



GAME REVIEWS

Tiger Woods PGA Tour 07



By **Stuart Dredge** | Mar 26, 2007
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There's a reason why there's about six mini-golf games for every proper golf sim on mobile. Mini-golf – or some variant of crazy golf – seems more suited to the playing patterns of mobile gamers: it's easy and quick to pick up'n'play, and you don't need to faff about with different clubs and wind conditions. Oh, and there's usually clowns involved. Always a bonus.

There aren't any clowns in *Tiger Woods PGA Tour 07*, but in all other respects EA Mobile has clearly worked hard to make a great *mobile* golf game, as opposed to a great golf game that's a bit fiddly when squeezed onto a phone. Sure, it doesn't offer the depth of Tiger's console outings, but it's much more fun for a quick round on the bus or train.

The core gameplay options are similar to console. Practice mode lets you get your golfing bearings, while Challenge mode provides you with a series of tests, such as completing three par-3 holes in less than 10 strokes in total. Finally, Tournament mode pitches you into an 18-hole competition as Tiger, against the cream of the world's golfers.

In all three modes, you get a choice of difficulty levels: Amateur, Pro or Legend.

In the high-end version we reviewed, there's only one course to play – Pebble Beach – which enables EA to cram in the necessary graphics. On lower-end phones, we believe there's at least one other course, though, at the expense of the whizzy visuals. More on that later.

First though, a huge round of applause for the simplicity of the *Tiger Woods PGA Tour* game. EA has junked the controls

last version, which tried to recreate the analog-stick swing of home console joypads, to fiddly effect.

Now you just hold down the '5' key on your phone as Tiger backswings, and release it to swing. If you want to draw or fade the shot, you use '7' or '9' instead of '5'. And in traditional *Tiger* fashion, you can put spin on the ball once it's in the air by hammering in the desired direction, using the keypad.

Meanwhile, everything you need is on the one screen, with a 3D view from behind Tiger, plus a little 2D map to the right of the screen, which can be switched off by pressing '0' if you want. Pressing the left softkey switches to Aim mode, which flies the camera to where the ball will be landing.

It all works really well. Putting is slightly different – you move a marker to aim your shot and set its strength, rather than changing the backswing – but that's easily grasped, too. Overall, it's the most accessible mobile golf simulation we've played.

As with console *Tiger Woods*, certain actions (long drives, holing from chips) win you trophy balls, which can be checked from the opening menu. And along the way there's wind conditions to be taken into

Then there's those visuals. They looked amazing on the Sc phone that we reviewed *Tiger Woods PGA Tour 07* on, moving smoothly when your camera follows the ball after you've hit the stuff.

However, at EA's recent launch event for the game, we played it on a Nokia N73, where the graphics looked just as good, but moved more jerkily, which is something to bear in mind if you use a Series 60 phone.

Overall though, this is a great game spoiled by one thing. That lack of additional courses does reduce *Tiger Woods PGA Tour 07's* long-term value. Once you've played through the Challenges on all three difficulty levels and won a Tournament, we wonder whether you'll really want to keep playing over and over on the same course.

Yes, there is a trade-off between the graphics and the space available on a mobile phone, but we can't help thinking that most mobile golfers would settle for slightly less on the graphical front if they could have a couple of extra courses for variety's sake, and maybe a stripped-down career mode, like the one you get in Gameloft's *Pro Golf 2007*.

Ultimately, though, *Tiger Woods PGA Tour 07's* accessibility is its strongest point, allowing you to blast through a round in a matter of minutes. It's about fun rather than depth, and on those terms it's a roaring success – and offers a good contrast with Gameloft's more serious sim.



Tiger Woods PGA Tour 07

Like Tiger, it's smooth and looks every inch a champion. Could do with additional courses, though



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Stuart is a freelance journalist and blogger who's been getting paid to write stuff since 1998. In that time, he's focused on topics ranging from Sega's Dreamcast console to robots. That's what you call versatility. (Or a short attention span.)

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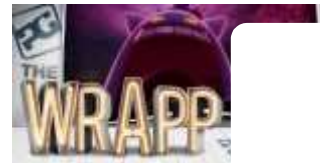


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