

HAPPIER DAYS AGAIN FOR ANDREESCU, SPIETH

Everybody loves a good comeback story, and the world of sports has been presented with a couple of good ones in the last few months.

Welcome back, Jordan Spieth. Welcome back, Bianca Andreescu.

It was only last September that this writer distributed a column titled *'Spieth's elite golf game has vanished'* and referenced the struggles experienced by the 27-year-old three-time major champion who hadn't won a title of any kind since the British Open in 2017 and had nearly fallen out of the top 100 in the official world golf rankings.

And Toronto's Andreescu, the darling of Canadian tennis fans since winning the 2019 Canadian Open and then the U.S. Open by beating the legendary Serena Williams in the final, missed all of 2020 due to injury, fuelling suggestions her career was not only on the downside, but perhaps finished.

But she rebounded in spectacular fashion after being non-competitive for 16 months. After falling in the second round of the Australian Open, Andreescu went to Miami and proceeded to serve and volley her way into the final. Unfortunately, she suffered an ankle injury mid-match against Ashleigh Barty of Australia and had to forfeit. Still, an ankle injury heals quickly compared to her earlier knee problems and she is pumped to play in this year's three remaining Grand Slam events, starting with the French Open in June. Andreescu is still only 20 years old, and has moved up to No. 6 in the world, so barring further injuries, her future looks bright indeed.

Spieth, meanwhile, got some swing advice from famed instructor Butch Harmon and in early 2021, he suddenly flipped a switch and started to play like the Spieth of old. He was dreadful from last year's PGA in August, until the Phoenix Open in February of this year — failing to make the cut five times in 10 events and finishing no better than 36th in the other five. Suddenly, in Phoenix, the old Spieth returned. He fired an astonishing third-round 61 to eventually finish fourth, and then racked up six top 15s in his next seven tournaments, capping it with a victory at the Valero Texas Open a week before the Masters, where he was again among the leaders all week, finally finishing tied for third.

Spieth said he never gave up hope that he would return to the top of the golf world. He was quoted in that aforementioned September, 2020 column as saying 'I've worked my butt off over the last year mentally, physically and mechanically. Things will start to come together.' It appears he was right.

Now, if only struggling Rickie Fowler could find that magic potion that Spieth used.

- **Jay Busbee** of Yahoo.com, on a typical sports fan's plans for Masters week: "... A tournament where napping on the couch isn't just an option, it's a prerequisite."
- Comedy writer **Brad Dickson** of Omaha: "**President Biden** said he will not throw out the first pitch before the Washington Nationals home opener. So if you want to see a 79-year-old pitcher you'll have to watch the Orioles."
- Comedy writer **Alex Kaseberg**: "Amid his sexual harassment allegations, **Deshaun Watson** received support on Twitter from **O.J. Simpson**. 'You know what, Juice, no, yeah, I'm good, that's OK,' said Watson."
- **Janice Hough** of leftcoastsportsbabe.com: "Dear Media. It's called 'The Masters. Not 'The Masters Without **Tiger Woods**. Thank you."
- Blogger **Chad Picasner**, on shortstop **Francisco Lindor**'s contract negotiations: "Lindor wanted \$32 million a year (for 12 years) from the Mets, but owner **Steve Cohen** said no way, you'll take \$34 million a year (for 10) and like it. I'm glad he's not doing my taxes."
- Headlines in the San Diego Times-Union after **Joe Musgrove** pitched the first no-hitter in the Padres' 52-year history: "YES, A NO-NO" and "SAY IT'S SO, JOE"
- A groaner from **RJ Currie** of sportsdeke.com: "It should be no surprise that Baylor gunned down previously unbeaten Gonzaga 86-70 to win the NCAA tournament. Hasn't Texas always been big on the right to arm Bears?"
- **Dwight Perry** of the Seattle Times: "Further evidence that stat geeks have too much time on their hands: It was revealed that Tigers rookie **Akil Baddoo** just became the first player in MLB history to hit home runs in his first two career games while batting out of the ninth spot in the batting order. Somehow overlooked: By a left-handed hitter, at home, on natural turf, in day games."
- **Patti Dawn Swanson**, aka the River City Renegade, on squeaky-clean Edmonton Oilers star **Connor McDavid** getting fined \$5,000 for elbowing an opponent in the face: "I couldn't have been more surprised had I found a copy of 'Sinatra: The Rapper Years' at my local vinyl store."
- Legendary basketball coach **Roy Williams** to reporters, on his Tar Heels coaching successor, Hubert Davis: "I will be here cheering. I won't ever criticize you. I'll blame it on the officials."

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