

Phoenix Open Minus Tiger, Sort Of...

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So, the Phoenix Open is finally here and fitted with an ultra-stacked field fresh off the Accenture Match Play Championship in Tucson. While the tournament is overflowing with top talent, a new non-Super Bowl-coinciding date and record crowds expected throughout the week, all the talk still on Mr. Woods—who's private plane is parked at Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport as I type.



It seems the Woods camp has made its goal these last two weeks to completely deter any spotlight from being shown on the Arizona's two PGA Tour events two consecutive weeks in a row. First, Woods's monumental break from silence was broadcast worldwide during the second round of the Accenture Match Play Championship held at the Ritz Carlton Golf Club in Marana. And now Numero Uno's jet is parked at a little airport in the South East Valley during the practice rounds of the Phoenix Open— it has reportedly been there since Sunday.

Being the huge skeptic that I am, I don't think Tiger is here in Phoenix. While tabloid speculation leans toward the supposition that he's here for additional rehab (which he was reportedly receiving in Mississippi), it just doesn't seem likely since the closest rehab facility is in Wickenburg (where he was rumored to be around Christmastime), in which case he'd park his jet up that way. Rather, I think he's lent his ride to a fellow Tour player or PGA Tour big wig or some other entity that may be involved with the tournament.

Besides, would the privacy-coveting Woods seriously travel to the corner of the U.S. dotted with endless tees during the same week that crazed golf fans unleash their uber-alert golf radars? Common sense points to no. However, we have seen how nonsensical the entire Woods scandal/saga/(insert your favorite noun) has been since that fateful Thanksgiving eve, so maybe I'll eat my words later this week as more details are learned of this mysterious luxury liner that has swooped into the Valley.

Tiger talk aside, a major draw for the FBR/Xerox Pro-am has backed out. Ray Romano pulled the plug on participating in the event to be held on Wednesday due to a family illness. Actor/comedian George Lopez, Mr. Fergie (aka Josh Duhamel), Andy Garcia, Alice Cooper and Mark Grace are still scheduled to appear. My time will be spent following George Lopez, who I (as well as oodles of fans) have followed since he started gracing the tourney with his presence.

Follow me on twitter at www.twitter.com/azfoothillsmag, as I tweet from the Pro-Am on Wednesday.