

August will be the 20th anniversary of Woods' pro debut, and in those two decades talented and compellingly athletic young people have chosen golf over other sports.

The results can be seen on leaderboards every week. The Tiger Babies are here, and they are taking over.

For the first time in the 13 years of the Golf Digest 50 all-encompassing money list, Woods is not No. 1.

That honour goes to Jordan Spieth, who is 22 years old and was 3 when Tiger won his first professional major championship, the 1997 Masters.

Spieth earned more than US\$53 million on and off the course (see chart) to lead the GD50.

At more than US\$48.5 million, Woods fell to No. 3, behind 45-year-old Phil Mickelson and ahead of Rory McIlroy, 26. Arnold Palmer, golf's most enduring cash machine at 86, is No. 5.

Don't feel sorry for Tiger: During his career, he has earned more than US\$1.4 billion – with a B.

The change at the top of the GD50 reflects new talent and new ways of marketing that talent.

Instead of Woods as the clear No. 1 and Mickelson the perpetual 1-A, a Big Four has emerged, connecting with their fans by taking to social media and digital platforms in addition to traditional advertising and media outlets.

The arrival of the Big Four of Spieth, McIlroy, Jason Day (No. 7 at age 28) and Rickie Fowler (No. 8 at 27) could not be more fortuitous.

"With Tiger and Phil deep into the back nine, this young group came along at just the right time," says John Mascatello of Wasserman Media Group, which represents Day and Fowler.

"You can never rule out anything with Tiger because he is just an incredible athlete," Mascatello says, "but because you no longer have to rest on any one person's shoulder, I think the game is well positioned."

Because of Woods, who also brought a focus on fitness, pro golfers are bigger, younger, stronger, better, more confident and richer than ever before.

In addition to the Big Four, this year's GD50 includes No. 22 Hideki Matsuyama, No. 34 Ryo Ishikawa, No. 36 Patrick Reed, No. 46 Danny Lee, No. 47 Lydia Ko, No. 48 Sangmoon Bae and No. 50 Paula Creamer. All are in their 20s – except Ko, who is just 18.

Poised to possibly move into the GD50 next year are players like Justin Thomas and Daniel Berger, both 22; Park Inbee, 27; and Robert Streb, 28.

"There is no question professional golf is as healthy as it's been in my 25 years in the game, both from an entertainment point of view and a commercial point of view," says Clarke Jones, managing director of the Americas for IMG, which has Ko, Matsuyama and Creamer among its clients, along with Palmer.

Think of it: Day was 9 when Woods won that 1997 Masters, McIlroy was 7 and Ko was born 11 days after Tiger slipped on his first of four Green Jackets.

The depth of talent in men's golf



## THE BANK OF TIGER PAYS DIVI-DENDS

WOODS SLIPS FROM THE NO. 1 SPOT ON THE GOLF DIGEST 50 MONEY LIST FOR THE FIRST TIME, BUT YOUNG STARS SCOOP UP THE EXTRA CASH

BY  
RON SIRAK

When the legacy of Tiger Woods is determined, his most important impact might well be the better athletes he attracted to golf. Woods did that in two ways: He made the game cool, and he made it possible to get rich – really rich – by playing golf.

was demonstrated last summer when McIlroy missed time with an ankle injury.

"When Rory got hurt, instead of the PGA Championship and the FedEx Cup Playoffs being uninteresting, Jason won two of the play-off events (plus the PGA), Rickie one and Spieth the other," Mascatello says.

"The No. 1 player couldn't play for six weeks, and there was more attention to the game than ever. It's like having depth on your roster in winning a Super Bowl."

That was not always the case when Woods was at the top and fan interest tended to wane when he was injured or playing poorly.

For decades, golf positioned itself as a sport whose value was defined not by the size of its audience but by the quality of those fans – a demographic with buying power. In the heady early days of Tiger-generated TV ratings, golf got taken out of its game plan.

"Tiger got golf off message, but we all got swept up in it," says one business insider, speaking not for attribution because he does business with the US PGA Tour.

"They got very fortunate that Jordan came along with his squeaky-clean image. Rickie gets it in terms of the media, the public and sponsors. Jason got his act together. But I still think Rory will be the guy."

Despite not winning a Major in 2015, McIlroy won twice on the US PGA Tour, including the WGC-Cadillac Match Play, and three times on the European Tour, including the DP World Tour Championship.

