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Remember Tiger limping around at the U.S. Open as he beat Rocco Mediate before heading into season-ending knee surgery? I just found out that Rocco was having some serious pain in his knee, too. Mediate damaged his knee when he stepped in a hole during a tournament in 2007 and has favored it ever since. "Yes, the pain was there at Torrey," Mediate told me. "I just didn't say anything." Mediate had surgery following the FBR Open a few weeks ago and his physical therapist, Cindy Hilfman, had a big circle on the calendar. "The goal was get him ready to play at Riviera, his favorite track," she said. On Friday I asked what it would have taken to keep him out of the tournament at Riviera. "Death," Rocco answered.

Good news for the Tour as Northern Trust has said they plan on continuing their sponsorship in spite of world economic impact.

Have you ever wanted to caddie for one of the Tour's hottest players? Had you been in Australia this week you might have had the chance. Anthony Kim had to find a last-minute replacement for his regular caddie, Eric Larson, thanks to Australian immigration authorities. When Kim and his caddie arrived in Perth on Monday, Larson was refused entry for a failure to declare a criminal conviction in the United States.

Larson used to caddie for Mark Calcavecchia, but in 1995 he was convicted for his part in a small cocaine ring and served an 11-year jail sentence. This was a stopper for the Aussies because of a "character requirement" rule. Kim fired his two previous caddies -- Ron Levin, who was on the bag for Todd Hamilton in his 2004 British Open win, and Scott Gneiser, who formerly worked with David Toms -- and, on Calcavecchia's recommendation, Larson was hired. Kim said Larsen will be back on his bag at the Match Play Championship next week.

With his win in the AT&T Pebble Beach National Pro-Am, Dustin Johnson jumped 74 places to No. 45 in the world golf rankings. There were no changes at the top so Tiger Woods remains No. 1 followed by Sergio Garcia, Padraig Harrington, Vijay Singh, Phil Mickelson, Henrik Stenson and Robert Karlsson.

So what's Jack Nicklaus up to? The best player of the 20th century was at Del Ray Dunes this week for a hospital benefit hosted by Bob Murphy. Jack claims that he "barely even watches golf on television anymore and might play for fun once a month at the most."

With the golf course design market softening these days, another victim of the global economic downturn, Nicklaus still has a handful of design projects still going but is nowhere near as busy as he's been in recent years.



Roberts Gives SST Fourth Win of '09

Loren Roberts won the Ace Classic on the Champions Tour this week, giving SST PURE its fourth win of 2009. Roberts who has a history of asking SST to PURE his clubs, birdied three of the last four holes to win by a shot.

On the PGA Tour, SST players dominated the top 20 at the Northern Trust Open at Riviera in Los Angeles. Steve Stricker finished in second place, followed by K.J. Choi and Fred Couples, who tied for third. A group of players with SST PUREd clubs tied for sixth: Luke Donald, Mark Calcavecchia, and Rory Sabatini.

If you read this weekly you know that SST PURE has a Shaft Alignment Lab that is a vital part of the PGA Tour's equipment support fleet. The SST PURE lab provides on-the-spot PUREing for the players on the PGA Tour. This week the list of clubs PUREd for the pros included back-to-back British Open champion Padraig Harrington, defending FedEx Cup champion Vijay Singh, Charles Warren, Woody Austin, David Duval, Brandt Snedeker, J.L. Lewis, Rory Sabbatini, Nicolas Thompson, Tim Petrovic, Eric Axley, Graeme McDowell, J.B. Holmes, John Rollins, and Garrett Willis.

John Rollins, who lost the Buick Invitational by a shot a few weeks back, decided he needed to PURE his clubs and join the ranks of the world's best players who also depend on SST. Last year players who PUREd their clubs won more than \$137 million and 37 events plus three out of four majors.

The Tour moves this week to Arizona and the first World Championship event of 2009 and the much-anticipated return of Tiger Woods. In the Feb. 7 edition of *Golfweek* magazine columnist James Achenbach wrote: "*Golfweek* has learned through sources at Nike that Tiger Woods had his clubs checked and adjusted by SST. As revealed by Nike insiders, the company assembled a dozen sets of irons for Woods, with only two sets being PUREd. In blind testing Woods picked those two sets as his primary set and backup set."

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