12:10 PM EST, on the 12th hole; a previously unknown South African named Louis Oosthuizen shot a birdie 3 while Englishman Paul Casey hit into the grouse bush, ending up with a triple bogey. This ballooned Oosthuizen's lead to eight strokes, and effectively ended the tournament. ESPN executives all gave a primal scream.

It took them 15 minutes to figure out how to handle it; by playing up the "battle for second" between Casey, and Lee Westwood. This may have been fine had Tiger been in the lead, because they would have been doing what they always do; kissing Tiger's butt. Oh, wait; they were doing that all weekend anyway. At least Curtis Strange did try to add something by talking about Oosthuizen, both as a golfer and as a person. By this time, I'm sure the 1,000 people still watching in the U.S. was realizing that they could still go out and get 27 holes in themselves at this point on a Summer weekend.

It was a disaster for "The Entertainment and Sports Leader". Not quite the critical disaster seen last week by them whoring out to LeBron James for "The Decision", but rather a financial and ratings disaster for the only Major that the network will broadcast. Quite frankly, it was an unmitigated bore for so many reasons. Most of them were not the fault of E$PN, but they did not help themselves with poor announcers, inane interviews, shoddy analysis, and camera work which was woefully sub-par in the HDTV age.

Things looked much better for them late Thursday. Tiger Woods, evidently the only golfer who can have every one of his shots televised even if he's 15 strokes off the lead, for once didn't suck on the first round, and was actually "in contention" at five under. And "oh, by the way", he

was still four strokes off the lead as young Rory McIlroy shot an unbelievable 63. It was immediately decided by E$PN that the tournament was almost over…it was just a matter of seeing if the telegenetic and popular young Northern Irishman could hold off The Greatest Golfer in the Universe.

For a little extra entertainment value, we had a John Daly sighting on the leaderboard, as John and his paisley pants outshot Tiger, and was three shots off the lead at six under. None of this mattered though, as Tiger is still not the same golfer he was before his life turned upside down on the revelation of his comic fodder indiscretions. He ended up tied for 23rd. Daly ended up in 48th after his much anticipated (and inevitable) crash and burn.

We also got to see almost every single shot from Phil Mickelson, despite the fact that Phil does not have a clue as to how to play links golf. He can never handle the wind, and the stubbornness that makes him so much fun to watch at the Masters, the US Open (in a car-crash kind of way), or on trick courses in the States always spell “flirting with the cut line” in the British Isles. Phil looked totally disinterested the entire weekend, and his final 48th place finish at one over par reflects that, which also tied him with defending champion Stewart Cink, 2009 US Open Champion Lucas Glover, as well as Daly.

It was probably as poor weekend for Americans at the hands of Great Britain since the Brits managed to burn down the White House in the War of 1812.

Meanwhile, E$PN’s hopes of at least having a well known foreign player winning was destroyed on Friday in the high winds as McIlroy responded to his 63 by going out and shooting 80. Good night, and good luck (ironically, McIlroy bounced back with two more rounds in the 60s, ending up tied for third). Meanwhile, Oosthuizen, in second place after the first round at seven under (and pretty much ignored by the announcers), followed up with a 67 on Friday, therefore leading the tournament at 12 under.

This would not do; so Saturday’s broadcast was all about the third straight over-50 golfer to contend (after Tom Watson last year and Greg Norman in 2008). Mark Calcavecchia, the 1989 champion, found the fountain of youth and was in second place after 36 holes, which meant that he was playing in the last pairing with Louis, while receiving 90% of the commentary from the announcers. At least for a few holes, until Calc choked, gagging his way to eight over par for the round after eight holes; hopelessly out of it. It was even worse for Calc on Sunday, as he

ended up in 73rd place after shooting an 80.

So we were left with one last chance for any drama on Sunday, with Casey being the last person with any chance of catching Oosthuizen. He actually got within three strokes at one point, until the disaster on 12 closed it out.

Therefore, we have another unknown winning a major; a man almost as obscure as Todd Hamilton, Ben Curtis, Michael Campbell, or Shaun Micheel. On the other hand, there is a chance that this is a breakthrough performance for the South African. He previously had six wins, and was rated 54th in the world prior to this week. Plus, he's only 27 years old, younger than many more heralded "next big thing" players currently on tour. My thoughts on Louis is that he may stick around and contend for majors for awhile, as he seems to have the disposition to handle it; unlike other young champions who have yet to repeat, such as Geoff Ogilvy, Zach Johnson, or Trevor Immelman.

Many factors contributed to this being one of the most boring telecast I've ever seen in a major, with not all of it being the fault of E$PN (although I will admit to thinking it was a better broadcast when US viewers had to piggyback off from the BBC pictures). The unknowns at the top of the board, the failure of not only Tiger and Phil, but other well knows such as Padraig Harrington, Cink, Sergio, Ian Poulter, Jim Furyk, and Kenny Perry took away any real buzz about the first page of the leaderboard. You couldn't even get excited about any unknown Americans like Curtis or Hamilton, as there were only two Americans that ended up in the top 10; Sean O'Hair and Nick Watney tying for eighth without ever threatening the leaders.

But perhaps the biggest culprit for the uninspired telecast was the Old Course itself. Don't get me wrong, I love the fact that one major a year is played on a links golf course. It is such a different challenge than what you see on any American course. You have to compensate for the rain, the wind, and course conditions not seen on any course in the States. You have to beware of crazy bounces off from the undulating terrain, and avoid those wicked pot bunkers. The Old Course at St. Andrews is considered "the birthplace of golf", and it fully deserves it place at the top of the rotation of the British Open, returning every five years.

While The Old Course is a true test of a golfer's skills, it just doesn't translate to television. No trees, no doglegs, no cliffs, no lakes waiting to swallow up miss hits, no massive bunkers, no pine straw or cart paths to contend with. In fact, it often looks on television as if they are playing on a big, open field, with only wispy fescue, pot bunkers, or grouse bushes to avoid. It's hard to

tell on television the actual layout of the hole, as there isn't much visual difference from the tee box to the fairway to the green itself. In most cases, one hole is totally indistinguishable from another, with the exception of the wonderful and diabolical Road Hole on number 17.

However, I somehow don't think Louis Oosthuizen, the man nicknamed "Shrek" due to the gap in his front teeth and his oversized ears, cares one whit about the anguish of E$PN or the boredom of certain web site golf writers. He played nearly perfect golf all week, with the results being a seven shot win in a major…definitely nothing to belittle.