

Great Scott

Golfer Adam Scott has enjoyed a jam-packed couple of years that has seen him become the first Australian to win the Masters, get married and become a father. But, as **Michael Stoneman** discovers, the star golfer isn't showing any signs of slowing down just yet

Life seems pretty good for Adam Scott right now. In April 2013, he became the first Australian golfer to slip on one of Augusta's famed green jackets, when he secured his first major championship by winning the US Masters, while last year his consistently good form – which included three further victories in 2013 – saw him rise to the top of the world rankings.

Things aren't too shabby away from the golf course, either, with the 34-year-old marrying long-term girlfriend Marie Kojzar at their home in the Bahamas in April 2014, and the couple welcoming their first child – a little girl named Bo – in February of this year.

That chain of events is enough to put a contented smile on any man's face, and Scott admits he is currently in "a good place" as he looks ahead to a busy summer of golf that includes the year's final two majors – the Open Championship and the US PGA's respectively. "Throwing a baby into the mix is certainly going to make for an interesting year this year," he says. "It's fantastic and, you know, it really is an exciting time for my wife and myself; we're going to be dealing with lots of different things coming up for sure. I feel like I'm in a really good place with everything. I just want to get out and play some really good golf."

In truth, Scott has been playing some "really good golf" for the best part of 15 years, having turned professional in 2000 and winning his first tournament the following year – the European Tour's Alfred Dunhill Championship in Johannesburg, South Africa.

The following few years saw Scott travel extensively around the world, winning events in Qatar, Scotland, Sweden and the USA as he began making a name for himself on both the European and PGA Tours. "Some of my favourite memories as a professional are from playing the European Tour in the early days and travelling the world, gaining experience and gaining experience in how to compete and how to win, as well," he explains. "Even though it might not be winning the Masters, it was a big deal at the time, just to win. It got me off on the right foot. I think it was a very good grounding for me as a professional."

Scott seemed destined for the professional ranks from an early age, having been introduced to the game by his parents, who were both keen golfers themselves, before going on to win the Australian Boys' Amateur title in 1997 and 1998. "My dad is a really good golfer, and so is my mum, actually, which is interesting. But it's been in the

family ever since I can remember so I was taken out to the golf course when I was just a little kid and fell in love with it from there. I played a lot of sports when I was younger, but eventually just ended up playing golf."

Scott puts much of his success down to the grounding his parents gave him – particularly his father, Phil, who coached him until he was 19 years old. "My dad was the one who was always there with me right from the get go. He was the biggest influence on me. He was a great role model for me as a kid, as I think back on it, and the way he balanced everything for me so that I just kind of made my own way as a golfer."

Scott's father was there for him through the good and bad times – and the good times certainly came quickly for Scott, who became the youngest ever winner of the prestigious Players Championship in 2004, at the age of just 23. Big things were predicted for the affable Aussie,

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Pictured: Scott is the first Australian to secure a win at the US Masters

who won seven more events on the PGA and European Tours over the next four years, helping him reach No.3 in the world.

Things took a downward turn towards the end of 2008, however, when Scott broke his hand, found himself suffering from recurring throat infections and saw his seven-year relationship with Kojzar come to an end. That series of events understandably had a negative effect on his on-course performance. "My motivation for practice and everything lowered because my head was a bit messed up," admits Scott. "Then all the wheels kind of fell off."

After missing the cut at the 2008 US PGA saw him drop out of the world's top 10, Scott's form went into free-fall. The following year saw him fail to make the weekend in 10 of the 19 PGA Tour events he played, as his world ranking dipped as low as 65th. "It just got away from me somehow," explains Scott. "For a while there, I just kept playing, thinking it's close, it's close. I kept missing the cut, just, and thinking one week it's going to turn around, but it never really did and it wasn't quite there. And after a while, the confidence went with it to make ➤



it even worse. So when you're struggling and low on confidence, that's a bad combination. It took some time for it to all come back around, the confidence included."

It finally did come back for Scott towards the end of 2009, when he won the Australian Open for his first professional victory on home soil, which he described as, "a great way to end a pretty frustrating year."

With his career back on track, Scott was able to refocus on winning what every successful golfer is ultimately judged on – a major championship. A runners-up finish in the 2011 Masters proved – to himself, as well as the golfing public – that he once again had the game to contend at the highest level, and, by the 2012 Open Championship at Lytham, it seemed like his time had finally come. A course record 64 had set Scott on his way in the opening round, and after accumulating a four-shot lead with four holes to play on the final day, it looked like Scott was set to emulate his hero Greg Norman by lifting the Claret Jug.

