

Treviño, Lee (1939-) Encyclopedia Article

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Treviño, Lee (1939—)

In 1968, Lee Treviño became the first Mexican American to win a major professional golf championship at the U.S. Open, and he became the first player in history to shoot all four rounds of the event under par. Born in Dallas, Texas, and raised by his mother, who worked as a housekeeper, and his maternal grandfather, a grave digger, Treviño got involved in golf because their four-room farmhouse overlooked the back of the Glen Lakes Country Club fairways. As a boy, Treviño studied the form of golfers on the course from his own backyard. He dropped out of school in the seventh grade and made his way into what was then an exclusively Anglo rich man's sport by working as a caddie and greenskeeper.

Treviño became a professional golfer in 1966, and by 1970 he was the leading money winner on the Professional Golfers' Association tour. In 1971, Treviño became the first player to win the U.S., British, and Canadian opens in a single year, and was the first Hispanic ever named PGA Player of the Year, Associated Press Athlete of the Year, and *Sports Illustrated* Sportsman of the Year. He won the British Open again in 1972 and the PGA again in 1974 among many other tournaments. He was awarded the Vardon Trophy for the fewest strokes per round (69.73 for 82 rounds), the lowest since Sam Snead in 1958. Treviño was struck by lightning in 1974, and the resulting back problems and surgeries restricted his play in the early 1980s. He served as a TV sports commentator, but came back to win the PGA in 1984 and the British Masters in 1985. Treviño retired from the PGA tour in 1985, with his thirty victories and a total career earnings of more than \$3 million (third highest). Treviño has been elected to the Texas Sports, American Golf, and World Golf Halls of Fame.

Lee Treviño

Further Reading:

Kanellos, Nicolás. *The Hispanic American Almanac*. 2nd ed. Detroit, Gale Research, 1997.