

Defending champ ready for repeat at Open

FARMINGDALE, N.Y. (AP) — Retief Goosen wouldn't mind going through it all again to keep his U.S. Open title.

Well, maybe he could do without the 2-foot miss.

Goosen turned one of golf's greatest gaffes into a stirring triumph at last year's Open, recovering from his botched gimme on the 72nd hole to win a playoff with Mark Brooks the following day.

The steely resolve Goosen displayed during that ordeal propelled him to new heights over the year that followed.

The 33-year-old South African won three times on the European Tour, along with the BellSouth Classic in Atlanta this year. He finished second to Tiger Woods at the Masters, falling apart on the final day, but showed the kind of game that should make him a regular contender in the majors.

"It's been a great experience," Goosen said. "I've enjoyed every minute of it. It

was tiring at times, but that comes with winning the U.S. Open. I wouldn't mind winning another one and going through it again."

After winning at Southern Hills, Goosen was a bit overwhelmed by the whole experience. It didn't really sink in until he was introduced as the U.S. Open champion at his next tournament.

Now, he is much more comfortable in the role.

"I feel like a defending champion," he said. "People are recognizing me a lot more than they did in the past."

Goosen is not likely to extend his title for another year, and not just because he has slumped a bit in the last couple of months.

The Open has not had a defending champion repeat since Curtis Strange in 1988-89, and before that there was Ben Hogan in 1950-51. Opens are tough enough to win once, much less twice in a row.

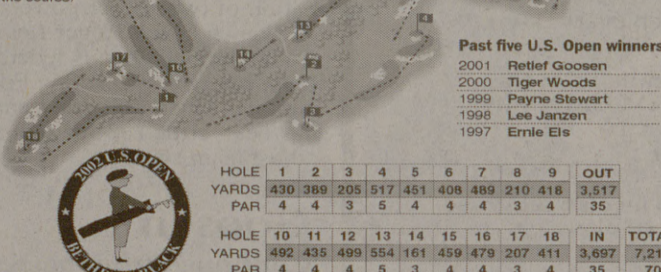
THE 102ND U.S. OPEN CHAMPIONSHIP

Farmingdale, N.Y. • June 13-16

Bethpage State Park

Basic Black

For the first time in history, the U.S. Open will be played at a daily-fee public course that is accessible to the average golfer. The Black Course at Bethpage State Park is a par 70 at 7,214 yards, the longest in U.S. Open history. The U.S. Open is widely regarded as the toughest test in golf, and for good reason. No other tournament puts such a premium on par. Only 12 players have finished a U.S. Open under par dating to 1995, the last time it was held on Long Island at Shinnecock Hills. A hole-by-hole look at the course.



Television schedule (all times EDT)
 • Thursday, June 13 and Friday, June 14, 11 a.m.-3 p.m., 5 p.m.-7 p.m., ESPN; 3 p.m.-5 p.m., NBC
 • Saturday, June 15, 12:30 p.m.-7 p.m., NBC
 • Sunday, June 16, 1:30 p.m.-8 p.m., NBC
 • Playoff (if necessary), Monday, June 17, noon-2 p.m., ESPN; 2 p.m. to conclusion, NBC

Past five U.S. Open winners
 2001 Retief Goosen
 2000 Tiger Woods
 1999 Payne Stewart
 1998 Lee Janzen
 1997 Ernie Els

HOLE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	OUT
YARDS	430	389	205	517	451	408	489	210	418	3,517
PAR	4	4	3	5	4	4	4	4	3	35

HOLE	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	IN	TOTAL
YARDS	492	435	499	554	161	459	479	207	411	3,697	7,214
PAR	4	4	4	5	3	4	4	4	3	35	70

SOURCES: USGA, Associated Press

Even so, Goosen at least plans to savor the next few days of his reign.

"I'm still going to be introduced that way until Sunday," he said. "I think I'm really keen

and going to be determined out there to try to do my best and see if I can hang onto the title. It's going to be a tough one. But they are all tough to win."

Clearly, he's not conceding anything to Tiger Woods, David Duval, Phil Mickelson or any of the other favorites. Goosen thrived in the stifling heat at Southern Hills a year ago, striking the ball brilliantly until he got the putter in his hand at the final hole on Sunday.

Goosen knocked his approach just 12 feet from the cup, on the low side of the green — perfect position to take two putts, pick up the trophy and join an elite club.

Inexplicably, he powered the first putt past the hole a couple of feet, leaving him a testy downhill on the slick greens. He missed that one, too, staring at the ball in disbelief while the crowd gasped.

"It was a little bit of a shock," Goosen said. "You stand there thinking you've got

two putts to win, then suddenly you're thinking, "Two putts and I'm out of here.""

