

Singh holds off field, claims Masters

by Leonard Shapiro
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AUGUSTA, Ga. — From the days in the mid-1980s when he was giving lessons to loggers on a jungle golf course in the backwaters of Borneo, Vijay Singh has always been a survivor. Sunday in the 64th Masters, the unflappable Fijian withstood several spirited assaults on his lead by some of the greatest players in the world and beat them all back to claim his second major championship in the last two years.

It did not come easily at Augusta National. First he had to show up at 8:15 a.m. to finish his third-round 70 with four consecutive pars. He went home to rest and think about his strategy, returned for a 2:50 p.m. tee time, then held off a formidable playing partner in David Duval, No. 2 in the world, and withstood charges from No. 1 Tiger Woods early and two-time U.S. Open champion Ernie Els at the end.

He also had to survive a yanked second shot into the pond guarding the 445-yard 11th hole for a bogey and a missed four-footer for a second back-nine bogey at the 170-yard 16th to post a gritty round of 3-under 69 and a total of 10-under 278 for a three-shot victory over Els (68-281) and a champion's check of \$828,000.

"I was pretty focused out there all day," said Singh, 37. "Walking up the 18th hole knowing that a two-putt will win the tournament is the greatest feeling I've had in a long, long time. Wearing this green jacket tops it all."

With a two-shot lead over Els and Duval as he walked to the 18th tee,

Singh hit a drive down the middle, his second shot within 18 feet of the cup, then holed one last birdie putt, raising his club over his head as the ball rattled down into the cup. He joined '97 champion Woods, fifth Sunday after a final round 69-284, as the only two men of color to win this event. And Singh's came on the 25th anniversary of Lee Elder's breakthrough as the first African American to play in the Masters. Singh won his first major in 1998 at the PGA Championship at Sahalee, Wash.

Duval got within a shot of Singh after three holes Sunday and was one back through 12. But he lost his chance for his first major championship when he bogeyed the 485-yard par-5 13th with a mis-hit 5-iron shot from 196 yards out that fell well short and into Rae's Creek as he attempted to make an eagle.

"I was trying to hit it in the same area of the green as Vijay did," Duval said. "I got over the ball, and the wind picked up. It happened over and over. I started to question whether I could get the club there. Then I decided it was the right club, and I just hit a poor shot."

Duval chipped to within 10 feet from the drop area, but missed that par putt, falling three back when Singh birdied at 13. Duval also bogeyed 18 for a 70 and fell into a tie with Loren Roberts (69), who also had an early charge, for third place at 6-under 282.

In the end, Els applied the most pressure on Singh. Els had to back off a 10-foot birdie putt at the 18th green when a photographer clicked his camera during Els's backswing. Els stopped, got out of his stance and

glared at the man momentarily. Then he missed the birdie putt that might have put a little more pressure on Singh at the final hole.

"He wasn't doing his job properly," Els said. "If I make the putt, maybe I still lose, but it might have given Vijay something to think about. The guy didn't give me a fair chance to do that. He shouldn't take a golf picture in his life again."

Els had makable birdie putts on each of his last three holes, missing a nine-footer at 16 and a 14-footer at 17 along with the 18th. But the South African gave credit to Singh, his frequent practice-round partner and longtime friend.

"He showed his mettle today, and he's done that before," Els said. "He's an awfully hard competitor, and this course has always been suited to his game. He really did the job today."

Three times on the front nine, at Nos. 6, 8 and 9, Duval made birdie putts, only to have Singh answer back with birdie putts. Every time Duval sank one, he had technically tied for the lead, though he insisted. "I never thought of it like that. I expected him to make those putts. I always felt I never caught him."

Singh caught two very fortunate breaks Sunday, as Masters champions usually do. At 11, nursing a two-shot lead, he was trying to hit his second shot toward the bailout area on the right. Instead, he pulled it left, where the ball hit land and bounced in the water. He got a favorable ruling on his drop, and had a relatively easy pitch to the green. He chipped to within two feet and made a bogey.

