just be that day. Call him an eternal optimist.

He was asked how he expected Friday to unfold, given the state of his game and the emotional day it will surely be for him in his final walk up to the 18th hole.

“I know exactly how I want Friday to

unfold, no question,” said the golf icon.

“I want to see what my starting time is on Saturday.”

The rest of the 93-player field would love to see the four-time champion around for the weekend, too, just as they loved seeing

What They’re Writing

(MONDAY–WEDNESDAY)

Arnold Palmer Day began with the 74-year-old, 50-year Masters veteran slowly driving up Magnolia Lane in his white Cadillac.

Hey, when you’re The King, you arrive at work in style.

As he emerged from the driver’s seat, flashbulbs popped, video cameras whirled, and fans got markers ready for autographs.

Hey, when you’re the leader of Arnie’s Army, your arrival sets off waves of commotion.

And when it’s the last week of your Masters Tournament career, you savor every step along the way.

—Josh Katzowitz, Augusta Chronicle

While the other top dogs in Georgia head into the week playing less than their best, Phil Mickelson is the steadiest player in golf, words that have rarely been spoken. After enduring a dismal 2003 that was filled with zero triumphs and one near-tragedy, Mickelson has emerged as the pick of the populace to win his first major at Augusta National.

Mickelson, who has finished third three years in a row at Augusta, has throttled down his attack, is generally keeping the ball out of the magnolias and azaleas and could finally snap his 0-for-45 famine in the major championships.

—Steve Elling, Orlando Sentinel

Ten years ago, Mike Weir wasn’t thinking of winning green jackets and planning the Champions Dinner menu at Augusta National. Ten years ago, the Canadian simply was trying to make a decent living playing golf, unsure if that ever was going to happen.

There was the time he was playing in a lower-rung event in Indonesia in the mid-1990s. He was taking a cab to the course when the car broke down and there was no caddy to turn to for help.

“I carried my bag through all this muddy water, hitchhiking back to the golf course and made a 9 on a par-3 to shoot 80,” Weir said. “I think probably then I had a tough time thinking I would win the Masters.”

—Craig Dolch, Palm Beach Post

If you’re a golf fan, I have one piece of advice for you: Before you die, visit Augusta National Golf Club during the Masters. Trust me. The golf course in heaven won’t be this nice.

I don’t care how hard it is to get tickets. . . . Do whatever it takes to get on a plane. Tell your spouse you’re just running out to get some bread. But get yourself down here.

Now, I’ve been to some impressive tracks. I’ve visited the Pebble Beach courses, and I’ve played Oakland Hills and the Plantation Course at Kapalua. But after walking among Augusta’s towering pines and blushing azaleas on a sun-kissed day, those other courses just sort of blend in.

—Carlos Monarrez, Detroit Free Press

Keeping notes on the course is all part of being a caddy at the Masters.



Three-time champion Gary Player and his grandson enjoyed a lighter moment during the Par 3 Contest.



him play in the Par 3 Contest Wednesday, with Woods and former Masters champion Mark O'Meara.

Ireland's Padraig Harrington won the Par 3 Contest, defeating Eduardo Romero. Harrington birdied the third playoff hole with a 2½-foot putt to claim the title.

Tiger Woods also tied Harrington and Romero with scores of 23, but a previous commitment prevented Woods from competing in the playoff.

Harrington shared the 2003 rain-interrupted Par 3 Contest title with David Toms.

A total of four holes-in-one were made, bringing the total made in the event to 55.

Defending champion Mike Weir, Phillip Price, Woods, and Jay Haas made aces in the Par 3 Contest, which began in 1960.

But the players have to worry that their own games are ready for a course that probably will play the most difficult in several years.

The field faces only two changes to the layout that redesigned and lengthened tees on nine holes in 2002 and made several other fairway and bunker changes to stretch the course to 7,290 yards.

A total of 36 pine trees were added to the right side of the 11th fairway to require more precise tee shots at the 490-yard, par-4 hole. The green at the 510-yard, par-5 13th was rebuilt, and a heating and cooling system was installed under the putting surface.

With cool mornings yielding to warm, sunny days, the Masters Tournament will show a different face for the first time in at least two years, perhaps longer.

Without rain leading up to the opening round, the par-72 layout will play firm and fast.

That will require more accurate drives in the fairway to set up more precise irons into the greens. Dry conditions will make the undulating greens more lethal, too.

"We're big-time excited and the players I've talked to are excited about the course conditions," said Will F. Nicholson Jr., Chairman of the Competition Committees.

It will require players to control their shots more precisely.



Invitees Kirk Triplett, left, and Tim Herron, center, were helped by three young caddies and a veteran at the Par 3 Contest.