Spieth had five US PGA Tour wins, including the Masters and the US Open; Day had the US PGA Championship, The Barclays and the BMW Championship among his five tour wins; Fowler earned titles at the Players and the Deutsche Bank; and Zach Johnson, who is No. 15 on the GD50, won the British Open for his second Major and 12th career victory.

"In terms of entertainment and growing the game, we have some really good kids: Rickie, Rory, Jordan and Jason," says the business insider. "The consumer wants good guys. That's who these kids are."

Agents even speak glowingly of clients who are not their own, realising their greatness will lift the entire golf market the way Woods helped make money for everyone associated with the game.

Spieth is represented by Lagardère Unlimited, Johnson is at Wasserman with Day and Fowler, and McIlroy is the sole client at Rory McIlroy Inc.

Before Tiger, the leading money-winner on the US PGA Tour made barely more than the average Major League Baseball player.

Woods changed all that. He helped quintuple US PGA Tour purses and brought in new sponsors like financial institutions, electronics, pharmaceuticals and petrochemicals.

"The amount of money that companies looked to spend in the sport increased, the number of nonendemic industries grew with Tiger playing professionally, the endemics took a whole different view of the sport, Nike actually got into the golf busi-

ness, the game became more global," says Mark Steinberg of Excel Sports Management, which represents Berger and Thomas in addition to Woods and GD50-ranked Justin Rose and Matt Kuchar.

In 1995, the year before Woods turned pro, Greg Norman led the US PGA Tour money list with US\$1.6 million.

This year, Spieth earned more than US\$23 million on the golf course, including official and unofficial money and his US\$10 million FedEx Cup bonus, an addition to the Tour during the Woods era.

Spieth also earned US\$30 million off the course. And there is no arena of sports marketing not open to golfers.

"Look at Patrick Rodgers," Mascatello says. "He has a relationship with the Indianapolis Colts. He's from Indiana, is a Colts guy; it was a natural progression. Rickie Fowler is with Farmers Insurance and Quicken Loans, but also Red Bull, which hadn't been in the golf game."

"It used to be branding and client entertainment. Now with social media you can have a corporate relationship without wearing a logo or showing up at a golf outing. Like Rickie and Mercedes are doing some digital things together, but with no logo on him."

The new generation is connecting with sponsors and consumers in the same way it connects with fans and friends – on smartphones.

"It's their way of life," Steinberg says. "Companies now ask, 'What is your following; will you be willing to tweet X amount of times for our brand?'" etc.

"Those were not the questions being asked in the '90s. Times have changed, and the next generation evolved with that change."

### SPiETH'S BIG DEAL

Sitting at the top of that marketing and performance pyramid is Spieth, who signed a 10-year contract extension with Under Armour even before he won two majors in 2015.

"Both parties went into this knowing he would win Major championships, and we built that into this unprecedented relationship," says Jay Danzi, who represents Spieth for Lagardère.

"Jordan's bought into a brand strategy from the beginning, and people are getting to see what an amazing person he is."

Adds David M. Carter, founder of The Sports Business Group: "(Spieth's) approachability and likeability will go a long way with a wide range of consumers and fans who have been consistently disappointed by other superstars."

In November, when Spieth travelled to the Australian Open, Under Armour was all over it, setting up a junior clinic there under the slogan "Rule Yourself" and promoting it on Instagram, Twitter and its website.

It's a new world of marketing in pro golf and a new galaxy of stars, with compelling rivalries that might extend beyond the Big Four. And that new reality seems to have golf in a very good place. ☺

## GOLF DIGEST 50

**ON-COURSE INCOME** for 2015 includes all money earned on the PGA Tour and the five international Tours (Japan PGA, PGA European, Australasian, Southern Africa, Asian) and the Champions Tour, LPGA Tour, Ladies European Tour and the Japan LPGA through Nov. 22. It includes unofficial money won in non-Tour events.

**OFF-COURSE INCOME** includes estimates of all money earned from endorsements, bonuses, appearance fees, corporate outings, speaking engagements, licensing fees (video games, trading cards, etc.), course architecture, books, instructional videos and businesses that capitalise on a person's status as a player, such as product lines including clothing, wine and turfgrass. Investment income is not included.

