

editor's
letter

BY
S. MURALI

frustrating. It was one thing after another. Back problems. Chipping woes. Swing issues. Lack of confidence. Not enough golf. And finally just a single top-10 finish in 11 tournaments. It was another lost year for Tiger.

— ESPN.COM SENIOR GOLF WRITER BOB HARIG,
ASKED TO COMMENT ON WOODS' 2015
PERFORMANCES



Above, from left to right:
Tiger Woods, Jordan Spieth,
Jason Day and Rory McIlroy.



THREE YOUNG LIONS TO REPLACE OLD TIGER

For a long time, it was difficult for me to stay up in the wee hours of the morning to watch a golf tournament unless Tiger Woods was in the mix.

In recent years, it has been to watch him struggle and often miss the cut.

Ironically, that would make things easier over the weekend as I would just get up the next morning and check the scores on the US PGA Tour website to see who won.

But now that the 2015 Major season has ended, I am delighted to say

things have changed for me.

I no longer crave my Tiger fix. The flight I most wanted to watch this year came in the first two rounds of the US PGA Championship, when Rory McIlroy and Jordan Spieth went head to head.

It was a breath of fresh air for a game that many consider a "sunset" sport.

Just like Tiger's fortunes have waned, not surprisingly, golf viewing figures have dropped in recent years.

There is talk that the game is losing

its allure, that less people are taking up the sport, and that golf courses are becoming emptier by the minute.

But Spieth, McIlroy and US PGA Championship winner Jason Day represent a new, exciting phase for the sport.

I believe that the competition among these three could well define the sport in years to come, and help it regain the pomp it enjoyed in the Tiger years.

Sure, 39-year-old Zach Johnson somehow outlasted everyone at this year's British Open.

But Spieth, 22, McIlroy, 26 and Day, 27, have won five of the last six Majors available.

Spieth, now world No 1, must be the most amazing competitor to emerge in the game since Woods.

The young American has no quit in him, and to watch him putt on a Sunday at a Major championship is like watching a fearless Lion stalk its prey.

McIlroy, after winning the last two Majors of 2014, has taken a little break

(and a twist of the ankle) but looks none too pleased to see his No 1 status taken away by someone even younger.

You can bet that the Irishman, who already has four Majors to his name, will not be taking this new order lying down.

And then, there is Mr Majors, Jason Day.

His record in big events is startling – he has finished top 10 in seven of the last 12 Majors.

And that win at the US PGA Championship earlier this month, and his record-setting 20-under-par tally, suggest that he is also going to be right in the mix for that World No 1 spot.

Granted, none of them exude the charisma and the novelty factor that Tiger brought to the game in 1997.

But put together, these three 20-somethings have the means to propel the sport to new heights.

Wonderful rivalries without Tiger in the fray.

Who would have ever thought it was possible?

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