MASTERS HISTORY

15 Years Ago: Nick Faldo defeated Scott Hoch in a playoff. Hoch missed a two-foot par putt at the first extra hole, while Faldo made a 25-foot birdie putt at No. 11 to win the Masters.

20 Years Ago: Texan Ben Crenshaw won the first of two Masters with a final round of 4-under-par 68 and 72-hole total of 277, two strokes better than Tom Watson. Crenshaw, who won his second Masters in 1995, started the final round two strokes behind leader Tom Kite.

25 Years Ago: The Masters first sudden-death playoff. Since then there have been five playoffs, and Nick Faldo is the only player to have won more than once. Faldo won playoffs in 1989 and 1990.

50 Years Ago: In one of the most famous playoffs in Masters history, Sam Snead defeated Ben Hogan 70 to 71 to win the last of his three Green Jackets. Snead's score of one-over-par 289 remains tied for the highest winning score in Masters history.

60 Years Ago: Augusta National Golf Club was closed and the Masters was cancelled due to World War II. The Tournament was suspended from 1943 to 1945.

70 Years Ago: The Masters begins what would become a series of innovative firsts. Spectator mounds, gallery roping, the over-under scoring system, scoreboards throughout the course, and the first overseas golf broadcast were introduced to professional golf at Augusta National Golf Club.

Augusta native Charles Howell III, left, and three-time champion Tiger Woods shared a conversation during a practice round.

“Last year, if you short-sided yourself with as much rain as we had, the greens were soft enough that you could maybe get the ball up and down from the wrong side of the hole,” said 2003 champion Mike Weir. “This year you’re not going to really have that option. You’re going to have to be on the correct side of the hole.”

“I also like it playing hard and fast because I’ve played this event when it’s been hard and fast in the past,” said Mickelson, a third-place finisher each of the past three years. “I have a pretty good idea of where I can hit shots to certain pins and where I can’t save shots.”

Knowing that and doing that, as Mickelson knows, are two different things.

So does 2000 Masters champion Vijay Singh.

“This is, to me, the hardest test of golf we play,” said Singh of the examination the Masters puts players through. “It requires the whole package. You can’t come here with one part of the game missing. You’re just not going to function.”

With all those variables staring the best players in the world in the face and the drama of Arnold Palmer’s good-bye sure to add additional poignancy to the proceedings, the Tournament was sure to be another one for the record books. ■





Masters veteran Jay Haas sharpened his putting stroke leading up to the first round.

China's Lian-Wei Zhang

(MONDAY–WEDNESDAY)

The first time the international golf world saw him was eight years ago, in his hometown of Shenzhen, China.

That's when the 1995 World Cup of Golf traveled to China, just a stone's throw from vibrant and hectic Hong Kong.

Well, Lian-Wei Zhang was a rookie pro in those days, a player in a country where golf was in its infancy. He and the Chinese team finished near the bottom of the international field, but the experience gave golf in China a major shot in the arm.

So when the 68th Masters began, Lian-Wei Zhang had come a long, long way.

Zhang, via a special invitation from the Masters Committee, joined the elite field at Augusta National Golf Club.

At 38 and from a country with well over 1 billion people, Zhang was the first Chinese golfer to play in the Masters.

He received the invitation because of "his proven ability on the European Tour and in Asia," Chairman Hootie Johnson said. "We felt it good for the game of golf to extend a hand to the most populous nation in the world. He is a good golfer and we thought it was entirely appropriate."

Zhang earned his invitation by becoming the first Chinese golfer to win on the European Tour. He birdied the final hole of the 2003 Caltex Masters to defeat South African Ernie Els by one stroke.

Zhang also won the 2003 China Open and in 2002 successfully defended his Macau Open title. He was second in 2003 on the Asian Tour's Order of Merit.