At the 155-yard 12th, Singh smoked a 7-iron over the back bunker behind

the green, but his ball came back into the sand with a fine lie. He blasted to within two feet of the cup, saved his par and walked to the 13th tee still holding that one-shot lead. Then Duval bogeyed in the creek, and Singh made a two-putt birdie from 22 feet.

Woods, who started the day six behind, shot 33 on the front and had makable birdie putts at 10, 11 and 13. The first two missed by inches. On the third, he said he misread the break and had no chance.

"I make those, I'm in the ball game at 7-under," he said. "It's disappointing from the standpoint that I didn't win. But at least I gave myself a chance. The golfing gods just were not with me."

Singh's work began at a very unfashionable hour when he and seven other players had to return to the frost-covered course at 8:15 to finish their weather-delayed third rounds in 45-degree weather.

Duval and Singh parred their remaining four holes. At the 15th in the morning, Singh made a nice four-footer for par after an indifferent third shot over the water to 35 feet, followed by a six-footer to salvage a two-putt from 40 feet at the 16th.

But the tournament might have begun to turn his way at the 425-yard 17th, when he hit his second shot into the right bunker from the middle of the fairway, with Duval putting for birdie from six feet. Singh's sand shot skittered 18 feet past the hole, leaving a delicate downhill, sharply breaking putt.

Singh barely touched his ball with the putter, and it rolled ever so slowly



FILE PHOTO
With a 3 under par finish Vijay Singh captured the 2000 Masters.

MASTERS LEADERBOARD

SINGH	-11
E. ELS	-7
L. ROBERTS	-6
D. DUVAL	-6
T. WOODS	-4

The Augusta National Golf Club

VIJAY SINGH'S MASTERS SCORECARD

Round 1	Round 2	Round 3	Round 4
72	67	70	69
TOURNAMENT TOTAL: 278, -10			
MAJOR CHAMPIONSHIPS: 2000 MASTERS, 1998 PGA CHAMPIONSHIP			

toward the cup, breaking at the last second and dropping sweetly in the cup as his caddy, veteran Dave Renwick, leaped high in the air and pumped his fist. Duval's six-footer lipped out of the cup.

Instead of a two-shot swing and a one-shot lead, Singh maintained the three-stroke margin he took to the

clubhouse when both men made routine pars at the 18th.

"That putt (in the morning) at 17 was big," he said. "That gave me a little boost. I was very confident with a three-shot lead. As long as I played solid as I did all week, they'd have to come up and catch me."

Browns can choose between two Penn State defenders

by Ken Murray
The Baltimore Sun
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The Cleveland Browns are on the clock. Five days and counting before the NFL draft begins, they are still weighing the value of the No. 1 pick. Do they invest millions of dollars in defensive end Courtney Brown or pledge their future to linebacker LaVar Arrington?

Take the best pass-rushing end to come out in the last 15 years? Or opt for the free-lancing linebacker who conjures up visions of Lawrence Taylor?

Tough call. Intriguing decision. Ozzie Newsome wishes he had it to make, though.

"I'm envious of Cleveland," said the Baltimore Ravens' vice president of player personnel, who owns the fifth pick. "They can't miss. They cannot miss with either one of those guys."

A draft ripe with impact players on offense will, in all likelihood, start with two impact players on defense Saturday.

Who's No. 1 is the question. There is no easy answer, not even for the Browns, for whom signability and need are major considerations.

Since the February scouting combine in Indianapolis, three players have been fitted for the No. 1 pick. First, there was Florida State wide receiver Peter Warrick. Then, after a bravo workout in March on his Penn State campus, it was Brown. More recently, all eyes have turned to Arrington, Brown's teammate and alter ego at Penn State.

"Probably the most fun guy to watch on tape this year has been LaVar Arrington," Newsome said. "You're talking about a young man who has shown the ability to take over college football games."

Arrington likely is rated higher on most NFL draft boards, but history is on Brown's side when it comes to the first pick.

Only three linebackers have been the first pick in the NFL draft — Aundray Bruce in 1988, Tom Cousineau in 1979 and Tommy Nobis in 1966 — and none made it to the Hall of Fame.

