Was this year's United States Open the greatest golf tournament ever? A tough question to even pose says Mitch, but one thing is for sure. It was without a doubt one of the most entertaining golf tournaments of most of our lifetimes, save possibly Jack's unthinkable victory at the '86 Masters at age 46. Tiger. Rocco. Torrey Pines. 91 holes of nail biting back and forth drama. Mitch talks about the spectacle that was the 2008 U.S. Open.

Was this the greatest golf tournament ever?

That is such an arbitrary question, and one that can not be honestly answered...it cannot even be honestly stated that this was the undisputed greatest U.S. Open ever. Not when you have etched in history such memorable (or legendary) tournaments such as former caddy Francis Ouimet winning the US Open as an amateur in 1913 (and if you are a fan of golf, go rent the movie "The Greatest Game Ever Played" with Shia LaBeouf playing Oiumet), or Ben Hogan's miraculous 1950 victory at Marion 16 months after a near fatal car crash, or Jack Nicklaus' classic 1962 playoff win against Arnold Palmer.

But this was certainly the greatest golf tournament that we've seen over the past 20 years...the most dramatic, against-all-odds, gripping story since Sir Jack turned back time at the 1986 Masters.

72 holes weren't enough to decide it, so unlike the Masters, which employs a

Sudden Death format, or the British Open and PGA Championship and their aggregate four hole playoff, Rocco Mediate and Tiger Woods had to come back Monday morning for an 18 hole playoff.

However, 90 holes wasn't enough either, so it went to Sudden Death, where the clock finally hit midnight for the Rocco's Cinderella Story, as Tiger parred the first playoff hole and Rocco's 20 foot desperation putt slid to the right to give Woods his 14th major championship.

The drama of this entire tournament was like nothing we've ever witnessed. It started on the very first day, as the USGA decided to mix things up a bit, and the pairings for the first two days had the top 12 players in the world grouped together. What that gave was two straight days of Phil Mickelson and Tiger playing together...and in Prime Time Friday night no less, due to the championship being held on the West Coast at Torrey Pines, north of San Diego.

The country watched with baited breath. Not only did you have this great matchup, you also had the added drama of Tiger playing his first 18 hole round on Thursday after the surgery on his left knee right after the Masters. Could he do the impossible and come back in his first tournament and contend? Could Phil satisfy the dream he had from the day he learned that Torrey Pines was granted a coveted Open spot...win at the course he grew up on?

When they made the turn on Friday, it didn't look good for either of them. Tiger was at four over, and Phil was two over as they hit the back nine.

And then the magic started...but only for Tiger. He birdied four out of the first five holes on his back nine, on his way to shooting 30, putting him tied for second at three under.

In a U.S. Open...it's supposed to be the man who shoots steady par that wins. Birdies are rare on the winner's scorecard, but then again, so are bogeys. Tiger's round was the golf equivalent of a ride on the Gemini Coaster at Cedar Point...up and down, up and down, down and up. For the 91 holes, Tiger had 14 bogeys, FOUR double bogeys, 17 birdies, and 3 eagles.

Two of his eagles were on the most insane back nine I'd ever seen...as the Tiger Roller Coaster went into hyper drive on Saturday night. Tiger followed a bogey on 12 by hitting far right on the par 5 13th hole. But he hit so far right that the thick rough was actually trampled down by the gallery, giving him a shot at the green. Tiger launched it to the back of the green, and then knocked down a 65 foot putt for eagle.

Not content with that, he also butchered the 17th hole, and was just trying to get a chip close enough to save par when he came out hot, bounced the ball once, and it dropped right into the hole for a birdie. Woods' expression said it all..."I can't believe I lucked out that much".

Luck had nothing to do with his 18th on Saturday, as he was able to take a read off from the putt of his playing

partner Robert Karlsson, and drained a 25 footer for another eagle and the 54 hole lead.

Tiger had never lost a Major when he'd led after 54 holes.

But Tiger had never played in so much physical pain before.

Watching Sunday was nearly excruciating. Time and time again, Tiger would strike the ball on the tee and almost collapse due to the pain. Given the torque he puts on that left knew with every shot, it's amazing that it is still attached to his body. But Tiger pushed on...but he didn't seem to have the magic that he possessed on Saturday.

Rocco Mediate, on the other hand, was having the

round of his life.

He had no real business being in contention this late in this big of a tournament. Rocco just got into the Memorial Tournament, and had a little momentum after a sixth place finish. The day after it ended, Rocco had to play the grueling 36 hole qualifier at the Scarlett Course just to try to get in. At the end of the day, he was one of eleven players tied for the right to playoff for the last seven spots...which he (obviously) achieved.

So after missing a short birdie putt on Sunday that would have forced Tiger to get an eagle to tie, the 157th ranked player in the world held a one shot lead.

Most people would have thought that a birdie on 18 would have been simple for Tiger, as he

always eats up par fives. But that was the "normal" Tiger...not the one nursing a throbbing knee.

On 18, Tiger winced in pain as he hit the ball, which ended up in a fairway bunker. Going for the green in two was out. His second shot found the rough...which would have eliminated birdie for most men; but not Tiger. He hit his third shot 12 feet from the cup...which might not have been that bad at Harbor Town or Colonial...but at a U.S. Open, you can't count on ever making a 12 footer.

Except if you are Tiger.

One half inch more to the right, and Rocco Mediate is the champion. Instead, we're going

to an 18 hole playoff on Monday.

It's a shame that most people probably weren't able to watch the playoff, as it was some of the most nerve wracking golf I have ever watched. Tiger jumped out to a three stroke lead after Rocco bogeyed the 10th hole.

All over, right?

No way.

Tiger bogeyed 11 and 12, and then Rocco ripped off birdies on 13, 14, and 15 to take a one stroke lead, which he held until the 18th

hole.

Once again, Tiger needed a birdie to continue the match.

Once again, Tiger delivered.

The Sudden Death hole was almost anti-climatic. Rocco, who had done such an amazing job in not faltering in the face of all of that pressure, finally succumbed, putting his drive on number 7 into a fairway bunker, and then yanking his second shot against the

grandstand, forcing a free drop into the greenside rough.

I just wish the tournament could have ended with Tiger hitting a birdie putt to win, rather than the worthy Mediate missing a par putt to lose.

In the end, it was all so incredible. Many tried calling it "David vs. Goliath", but that wasn't really fair given that "Goliath" was in so much pain that many of his competitors was expecting him to withdraw at any moment.

What we really had was a perfect mixture of everything. The course itself was magnificent. The USGA finally got the message, and after years of making the courses at the U.S. Open ridiculously impossible to play, they finally got a reality check. The South Course was very hard, and the greens very fast, but it was a very fair setup. In the end, there were still only two players under par for the championship. Hopefully, they'll remember this next year when the Open returns to Bethpage Black.

Neither competitor deserved to lose this one. Not the Greatest Player Ever...not after all he'd been through. And certainly not the affable 45 year old Rocco...a

man enjoying life immensely, especially given the fact that his career was almost ended by continued back problems.

But someone had to win...and once again it is the single greatest athlete the sport has ever seen.

The 2008 British Open at Royal Birkdale is less than six weeks away. I can't wait. I'm just hoping that Tiger's knee will allow him to participate.