Four bogeys over the four closing holes, however, handed the trophy to South Africa's Ernie Els, and many commentators were left wondering how Scott could recover from such a dramatic collapse.

He bounced back in the best possible way, however, by



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sealing the following year's first major – beating Angel Cabrera in a play-off to claim a first Masters title for Australia. Even now, Scott finds it hard to watch footage of his winning putt. "I always think, 'I can't believe that's me playing,'" he says. "It's a strange feeling to watch yourself at all, but certainly in that moment and understanding how big it is for a golfer to be in that moment. It's just truly unbelievable. Of course, that's all the stuff I practised for,

but it's truly amazing that it just happened. As I watch that putt, the emotion is the first thing. It's unbelievable, but it's all in there, and really, it's amazing."

Scott credits his elevation to major champion on playing a reduced schedule of tournaments during the year, ensuring that he is at his best for the biggest events. "I played a lot of tournaments all around the world for ten years," he says. "I mean, that takes its toll. When you're 21 it's pretty easy to fly around the world nonstop and just go play and do everything you want to do but it's different when you're 31. It catches up with you a little bit. So I just do what feels best for me now. I'm out here with the goal to be the best player I can be and get the most out of my game."

And the reduced-play formula seemed to work for Scott, so much so that he found himself as the highest ranked golfer in the world in May 2014 – something he described as, "a dream come true". The previous month, Scott had married Kojzar at a low-key ceremony in the Bahamas – after the pair had reconciled before his 2013 Masters triumph – bringing balance to both his personal and professional lives.

Above: Scott was destined to become a professional golfer from an early age

Below: Slipping on the famed Masters green jacket was a proud moment for Scott

So which was harder – facing a putt for the Masters or asking the woman he loved to marry him? "The putt definitely, because I didn't even have to ask," he says. "I got out of that one. That was good. We just decided over a conversation. We thought it was time, so we did it."

The publicity-shy pair didn't even tell their guests that they were being invited to a wedding, they just thought they were going to a party. "We just said we were having a party, so come on over. They had no idea that it was going to happen. That was the fun little game for Marie and I to play for a while; planning it and stuff."

Meanwhile, earlier this year, the pair celebrated the arrival of their daughter, Bo, who was born while the couple were in Australia during Scott's off season. "I must say it's just been a great experience," he says. "I was home for nine days after Bo was born. And, okay, disturbed sleep the first couple of nights was my





"It has to happen, the next wave of guys has to come along and, you know, I hope they stay hungry for it and push themselves. Certainly a guy like Jordan, talking about the Masters, to be so young, you know, I've said it before but his window is now and he should push as hard as he can because you don't know how long it can last. Some people are lucky and have 20-year careers and play good for that long and other people don't. He could be in the prime of his life right now. Make the most of it."

That's certainly advice worth heeding, because if there's anyone who's made the most of it in their life, it's Adam Scott. ■

only complaint. But it wasn't that big a deal. I think if you can kind of write up a whole dream scenario of how it should all happen, I think we had a pretty good run of things."

With Scott's international schedule, he's still unsure if Marie and Bo will be able to travel with him to events around the world. "As far as how we're going to manage having a kid, I don't really know yet. We'll just kind of play it by ear, and as long as they are settled and comfortable, that will be good. But I'll try to

keep my routines of golf as clear as possible for me so I can play well, and if they can travel a bit, that would be great, because I certainly want to see them as much as I can. But obviously with this job...you're away sometimes, and we've just got to find the right balance."

Balance isn't something that Scott has found hard in his life so far – when he's not winning millions on the golf course, he can usually be found in the waves on his surfboard. "I grew up at the beach but I stopped surfing when I was about 13, and then I took it up a few years ago. I needed something else to do. I just enjoy the ocean full stop, even just to go for a swim at the end of the day for 30 minutes. It feels good to me." Between surfing and being a new father,

Scott would seem to have his hands pretty full, but his hunger for success on the golf course remains undiminished – especially since he has been overtaken at the top of the world rankings by young guns such as 26-year-old Rory McIlroy and 21-year-old Jordan Spieth, who won the Masters earlier this year in record-breaking fashion.

Above: Scott has won a series of tournaments and obtained the World No.1 slot last year
Below: Balancing family life with his career will be a new challenge for Scott

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