

What it feels like to win: Greg Norman with the BIGGA Support Team after he won the 1993 Open. Now, Scott MacCallum offers some fond words of wisdom following a certain defeat in Augusta...



Cheering up Greg

There can't be many multi millionaire golfers feeling worse than Greg Norman at the moment.

We all watched Greg's public humiliation at the Masters and, if you were like me, found it a painful experience. How can a man who can hone in on a target four and a quarter inches small with relentless regularity for three days miss the huge Augusta National greens so consistently on the final day? How can a man who barely missed a putt of under 10 feet for 54 holes be the same man who couldn't locate a donkey's backside with a banjo on the home stretch?

In the past, some bizarre and unlikely incidents have deprived him of US Major glory. Remember the holed bunker shot in the '86 USPGA at the Inverness Club, Ohio, which sent Bob Tway's Twoops – yes that's how his fans are known – not to mention the man himself into delirium and Larry Mize's outrageous play-off chip in at Augusta a year later? Those, it could be argued were incidents out with Norman's control although he did squander a big lead to give Tway the opportunity. There have been other occasions when he has caused his own downfall in Majors. The '86 US Open when he led going into the final round but shot a large score, again in the same tournament last year when he stumbled and let in Corey Pavin. He's only the second man to have lost play-offs for all four Major Championships.

But his performance at this year's Masters was a new low for him. The definitive example of a man falling on his own sword and being the architect of his own misfortune. He's bounced back from disappointment before but in future who would bet on him winning with

a one shot lead going into the final round of a Major in future never mind a six shot lead?

Having said all of that. I like him and I think he's great for the game of golf and I've decided that if I happen to bump into him in the next few weeks I need a few well chosen words to cheer him up a bit. Likewise if you should come across him and are like minded why not select a couple from the list below and make him feel a little better.

- ◆ You can only blow it if you've been in contention in the first place.
- ◆ You'd have accepted second before the week began.
- ◆ You got a nice big cheque as a consolation prize.
- ◆ You're the most charismatic loser in world sport.
- ◆ Now every woman in the country wants to mother you.
- ◆ What golfer in the world would not gladly swap lives with you?
- ◆ How many people would give their right arms even to play Augusta?
- ◆ Doug Sanders says he can go at least five minutes without thinking about his famous golfing disaster.
- ◆ You're undoubtedly the best player in the world never to have won a Major Championship in the States instead of just another one of those Jeff Sluman, Scott Simpson, Bob Tway characters who have won one.
- ◆ Of the players who have won two Majors in the world Sandy Lyle, Bernhard Langer, John Daly, Andy North you're probably the best.
- ◆ Who remembers who beat Devon Loch?
- ◆ Jack Nicklaus didn't win every Major in which he was in contention... Just most of them.

◆ Look at all the players who have only won one Major – Tom Kite, Ian Woosnam, Corey Pavin, Paul Azinger, Jose Maria Olazabal, Bill Rogers, Fred Couples, Craig Stadler, Tom Weiskopf. Tom was runner up in the Masters four times, so you've still got one to go!

◆ You've still won more Majors than fellow Australians Ian Baker-Finch, Steve Elkington, Wayne Grady, Graham Marsh, Kel Nagle.

◆ Everybody makes mistakes.

◆ Some top players have never won a Major: Andy Bean, Neil Coles, Chip Beck, Calvin Peete, Davis Love III, Jumbo Ozaki, Colin Montgomerie, Peter Alliss.

◆ You're joint holder of the record low round in The Open and The Masters with 63 – can Faldo say that?

◆ At least you've still got your health, not to mention your wealth.

◆ Tommy Aaron, Charles Coody, George Archer, Bob Goalby and Gay Brewer all won the Masters and what happened to them?

◆ You didn't shoot the worst score in the final round. Ian Woosnam and Alexander Cejka had 80s, Vijay Singh had an 82 while Bernhard Langer, John Daly and Jack Nicklaus joined you with 78s.

◆ Think yourself fortunate that your name doesn't rhyme with choke like Scott Hoch.

◆ How many people can say they've been runner-up in one Major never mind eight.

◆ I think your hats are great.

◆ Arnold Palmer blew a seven shot lead with nine holes to play in the 1966 US Open so you're in good company.

◆ You could swap one of your Opens for one of Bernhard Langer's Masters then you'd both be happy.

◆ You're still more popular than Faldo.