GOLFUPDATE

At the zenith

The golf has entered the post-Tiger Woods era with Martin Kaymer, the fluid-swinging German, edging out Lee Westwood as the number one golfer in the world

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erman professional golfer Martin Kaymer became the No. 1 ranked golfer in the official World golf rankings in February 2011 after his runner-up finish in the WGC-Accenture Match Play Championship. It marked a new phase of golf, where the top ranking gets passed around a handful of players the way box-office grosses designate a new No. 1 movie almost every week.

At 26, Kaymer is the second-youngest player to capture the top ranking since Woods did so at age 21 in 1997. But he was also the first player younger than Woods to pass Tiger in the rankings, which he did earlier this year. Kaymer, who was born in Düsseldorf, Germany, in 1984 turned professional in 2005. A member of the European Tour, he has won nine tournaments on the tour including four in 2010 to win the Race to Dubai, formerly the Order of Merit, for the first time.

After missing the cut at the Masters, Kaymer performed very well in the 2010 majors. He finished in a tie for eighth at the US Open and then tied for seventh at the Open Championship after starting the final round in third. On 15 August 2010, Kaymer won the PGA Championship at Whistling Straits for his first major championship-a victory which made him only the second German to win a major championship, after Bernhard Langer. Finishing regulation play in a two-way tie at 11 under par, he defeated Bubba Watson in a three-hole playoff. In 2010, Kaymer and Graeme McDowell shared the European Tour Golfer of the Year award.

Kaymer was a member of the winning European Ryder Cup team. He won both four-balls (partnered with Westwood and Poulter), halved his foursome and lost his singles match. A week later he won the Alfred Dunhill Links Championship at St Andrews with Danny Willett coming in three strokes behind. He was the first player since Tiger Woods in 2006 to win three successive tournaments in a year and the first European to achieve this since Nick Faldo in 1989.

Entering the 2011 season, Kaymer turned down a chance to become a full PGA Tour member; he had become eligible with his win in the 2010 PGA Championship. He stated he would concentrate on the European Tour for 2011, but would play several US events as well.

In January 2011, Kaymer claimed his third Abu Dhabi HSBC Golf Championship title in four years and displaced Tiger Woods as number two in the world rankings. After his runner-up finish at the 2011 WGC-Accenture Match Play Championship, Kaymer overtook Lee Westwood as the number one golfer in the world, making him only the second German (after Bernhard Langer) to be the top-ranked golfer in the world.