However, since 1972, nine defensive linemen have led off the draft, in-

cluding Hall of Famer Lee Roy Selmon in 1976. That's one almost every three years.

The past decade enforced the priority NFL teams have placed on premier pass-rushing linemen. In the 1990s, 22 defensive linemen were taken in the top 10 picks of the first round, most of any position. And 62 defensive linemen were picked somewhere in the first round in the last decade, again the most for any position (defensive backs are second with 53).

Arrington spent five hours visiting the Browns last Thursday, and left with the expectation he's headed back to Cleveland.

"After conversing with the owner and coaching staff, I get the feeling that they really don't know," he said. "But at this point, I'm kind of confident that maybe I will end up in Cleveland."

That's big news in Washington, where the Redskins cornered the second and third picks in the draft with the hope of taking Arrington and Alabama tackle Chris Samuels.

The Redskins aren't in the market for a defensive end, even one as talented as Brown. They signed future Hall of Famer Bruce Smith and re-signed Marco Coleman to big contracts in the off-season, and have former No. 1 pick Kenard Lang in reserve with Anthony Cook and Ndukwe Kalu.

The Redskins thought so highly of Arrington that they traded two first-round picks and two late-round picks to the San Francisco 49ers to move into the No. 3 spot, seemingly assuring themselves of the best linebacker and lineman in the draft. Now, they might be forced to trade that pick to a team that covets Brown.

It's not hard to understand why Washington wants the 6-foot-3, 233-pound Arrington, a junior coming out early. He was a first-team All-American as a sophomore and junior for the Nittany Lions, and won both the Butkus and Bednarik awards as the nation's best college linebacker and defensive player in 1999.

Last season, Arrington made 72 tackles, including 20 for losses, with nine sacks and one interception. In a game at Purdue, he sacked quarterback Drew Brees, forcing a fumble

that he recovered and returned for a touchdown. He blocked a potential game-winning field goal by Pittsburgh with four seconds left. Against Texas

NFL DRAFT POSITIONS

- 1 Cleveland
- 2 Washington (From New Orleans)
- 3 Washington (From San Francisco)
- 4 Cincinnati
- 5 Baltimore (From Atlanta)
- 6 Philadelphia
- 7 Arizona
- 8 Pittsburgh
- 9 Chicago
- 10 Denver
- 11 New York Giants
- 12 San Francisco (From Carolina through Washington)
- 13 New York (From Tampa Bay through San Diego)
- 14 Green Bay
- 15 Baltimore
- 16 New York Jets (From New England)
- 17 Oakland
- 18 New York Jets
- 19 Seattle (From Dallas)
- 20 Detroit
- 21 Kansas City
- 22 Seattle
- 23 Carolina (From Miami)
- 24 San Francisco (From Washington)
- 25 Minnesota
- 26 Buffalo
- 27 New York Jets (From Tampa Bay)
- 28 Indianapolis
- 29 Jacksonville
- 30 Tennessee
- 31 St. Louis



A&M in the Alamo Bowl, he delivered 14 tackles, a sack and had three hurries that became interceptions.

Arrington is a lightning rod of defense with the reputation of being slightly undisciplined. His effervescent personality is in contrast to that of Brown, who is soft-spoken and religious.

Nevertheless, Penn State Coach Joe Paterno called Brown the best defensive end he ever coached. Brown, 6-5 and 270, set Penn State records for tackles for losses in a season (29) and a career (70), and also had a school-record 33 sacks in four years.

Brown posted a remarkable 4.53 time in the 40-yard dash at his private workout last month, sending ripples through the league. Arrington's times ranged between 4.49 and 4.55.

While Brown has been compared to Bruce Smith — the first pick in the 1985 draft — Arrington has been measured against Taylor, the Giants' dominating Hall of Fame linebacker and No. 2 pick in 1981.

"Courtney Brown is not going to be able to give you as many features as Arrington," said Phil Savage, the Ravens' director of college scouting. "But he can rush the passer, he can play the run at his position, and, at his height, weight and speed, he's going to be tremendous."

