

The One-Armed Bandit

From an early age, Larry Alford II lived and breathed the sport of golf. As a teenager, he was ranked one of the top 16 young golfers in the nation.

In June of 1991, Alford was tied with Tiger Woods going into the final round at the Dinah Shore/Mission Hills Tournament in California. It was only in the last few holes that Woods pulled ahead for victory. Subsequently, Alford won the prestigious Houston Golf Association Tournament of Champions.



A few days later, his life changed suddenly. In August of 1991, at the beginning of his senior year of high school, Alford was in an automobile accident. He suffered severe injuries, but the most devastating one was that his left arm had to be amputated just below the elbow. Even this tragedy, however, could not diminish his dream of becoming a professional tour player.

Alford had never heard of a one-armed golfer, but then again, he didn't know that it couldn't be done. As he began to swing a few golf clubs at the rehab center, his desire was rekindled. A golf prosthesis, the only one of its kind in the world designed by his stepfather, enabled him to resume play.

After several months of practice with his new hand, Alford hit a ball one day. When it landed more than 200 yards away, he knew he was "back." He rejoined his high school team, scoring even better than before, and earned a college scholarship. Utilizing all the support from family, friends, and many PGA tour players, Alford has turned to charity tournaments as a means to inspire others.

Known as the One-Armed Bandit, Alford has participated in more than 500 golf and speaking events and has helped raise more than \$5 million for local and national charities.

"Everything in life is attitude," Alford said. "When I get knocked down, I get right back up and keep trying. I look at life differently, handle changes differently. In golf, as in life, the ones who turn the bad breaks into positive ones are the true winners."



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In light of Alford's experience, most of us would agree that we could achieve more with the abilities and the state of our health that God has bestowed.

And that is a challenge for me. As I heard a wise man once say, "In the long run, men (and women) hit only what they aim at."

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me (Philippians 4:13).

– Beecher Hunter