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## Tiger Woods is God: Check the Website

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Quick, tell me the name of the golfer who won the U.S. Open last week. Now which golfer didn't win? If you are like most casual golf watchers you couldn't name the winner, but you knew that Tiger Woods did not win. My guess is that you could not name either of the players who were in the Monday playoff. And furthermore, like much of the rest of America, you did not watch the final round of the tournament on Sunday, nor the Monday playoff.

Some call this the Tiger Woods factor in golf. Others make more serious claims.

Sunday morning while driving on the road to Atlanta to see the beloved Braves tank another game, I was nearly knocked off my horse by the voice on the radio claiming that Tiger Woods is god. Had Tiger come back and won the U.S. Open that afternoon I would have been ready to take this claim seriously.

In Christian drenched eastern Tennessee where the many names of god seem to be everywhere, the story of the new religion of Tiger Woods came to me from National Public Radio. This was not some mountain bible thumper calling for repentance; it was NPR, America's voice of cool deliberate reason, sending out a story about this new religion.

What first caught my ear was the web address, [www.tigerwoodsisgod.com](http://www.tigerwoodsisgod.com) and then the interview with the former disc jockey who has left the world of radio to devote his life to preaching this new gospel via the Internet. It's a good thing I did not have one of those new computer watches that allow you to connect to the net anywhere within the confines of low earth orbit. I would have swung it into immediate action and risked driving off a cliff.

So I had to wait until I returned home.

It was worth the wait. What comes up on the screen is a picture of Tiger Woods pumping his fist as he finishes the Master's victory with the Augusta National Scoreboard in the background. Across the top in large Gothic lettering are the words: "First Church of Tiger Woods," and then in smaller lettering the message, "Welcome to the First Church

of Tiger Woods Celebrating the emergence of the "true" Messiah." The accompanying music, Beethoven's "Ode to Joy," plays repeatedly, and in the upper left of the picture is an animation showing in turn a drawing of the standard version of god, flashes of lightening, and the words "Thy Golfer, Thy Son." Under the photo is the caption, "Proud Father looks on as Tiger Woods wins the Masters." Inexplicably the burning bush is absent from the scene.

This mind-stretching exercise is the handiwork of John Ziegler, former Nashville talk show host and self-proclaimed "scratch golfer." In 1997 Ziegler began holding prayer services on his radio show every Monday following tournaments graced by Tigergod. Ziegler organized the religion after Earl Woods, Tiger's earthly father, proclaimed Tiger as the "Chosen One."

Ziegler was ultimately fired from his radio show, not for the prayers or the organization of a religion, but for discussing the topic, "Why white people love Tiger Woods." This freed up Ziegler to devote his entire life to the new religion and to create this cybershrine to the golfing feline deity.

A full history of this new religious movement is available at the web site along with many other grand features and marvelous graphics. Pictures of Tiger as Moses, Tiger as god, and a gallery of Tiger moments with clever and cutesy captions are well worth the visit.

Don't miss the Ten Commandments with Tiger holding the Tablets and looking very much like a representation of Moses. Commandment Six "Thou shall not scream 'You da man!' after any Tiger shot since to call him a man would be demeaning," may be the best of the ten.

Among the evidences of Tiger's divinity is the fact that in the last 30 times Tiger has played a tournament in the U.S. the Dow went up on 29 of the following Mondays. According to Ziegler this makes Tiger bigger than Alan Greenspan, a deity of some repute in his own right.

"The Weekly Prayer for Tiger" is another gem available on the site. You can hear John Ziegler recite the first prayer he composed after the 1997 Master's. This is tastefully accompanied by Gregorian Chant, which I was unable to decipher with my rusty Latin. All the prayers seem to be a

parody of the Lord's Prayer and the faux-Latin ending in Ziegler's recitation is a very nice touch.

If all of this seems to be a bit much check the testimonials page where e-mail after e-mail denounce the web site. It will give you some relief, even though interspersed are messages endorsing the new religion.

Be sure to examine the "Lost Prophecy of Holo Oneus," John Ziegler's interpretation of the prophecies, and many other highly enlightening essays and random thoughts by the Pastor of the First Church of Tiger Woods. It would be heartening to know that all of this has made a millionaire of John Ziegler, as this would affirm the notion that it is still possible to turn nothing into millions in America.

If nothing else all this may prove that Earl Woods was not exaggerating when he said that Tiger would be bigger than Ghandi or Buddha. He might even be bigger than John Lennon or the Beatles.

Certainly "What's his name" who won the U.S. Open, would agree with this assessment.

On Sport and Society this is Dick Crepeau reminding you that you don't have to be a good sport to be a bad loser.

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