"A defensive coordinator can be a lot more creative with Arrington because of his versatility. Arrington can probably go in and play right away because he's somewhat of a free-lancer now."

"And I think even if he doesn't have every defensive call down, with his skills, he'll be able to overcome anything, just like he did at Penn State."

"I think Brown will play from Day 1, too. But at the same time, you're going to see him, quote, 'develop' right before your eyes as he gets into his career."

Which one will the Browns take? As an expansion team with the first pick a year ago, they went back and forth on quarterbacks Tim Couch and Akili Smith.

Only when Couch agreed to a contract the night before the draft was he the certain No. 1 choice. That scenario might repeat itself this year.

Either way, Newsome says, it'll be a good choice.

U. of North Dakota hockey team goes out on top

by Gregg Wong
Knight-Ridder Tribune
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The end of Lee Goren's college hockey career was considerably better than the start.

Goren, a senior right wing for the University of North Dakota, had to sit out his freshman year because he played two games of major junior hockey in Canada. The Sioux ended that season, 1996-97, by winning the national championship in Milwaukee, with Goren looking on from the stands.

As a sophomore, illness and injury limited his play to 29 games, in which he scored just three goals. Finally, as a junior, he started to show his talents, scoring 26 goals to help the Sioux win their third consecutive Western Collegiate Hockey Association championship. But the top-seeded Sioux were eliminated in the NCAA quarterfinals, bringing that season to a disappointing end.

His senior year made up for his previous misfortunes.

Goren scored the tying goal, set up the game-winner and scored the clinching empty-netter, all in the third period, Saturday night in the Providence Civic Center to lead the Sioux to a 4-2 victory over Boston College and their seventh NCAA Division I men's hockey championship.

"Now I know how the seniors felt in '97 when they went out by winning their last game, the national championship," said Goren, 22, of Winnipeg, Manitoba. "I watched them do it, and now as a senior I got to do it. It's an amazing feeling. I'm so happy ... for everybody."

The Sioux trailed 2-1 entering the third period when Goren scored at the 2:43 mark, his shot deflecting off the skate of a retreating BC defender and past goalie Scott Clemmensen.

From that point on, the Sioux took over.

"That goal energized them. They were strong after that," said Eagles coach Jerry York, whose team came up short in a third consecutive Frozen Four.

A turnover at center ice led to the go-ahead goal. Jason Ulmer intercepted a BC pass and fed the puck to Goren breaking in. Clemmensen stopped Goren's shot but had no chance on Ulmer's rebound at 14:22.

Goren's clincher came with 45.2 seconds remaining and Clemmensen pulled for a sixth skater. Goren fired the puck into the empty net from the BC blue line for his nation-leading 34th goal.

Goren was selected most outstanding player of the Frozen Four, and he led the all-tournament team. When asked what that meant to him, he replied, "What means most is we had four goals and they had two."

Goren, 6 feet 3 and 205 pounds, was an assistant captain for the Sioux. In the locker room before the third period, he reminded his teammates about the 1997 title game in Milwaukee, a 6-4 victory over Boston University.

"I knew we had a good shot at winning tonight. I said, 'If we can win the period, we can win the game,'" he said. "We scored five goals in the second period against BU, and I told the guys I knew we could score four goals against BC."

"We only got three. But that was enough."

The Sioux, who were ranked No. 1 in the nation in the final Pioneer Press poll, finished with a 31-8-5 record, going 13-1-2 in their last 16 games. They have won the national championship the last five times they reached the title game, and have won all three finals played in Providence, also doing so in 1980 and '82.

It was a third consecutive year of heartbreak for second-ranked Boston College (29-12-1). The Eagles lost the 1998 title game to Michigan in overtime and lost in overtime to Maine in last year's semifinals. Their only NCAA title in five trips to the final was in 1949.

Joining Goren on the all-tournament team were three teammates, goalie Karl Goehring, defenseman Mike Commodore and wing Bryan Lundboh, and two Eagles, defenseman Mike Mottau and center Jeff Farkas.