Past Par 3 Contest CHAMPS

Year	Player	Score
1960	Sam Snead	23
1961	Deane Beman	22
1962	Bruce Crampton	22
1963*	George Bayer	23
1964	Labron Harris Jr.	23
1965	Art Wall Jr.	20
1966	Terry Dill	22
1967*	Arnold Palmer	23
1968	Bob Rosburg	22
1969*	Bob Lunn	23
1970	Harold Henning	21
1971*	Dave Stockton	23
1972	Steve Melnyk	23
1973	Gay Brewer	20
1974*	Sam Snead	23
1975*	Isao Aoki	23
1976	Jay Haas	21
1977*	Tom Weiskopf	23
1978*	Lou Graham	22
1979	Joe Inman Jr.	23
1980	Johnny Miller	23
1981	Isao Aoki	22
1982*	Tom Watson	23
1983	Hale Irwin	22
1984	Tommy Aaron	22
1985	Hubert Green	22
1986*	Gary Koch	23
1987	Ben Crenshaw	22
1988	Tsuneyuki Nakajima	24
1989*	Bob Gilder	22
1990	Raymond Floyd	23
1991*	Rocco Mediate	24
1992	Davis Love III	22
1993	Chip Beck	21
1994	Vijay Singh	22
1995*	Hal Sutton	23
1996*	Jay Haas	22
1997*	Sandy Lyle	22
1998	Sandy Lyle	24
1999	Joe Durant	22
2000*	Chris Perry	23
2001	David Toms	22
2002*	Nick Price	22
2003+	Padraig Harrington	
	David Toms	21
2004*	Padraig Harrington	23

*Won in playoff +Tied

2004 Masters Tournament Invitees

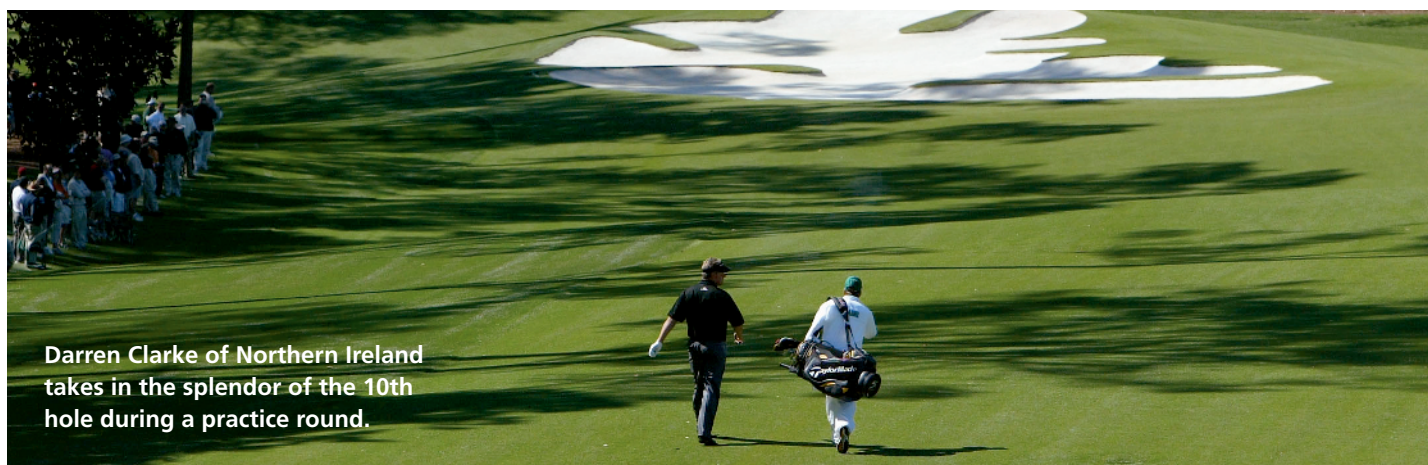
Number after each name indicates the basis of qualification. See qualifications on next page.

#Denotes first Masters. *Denotes amateur.

Tommy Aaron (1)
Robert Allenby (Australia) (14, 16, 17)
Stuart Appleby (Australia) (14, 15, 16, 17)
George Archer (1)
#Briny Baird (14)
Seve Ballesteros (Spain) (1)
Rich Beem (4, 10, 16)
Thomas Bjorn (Denmark) (12, 16, 17)
Gay Brewer (1)
Jack Burke (1)
Jonathan Byrd (10)
Angel Cabrera (Argentina) (10)
Chad Campbell (13, 14, 15, 16, 17)
Michael Campbell (New Zealand) (16)
#Paul Casey (England) (16, 17)
Billy Casper (1)
Alex Cejka (Germany) (13, 16, 17)
K. J. Choi (Korea) (10, 14, 16, 17)
Stewart Cink (14, 17)
Tim Clark (South Africa) (10, 13)
Darren Clarke (N. Ireland) (16, 17)
Charles Coody (1)
Fred Couples (1, 14, 16, 17)
Ben Crenshaw (1)
#Ben Curtis (3, 16, 17)
John Daly (15)
#Brian Davis (England) (17)
Chris DiMarco (14, 16, 17)
David Duval (3)
Ernie Els (South Africa) (3, 10, 11, 14, 16, 17)
Bob Estes (14, 16)
Nick Faldo (England) (1)
Brad Faxon (14, 16, 17)
**Nick Flanagan (Australia) (6-A)
Steve Flesch (14, 17)

