

# **NO MATTER WHAT SANCHEZ DOES, IT SURE BEATS FLIPPIN' BURGERS**

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## **Body**

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Javier **Sanchez** got off to a sizzling start Thursday in the first round of the U.S. Open, going par-birdie-par before play was suspended because of fog.

That said, few people -- if anyone -- believe **Sanchez** has a prayer of being on the leader board down the stretch.

That's OK by **Sanchez**. He doesn't pay much heed to naysayers or mind-boggling odds. After all, he **beat** incredible odds just to get this far.

**Sanchez**, 41, took up golf 20 years ago when he was a cook at Palo Alto Municipal Golf Course. Four years earlier, he left his home in Mexico and paid someone \$50 to help him cross the border. He had an uncle who lived in Redwood City and **Sanchez** settled there, where he got a job as a dishwasher.

He later got a job cleaning rooms at a Holiday Inn. There, he had some close calls with the Immigration and Naturalization Service.

"There were a couple of times when I was working in Palo Alto and a lot of the immigration came in and chased us around the place," he said. "We sneaked out into the rooms until they left."

He eventually got a job in the golf club kitchen, where he made \$3 an hour and saved enough money to buy a used set of clubs for \$150.

"I saw people out there playing but I had **no** idea what they were **doing**," he said. "I was very interested in finding out. So I got some golf clubs, a bag, and I used to go to the driving range and not even hit a ball, just watch people swing. And later on, when everybody would leave, I'd kind of start imitating them. I started hitting the ball up in the air and fell in love with the game. Later on, (the club pro) gave me some instructions and I went on from there."

Soon, **Sanchez** was hooked.

"After I'd get **done** with work, I'd go out and practice," he said. "It was a piece of cake. I'd spend a lot of hours in the dark. I used to putt with the lights on in the parking lot; they'd shine on the putting green. I used to play there until 9, 10 at night. I put in a lot of hard work."

It paid off. He eventually married an American woman (he has since remarried) and became a legal resident. He moved to Fayetteville, Ga., where he got a job at a driving range and wound up on the T.C. Jordan Tour.

In 1983, **Sanchez** got a call from the U.S. Golf Association that Billy Ray Brown was pulling out of the Open and that **Sanchez** was the first alternate. He hopped a plane to New Jersey, and 12 hours later was playing in the Open at Baltusrol, a course he had never seen. He missed the cut.

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**Sanchez** qualified for four more Opens (1993 through '96), finally making the 36-hole cut in '96 and finishing in a tie for 90th, for which he collected \$5,305. The same year was his best on the Nike Tour. He played in 14 of those tournaments, including a second-place showing in the St. Louis Golf Classic.

Once again, he made the Open this year with strong rounds in the local and sectional qualifiers.

"(I made it by) chasing that ball and shooting low numbers," he said. "It's hard. It's hard to get into the local and sectional qualifiers. I was very fortunate to be playing good at the time. It seems like when the summer comes around, my game gets a little better.

"I feel good about my game. This is a very hard golf course. As long as I keep it in the short grass, I think I'll be OK."

Sutton starts quickly

Hal Sutton buried the first opening-hole eagle in U.S. Open history Thursday. He followed that by sinking birdies at **No.** 2 and **No.** 4 and eventually went to 6-under-par through 13 holes.

Then things started to unravel.

Sutton double bogeyed 14 and bogeyed 16 and 18. Once at the top of the leader board, Sutton finished 2 under par, four strokes behind Tiger Woods, the leader.

"What a weird day," Sutton said. "The weather was kind of strange and my finish was real strange. Lot of good and a lot of bad . . . I guess that is U.S. Open type stuff."

Sutton watched playing partner Lee Westwood's lie at the par-5 14th and noticed that his ball slowed in the wind and ended up in a bunker.

"I went ahead and hit a smooth pitching wedge," Sutton said. "I guess the wind got in behind mine, because I didn't hit it very hard. We were uphill."

Sutton's ball landed in deep rough.

"I hit a really good chip from where that ended up," he said. "But I hit a weak putt."

There were more problems at **No.** 18.

"I couldn't see over about 150 to 200 yards," Sutton said, referring to the fog that had settled in. "That makes it usually pretty hard."

Jack gets choked up

Jack Nicklaus stepped up to the first tee to start his 44th consecutive U.S. Open, looked at his son and caddie Jack II and stepped back for a moment.

"Excuse me," Nicklaus said, fighting back tears. "I was just having a moment for our defending champion."

Nicklaus was referring to Payne Stewart, who died in a plane crash last fall. As reigning champion, Stewart was supposed to play in a group that included the British Open champion and the U.S. amateur champion. Nicklaus, a four-time Open champion, was asked to take Stewart's place.

After Nicklaus' pause, he again stepped to the tee and started what could be his final U.S. Open. Nicklaus stood at 2 over par through nine holes when play was postponed.

'Happy Halloween'

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Jesper Parnevik got lots of notice for his orange shirt. Which is exactly what he must have wanted when he put on his shirt.

"Hey Jesper, Happy Halloween," one spectator yelled.

Tiger Woods called his threesome member "a beacon," and at times in the thick fog, Parnevik's shirt was the only thing that stood out.

Tiger the fan

Woods said he tries to stay away from the media reports calling him a favorite. He tries not to watch television or read newspapers during a tournament. However, he confessed to one breakdown this week.

"Actually, I got pretty good vibes last night after my Lakers won," he said.

\* Monterey High track star Sani Roseby, who won the state 100-meter championship two weeks ago, is working at a much slower pace this week. She's monitoring press credentials at the media dining commons.

## Notes

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100TH U.S. OPEN AT PEBBLE BEACH

NOTEBOOK

## Graphic

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Photos (2);

PHOTO: RICHARD WISDOM -- MERCURY NEWS

Miguel Angel Jimenez, who trails leader Tiger Woods by one stroke, blasts from a bunker at 15 en route to a bogey-5.

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PHOTO: NHAT V. MEYER -- MERCURY NEWS

Hal Sutton eagled the first hole and got to 6 under before his round began to unravel on the back nine. He finished at 2-under-par 69, four strokes behind Tiger Woods.

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