NAME	PREVIOUS RANK	ON COURSE	OFF COURSE	TOTAL
1. Jordan Spieth	16	\$23,030,465	\$30,000,000	\$53,030,465
2. Phil Mickelson	2	\$2,301,730	\$50,000,000	\$52,301,730
3. Tiger Woods	1	\$551,098	\$48,000,000	\$48,551,098
4. Rory McIlroy	3	\$9,468,190	\$37,500,000	\$46,968,190
5. Arnold Palmer	4	—	\$40,000,000	\$40,000,000
6. Jack Nicklaus	5	\$41,500	\$22,000,000	\$22,041,500
7. Jason Day	28	\$11,938,330	\$7,500,000	\$19,438,330
8. Rickie Fowler	12	\$8,254,416	\$9,000,000	\$17,254,416
9. Justin Rose	7	\$7,119,762	\$8,000,000	\$15,119,762
10. Gary Player	11	—	\$15,000,000	\$15,000,000
11. Bubba Watson	10	\$8,289,297	\$6,000,000	\$14,289,297
12. Henrik Stenson	18	\$8,513,827	\$5,000,000	\$13,513,827
13. Dustin Johnson	22	\$6,209,467	\$6,000,000	\$12,209,467
14. Greg Norman	17	—	\$12,000,000	\$12,000,000
15. Zach Johnson	29	\$5,728,154	\$5,500,000	\$11,228,154
16. Sergio Garcia	8	\$2,917,143	\$7,500,000	\$10,417,143
17. Jim Furyk	13	\$4,112,664	\$5,750,000	\$9,862,664
18. Adam Scott	9	\$1,494,529	\$8,000,000	\$9,494,529
19. Bernhard Langer	20	\$3,562,370	\$5,750,000	\$9,312,370
20. Matt Kuchar	14	\$3,810,304	\$5,500,000	\$9,310,304
21. Colin Montgomerie	24	\$2,666,177	\$6,500,000	\$9,166,177
22. Hideki Matsuyama	36	\$4,121,146	\$5,000,000	\$9,121,146
23. Ernie Els	15	\$521,154	\$8,000,000	\$8,521,154
24. Tom Watson	33	\$408,751	\$7,500,000	\$7,908,751
25. Nick Faldo	35	\$47,275	\$7,500,000	\$7,547,275
26. Jimmy Walker	21	\$5,035,850	\$2,500,000	\$7,535,850
27. Davis Love III	39	\$1,505,771	\$6,000,000	\$7,505,771
28. Brandt Snedeker	46	\$3,985,556	\$3,500,000	\$7,485,556
29. Fred Couples	34	\$729,991	\$6,500,000	\$7,229,991
30. Lee Westwood	27	\$1,421,011	\$5,750,000	\$7,171,011
31. Martin Kaymer	19	\$2,430,945	\$4,000,000	\$6,430,945
32. Louis Oosthuizen	NR	\$4,110,531	\$2,250,000	\$6,360,531
33. Miguel A. Jimenez	37	\$1,830,883	\$4,500,000	\$6,330,883
34. Ryo Ishikawa	32	\$1,134,487	\$5,000,000	\$6,134,487
35. J.B. Holmes	NR	\$4,369,930	\$1,750,000	\$6,119,930
36. Patrick Reed	43	\$4,321,960	\$1,750,000	\$6,071,960
37. Charley Hoffman	NR	\$4,546,129	\$1,500,000	\$6,046,129
38. Luke Donald	30	\$1,994,152	\$4,000,000	\$5,994,152
39. Graeme McDowell	25	\$1,188,463	\$4,750,000	\$5,938,463
40. Keegan Bradley	31	\$2,167,579	\$3,750,000	\$5,917,579
41. Hunter Mahan	26	\$1,908,973	\$4,000,000	\$5,908,973
42. Stacy Lewis	41	\$1,893,423	\$4,000,000	\$5,893,423
43. Paul Casey	NR	\$3,768,311	\$2,000,000	\$5,768,311
44. Ian Poulter	38	\$2,154,348	\$3,500,000	\$5,654,348
45. Bill Haas	NR	\$3,309,024	\$2,250,000	\$5,559,024
46. Danny Lee	NR	\$4,515,933	\$850,000	\$5,365,933
47. Lydia Ko	NR	\$3,800,802	\$1,500,000	\$5,300,802
48. Sangmoon Bae	NR	\$2,794,632	\$2,500,000	\$5,294,632
49. Padraig Harrington	48	\$1,491,667	\$3,750,000	\$5,241,667
50. Paula Creamer	47	\$363,485	\$4,750,000	\$5,113,485

NR Not ranked among the Golf Digest 50 in March 2015.

**SOURCES** Figures for the list were compiled through Golf Digest interviews with agents, players, executives of companies involved with endorsements, industry analysts and through the official money lists of the professional tours.