Raymond Floyd (1)
Doug Ford (1)
Fred Funk (14, 16, 17)
Jim Furyk (2, 10, 14, 16, 17)
Sergio Garcia (Spain) (16, 17)
Bob Goalby (1)
Retief Goosen (South Africa) (2, 10, 14, 16, 17)
Jay Haas (14, 16, 17)
#Todd Hamilton (17)
Padraig Harrington (Ireland) (16, 17)
Tim Herron (14, 16)
Charles Howell III (14, 16, 17)
Trevor Immelman (South Africa) (17)
Toshi Izawa (Japan) (16)
#Fredrik Jacobson (Sweden) (11, 16, 17)
Jonathan Kaye (14, 15, 16, 17)
Jerry Kelly (14, 16, 17)
Bernhard Langer (Germany) (1)
Paul Lawrie (Scotland) (3, 10)
#Stephen Leaney (Australia) (11, 16, 17)
Justin Leonard (14, 16, 17)
#J. L. Lewis (14)
Peter Lonard (Australia) (16, 17)
Davis Love III (5, 10, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17)
Sandy Lyle (Scotland) (1)
Jeff Maggert (10)
Shigeki Maruyama (Japan) (14, 16, 17)
Len Mattiace (10)
Rocco Mediate (14, 16, 17)
#Shaun Micheel (4, 14, 16, 17)
Phil Mickelson (10, 14, 15, 16, 17)
Larry Mize (1)
Colin Montgomerie (Scotland) (16, 17)
Byron Nelson (1)

Jack Nicklaus (1)
José Maria Olazabal (Spain) (1, 10)
Mark O'Meara (1, 10)
Arnold Palmer (1)
Craig Parry (Australia) (17)
Craig Perks (New Zealand) (5)
Kenny Perry (11, 14, 16, 17)
#Tim Petrovic (14)
Gary Player (South Africa) (1)
#Ian Poulter (England) (16, 17)
Nick Price (Zimbabwe) (11, 14, 16, 17)
#Phillip Price (Wales) (16)
Chris Riley (14, 16, 17)
John Rollins (14)
Eduardo Romero (Argentina) (16)
Justin Rose (England) (11)
Adam Scott (Australia) (5, 15, 16, 17)
Vijay Singh (Fiji) (1, 10, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17)
Jeff Sluman (14)
**Nathan Smith (9)
**Brandt Snedeker (8)
Craig Stadler (1)
David Toms (4, 10, 11, 14, 16, 17)
Kirk Triplett (14, 17)
Bob Tway (14, 16, 17)
Scott Verplank (10, 14, 16, 17)
Tom Watson (1)
Mike Weir (Canada) (1, 11, 14, 15, 16, 17)
**Casey Wittenberg (6-B)
*Gary Wolstenholme (England) (7)
Tiger Woods (1, 2, 3, 4, 10, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17)
Ian Woosnam (Wales) (1)
Lian-Wei Zhang (China)
Fuzzy Zoeller (1)



Darren Clarke of Northern Ireland takes in the splendor of the 10th hole during a practice round.

For the second year in a row Ireland's Padraig Harrington was the winner in the Par 3 Contest. Harrington won a three-hole playoff with Eduardo Romero. In 2003 Harrington and David Toms shared the title.



How They Qualified

- 1** Masters Tournament champions (lifetime)
- 2** U.S. Open champions (honorary, noncompeting after five years)
- 3** British Open champions (honorary, noncompeting after five years)
- 4** PGA champions (honorary, noncompeting after five years)
- 5** Winners of The Players Championship (three years)
- 6** Current US Amateur champion (6-A) (honorary, noncompeting after one year) and the runner-up (6-B) to the current U.S. Amateur champion
- 7** Current British Amateur champion (honorary, noncompeting after one year)
- 8** Current U.S. Amateur Public Links champion
- 9** Current U.S. Mid-Amateur champion
- 10** The first 16 players, including ties, in the 2003 Masters Tournament
- 11** The first eight players, including ties, in the 2003 U.S. Open Championship
- 12** The first four players, including ties, in the 2003 British Open Championship
- 13** The first four players, including ties, in the 2003 PGA Championship
- 14** The 40 leaders on the Final Official PGA Tour Money List for 2003
- 15** The 10 leaders on the Official PGA Tour Money List published during the week prior to the 2004 Masters Tournament
- 16** The 50 leaders on the Final Official World Golf Ranking for 2003
- 17** The 50 leaders on the Official World Golf Ranking published during the week prior to the 2004 Masters Tournament.

The Masters Committee, at its discretion, also invites International players not otherwise qualified.