Goosen pulled himself together, making a 3-footer to force the playoff. Then he kept reminding himself he still had a chance to win his first major. He slept well that night, awoke in a refreshed state of mind and cruised to a two-stroke victory over Brooks in the 18-hole playoff.

Would things have been different if he didn't beat Brooks? How would Goosen have coped with being another Jean van de Velde, the Frenchman who blew the 1999 British Open?

"I don't know," the South African replied. "I'm here now. I won that event and things have gone great for me."

He had a chance to win another major at Augusta National, going to the final day tied with Woods. Goosen faded to a 74, but insists that he would

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SPORTS IN BRIEF

Aggies schedule Miami, Air Force

The Texas A&M football team will play a home-and-home series with Miami and Air Force in the future, A&M Athletic Director Wally Groff and head coach R.C. Slocum announced Wednesday.

The series with the Hurricanes begins when A&M visits Miami on Sept. 15, 2007. Miami will come to Kyle Field in 2008. A&M and Miami's lone meeting came in 1944 when the Aggies pounded the

Hurricanes, 70-14, to give Miami its worst loss in school history.

A&M's series with Air Force will start in College Station in 2008 and move to Colorado Springs in 2009. A&M and Air Force have never met on the football field.

"I'm excited about playing Miami and Air Force, and I think our players and fans will enjoy those games," Slocum said. "We have never shied away from playing anyone. I think our non-conference schedules are as attractive as you'll find anywhere."

Sweden advances with tie

YOKOHAMA, Japan (AP) — First defending champion France, now Argentina.

Two teams originally thought likely to win the World Cup have made very early exits, and the final barriers for both were surprisingly strong Scandinavian teams.

Anders Svensson sent a free kick over a defensive wall and past the goalkeeper in the 59th minute. Then Sweden held on for a 1-1 tie against the Argentines on Wednesday — all it needed to advance to the second round.

When England tied 0-0 with Nigeria, it also moved on. And Argentina joined France in first-round humiliation — the French were beaten by Denmark on Tuesday.

Also advancing, in dramatic fashion, was Paraguay, which scored three times in the second half to take second place in Group B with a 3-1 win over Slovenia. Spain, already into the second round, beat South Africa 3-2, giving Paraguay the edge over South Africa on goals scored, 6-5.

Argentina had not such good fortune.

"This is going to be very difficult for me to forget," said Argentina's Juan Veron. "We're going to face a lot of criticism, but we gave all we had on the field."

It was not enough, mainly because of a 1-0

2002 WORLD CUP STANDINGS

Next games - Thursday, June 13
 Brazil vs. Costa Rica at Suwon, South Korea
 Turkey vs. China at Seoul, South Korea
 Italy vs. Mexico at Oita, Japan
 Ecuador vs. Croatia at Yokohama, Japan

Group A	W	L	T	GF	GA	Pts
x-Denmark	2	0	1	5	2	7
x-Senegal	1	0	2	4	5	5
Uganda	0	2	4	5	2	0
France	0	2	1	0	3	1

Group B	W	L	T	GF	GA	Pts
x-Spain	3	0	3	4	5	9
x-Paraguay	1	1	6	8	4	5
South Africa	1	1	5	5	4	4
Slovenia	0	3	2	7	0	0

Group C	W	L	T	GF	GA	Pts
x-Brazil	2	0	6	1	6	6
Costa Rica	1	0	1	3	1	4
Turkey	0	1	2	2	1	1
China	0	2	0	6	0	0

Group D	W	L	T	GF	GA	Pts
South Korea	1	0	1	3	1	4
United States	1	0	1	4	3	4
Portugal	1	0	6	3	3	3
Poland	0	2	0	6	0	0

Group E	W	L	T	GF	GA	Pts
x-Germany	2	0	1	1	1	7
x-Ireland	1	0	2	5	2	5
Cameroun	1	1	2	3	4	4
Saudi Arabia	0	3	0	0	12	0

Group F	W	L	T	GF	GA	Pts
x-Sweden	1	0	2	4	3	5
x-England	1	0	2	1	5	5
Argentina	1	1	2	2	4	4
Nigeria	0	2	1	3	1	1

Group G	W	L	T	GF	GA	Pts
x-Sweden	1	0	2	4	3	5
Japan	1	0	3	1	6	4
Russia	1	0	2	1	3	4
Croatia	1	0	2	2	3	4

Group H	W	L	T	GF	GA	Pts
Japan	1	0	3	2	4	4
Russia	1	0	2	1	3	4
Belgium	0	2	3	2	2	3
Turkey	0	1	1	3	1	3

SOURCE: Associated Press

See Cup on page 6

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