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Former UT golfer wins coveted British Open

TROON, Scotland (AP) — Jesper Parnevik knew the score this time. And it told him that Justin Leonard was the British Open champion.

Leonard, the only contender to mount a charge on Sunday at Royal Troon, closed with a 65 to win the 126th Open championship at 12-under-par 272.

Parnevik, who had as much as a four-stroke advantage on the final day, lost the lead for good when Leonard, playing in the group ahead of him, made a birdie on No. 17.

"I came up to 17 and watched his birdie and the air kind of went out of my sails for good," Parnevik said.

Parnevik followed with a bogey on No. 17 to fall two behind and the tournament was over.

It was his second crushing disappointment in the British Open. He lost the 1994 championship just 10 miles down the coast at Turnberry when he failed to look at the scoreboard on the final hole and gambled when he did not need to.

"This one hurts a lot more than Turnberry," Parnevik said. "I think the pressure was too much. It was a struggle all day."

As Parnevik walked up the 18th fairway to a thunderous ovation from the packed bleachers, the inescapable truth was written in the black letters on the

giant yellow scoreboard: He was second once again.

Leonard's closing round was one of the best in his major championship history, ranking with the 67 by Nick Faldo in the 1996 Masters, the 64 by Greg Norman in the 1993 British Open and the 63 by Johnny Miller in the 1973 U.S. Open.

All of them shot scores no one else could come close to on the final day. So did Leonard. Of the 16 players who started the day under par, Leonard was the only one to shoot a round in the 60s.

"Just to be able to come through with the tournament on the line, that's the kind of confidence I'm able to take away from here," Leonard said.

Only Jim Barnes in 1925 was able to come from strokes back on the final day to win the British Open.

Later, as Leonard brushed back tears when he was awarded the silver claret jug that goes to the winner, the scoreboard carried the message: "Well done, Justin, you at Royal Birkdale in 1998."

Leonard, the fifth consecutive American to win the Troon, starting with Arnold Palmer in 1962, was a picture of calm on the course.

"Because all day I was behind, and most of the day behind by two or three strokes," Leonard said. "I wanted to go out aggressively and avoid making a couple of mistakes on the back nine."

He followed that plan perfectly.

Needing only two putts on the final hole, Leonard stroked his 30-footer gently toward the hole and gave out a big sigh and rolled his eyes as it nestled within in distance.

"That last putt I was just praying that I could two-putt," Leonard said. "It was surprising how calm I stayed."

A final bogey on No. 18 put Parnevik at 275, tied with Darren Clarke of Northern Ireland. Jim Furyk was fourth with a 279 and Pdraig Harrington of Ireland finished at 280.

Tiger Woods stumbled once again, making a triple bogey on the par-3 eighth hole in shooting a 74 to finish 12 strokes back.

Woods, who started the day eight strokes behind, made a bit of a run with two early birdies, but lost hope when he made a triple bogey 6 on the 126-year-old Postage Stamp hole when it took him two shots to get out of the bunker.

Big numbers did Woods in at Royal Troon. He had three triple bogeys and a quadruple bogey in the tournament.

Leonard won with a hot putter that helped him get birdies on the front nine to get back in the hunt. He then closed with a series of great putts to blow past Parnevik.

"Making those putts on 15, 16 and 17," Leonard said, searching for words to describe the feeling. "The ball just opened up for me today."

Leonard made a 12-footer to save par on the 15th.

"That was the tournament right there," Leonard said.

He followed it with a 15-footer for birdie on the next hole and then the 35-foot birdie putt on No. 17.



PHOTOGRAPH: Associated Press
Justin Leonard kisses his trophy after he won the 126th British Open Sunday.

Leonard has bright future ahead

TROON, Scotland (AP) — The night before the final of the 1992 U.S. Amateur, Nancy Leonard hemmed a new pair of pants for her son and tried to imagine how a breakthrough win would change his life.

Imagine what the future holds for Justin Leonard now.

Someone asked the 25-year-old Texan to do that moments after he coolly finished off Royal Troon's tough final holes to become the British Open champion. Leonard is no wild-and-crazy guy, but the picture he kept coming back to was the party his friends were throwing at the Royal Oaks club in Dallas that very moment without him.

"The men's locker room will be crazy," he said. "I hope somebody videotaped it for me."

After a moment's reflection, though, Leonard was not so sure he actually wanted to watch it. This is the same guy who had a hard time living down his selection by Cosmopolitan magazine last year as one of the world's 25 most eligible bachelors.

"I keep thinking how big my club bill is going to be," he said, "after everything is broken and all the champagne that's going to be poured."

Typical Leonard.

He is way too modest. He gets asked about breaking through to the highest level of his profession and all he can talk about is the guys he plays a regular Nassau with busting a couple of lockers.

