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Watson sweeps awards

In 1978, refusing to rest on his laurels; Tom Watson became the first golfer ever to sweep the PGA money title, PGA Player of the Year Award and Vardon Trophy in back-to-back seasons.

After winning four PGA tour events and the British Open in 1977, Watson cemented his reputation as one of the world's premiere golfers in 1978. Watson won five times, breaking a pair of PGA records — both previously held by Johnny Miller — along the way. His official earnings of \$362,429 topped Miller's old mark of \$353,021, set in 1974.

Watson also earned his first million

Watson also earned his first million dollars faster than anyone ever had. His career winnings passed seven figures with his victory in the Byron Nelson Classic, approximately six years and seven months after his first check on the tour. That broke Miller's standard of six years, nine months.

Aside from two consecutive missed cuts in the Doral-Eastern Open and the Tournament Players Championship in March — his only two misses of the year — Watson's performance never ebbed. He won the first tournament of the year, the Joe Garagiola Tucson Open, leading from wire to wire.

He won two weeks later, defeating Ben Crenshaw in a playoff at the Bing Crosby National Pro-Am. He won the Byron Nel-



TOM WATSON

son in the middle of the schedule, and his victories in the Colgate Hall of Fame and the Anheuser-Busch Classic came in consecutive starts at the end of the '78 slate,

At the Masters, Watson nearly made it two green jackets in a row. After a first-round 73, Watson came back with 68-68-69 and tied for second, a single stroke behind Gary Player.

In the PGA Championship at Oakmont, Watson started 67-69-67 and led after each of the first three rounds. But he slipped to a 73 on Sunday and was caught by Jerry Pate and John Mahaffey, who won the three-way playoff on the second extra hole.

Watson first gained national attention in 1974. He led the U.S. Open at Winged Foot after three rounds, but a final 79 dropped him to a share of lifth. Shortly thereafter he scored his first PGA victory, coming from six shots back with a closing 69 to win the Western Open.

Watson was only 6 years old when his father, a scratch golfer, exposed him to the game. He became a four-time winner of the Missouri Amateur and played three years at Stanford University before graduating in 1971 with a degree in psychology.

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