But there is no missing this point: In the same way a win at the U.S. Amateur earned Leonard a spot near the front of the emerging class of great young players, winning a major confirms it. A breakthrough win like the British Open separates him from the crowd packed with potential and names like Phil Mickelson, David Duval and Jim Furyk. Most important, it establishes him as a legitimate rival for the two best players his generation has so far produced — 21-year-old Masters champion Tiger Woods and 27-year-old U.S. Open champion Ernie Els.

"I don't feel like I play harder or practice harder because of those two. But maybe going in there today, having seen Tiger and Ernie do it, I thought it was OK to go out and win a tournament like this even being the age I am."

"Maybe," Leonard said. "that was in the back of my mind somewhere."

If so, it was apparently back there for some time. Not so you would know it by watching him swing.

Leonard has one of those horribly flat, "hit-the-ball-before-it-moves" maneuvers made necessary by the high winds in Texas and made famous by the movie *Tin Cup*. And he can be very touchy about defending it.

"The reason you don't see everybody swing this way," Leonard said earlier this weekend, when a British reporter asked about his "unique" swing, "is because no one else out there is 5-foot-9, 157 pounds, with a 10-C shoe and thinks exactly the way I do."

The swing may LOOK like it was slapped together on the practice range five minutes before his tee time. But Leonard has been working on it his entire life. His sister, Kelly, has proof. She often tells stories about how he fashioned par-5 holes at the beach and played them with sticks while the other kids were building sand castles. And how, the moment their parents walked out the door, he would start chipping his way across the house, using the dining room, a few steps up, as an elevated green.

All that practicing paid off Sunday. Leonard started the day in third place, trailing leader Jesper Parnevik by five strokes and Darren Clarke by three. He ran off six

Jim Litke
AP
Commentary

Top finishers, monies won and scores

Justin Leonard,	\$418,875	69-66-72-65	272
Darren Clarke,	\$251,325	67-66-71-71	275
Jesper Parnevik,	\$251,325	70-66-66-73	275
Jim Furyk,	\$150,795	67-72-70-70	279
Stephen Ames,	\$104,719	74-69-66-71	280
Pdraig Harrington,	\$104,719	75-69-69-67	280
Pete O'Malley,	\$68,137	73-70-70-68	281
Eduardo Romero,	\$68,137	74-68-67-72	281
Fred Couples,	\$68,137	69-68-70-74	281
Robert Allenby,	\$40,715	76-68-66-72	282

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Thurs. 24th, 1 p.m.	MSC Visual Arts: Art in the "Real World" - a "field trip" to Houston	Meet at MSC Forsyth Center Galleries
Fri. 25th, 7:30 p.m.	MSC Opera and Performing Arts Society: Broadway Cabaret	Rudder Forum

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WHAT'S IT LIKE AT THE PLASMA CENTER?

To the staff of the Plasma Center,

I would like to start by saying thank you to each and every employee for making the past three years enjoyable in a professional, efficient and courteous environment. As a donor since 1993, I have been more than satisfied with every aspect of your operation, which allows myself and others to contribute what we can to community service, all the while being serviced by diligent, but relaxed, workers. Everyone at the Plasma Center, from those behind the front counter to the phlebotomists to the supervisors, have made great efforts to insure that each donor feels hygienically safe, as well as keeping the atmosphere light.

Like most, I started coming to the Plasma Center for monetary reasons, but I soon developed acquaintances that appealed to me almost as much as the original need for money, enabling me to look forward to each donation, not only for my wallet's sake but also to see my friends. Like I commented to someone recently, talking to people at the Plasma Center was like getting mail from a far-off friend that you don't get to do much with, but who you can talk to as often as you write. For those acquaintances and for your continual services. I would like to thank all of those I've come to know and appreciate over the past three years - Emily, and Tracy, Heath, and Marty, Ada and Josie, etc... more I can't remember or those who have gone on to better things.

So, as I graduate from this great University, I bid you all a fond farewell and strong commendations on such a successful blend of quality medical practice and friendly service. Thank you all and have a great summer. Thanks, C.F.

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Lions reach deal with Sanders

UNIVERSITY CENTER, Mich. (AP) — Barry Sanders agreed to a five-year contract with the Detroit Lions on Sunday and will report to camp on Monday, the team announced.

The team did not disclose the financial terms of the contract, but said it includes an option for a sixth year. Sanders had reportedly been close to signing a contract that would pay him on average between \$5.3 million and \$5.5 million per season, making him the league's highest-paid running back.

"This was obviously a complicated deal, and we glad we could iron out the final details," said Chris Schmidt, the Lions executive vice president and chief operating officer. "Barry's been an important player for this team for the past eight seasons. And with this deal, we're delighted that Lions fans will have the opportunity to watch Barry for years to come."

Sanders won the NFL rushing title last season with 1,553 yards, becoming the first back in league history to rush for 1,500 yards or better in three straight seasons.