

Report: Anthony Kim might not play golf again in order to secure hefty disability settlement

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Alex Myers

Remember Anthony Kim? The 23-year-old kid who stole the show at the 2008 Ryder Cup by leading the U.S. to an upset win? You've probably asked yourself "What ever happened to him?" on more than one occasion. And now, we finally know -- well, maybe.

Alan Shipnuck has a [fantastic story on the vanishing Kim](#) in this week's *Sports Illustrated*. While reading the piece in its entirety is well worth your time, one part of Shipnuck's reporting really jumps out.

[Related: Kim and other "next great American golfers"](#)

Apparently, Kim is sitting on a potential payout that could be bigger than the FedEx Cup bonus. And to collect it, Kim doesn't have to do anything -- which just might explain his prolonged absence from the game.

*The answer very well may lie in an insurance policy Kim has against a career-ending injury. An IMG source pegged its value at \$10 million, tax-free. Kim's friend, who has had financial discussions with him, says, "It's significantly north of that. Not quite 20, but close. That is weighing on him, very much so. He's trying to weigh the risk of coming back. The way he's phrased it to me is, 'If I take one swing on Tour, the policy is voided.'" *

Assuming the friend's figure is accurate, Kim would have to earn some \$35 million on and off the course to match the amount he would collect by never playing golf again. (That's factoring in taxes; agent's commissions; private jets; diamond-encrusted belt buckles; salaries for a caddie, swing coach, short-game specialist, trainer, nutritionist and osteopath; and other expenses of the modern Tour pro.) For context, his career Tour earnings are \$12.2 million, \$9.2 million of which was accumulated between 2008 and '10. Kim signed a blockbuster deal with Nike following the '08 season, and his annual endorsement income peaked the following year at \$6 million. If he can again be the player he was, he could make his \$35 million nut with four or five good years. But that's a very big if. "To say that he won't come back because of money, that doesn't ring true to me because he's the most competitive kid I know," says Knost. "I can't imagine that's what he's thinking, unless something's changed and he doesn't want to play anymore."*

Competitive or not, that's a lot of easy money to turn down -- assuming, of course, Kim could prove injuries ended his career. Not that he doesn't have a history of being hurt.

After contending at the 2011 Masters, Kim injured his thumb and had surgery a month later. Then came wrist tendinitis and a ruptured achilles tendon in 2012. Phil Mickelson told Shipnuck that Kim was still recovering when he randomly bumped into him practicing at the Madison Club in California early in 2013.

"He was still getting over the Achilles injury," Mickelson says. "He wasn't walking much, so he was playing only nine holes at a time in a cart. But he was hitting it great -- long and straight. He looked ready for the Tour. I expected to see him out there in a couple of months."

But despite rumors of Kim returning to the PGA Tour -- where he still has status on a medical exemption -- he hasn't played since withdrawing from the 2012 Wells Fargo Championship. Kim had more WDs than made cuts in the 10 events he entered that year.

Earlier this year, Kim's agent, Clarke Jones, told Golf Channel's John Hawkins that Kim wasn't even playing golf recreationally. According to an anonymous friend Shipnuck spoke to, though, that isn't the case.

"AK's not injured," says the friend. "He can play, he can walk. His swing looks good, the strike sounds solid, his ball flight is good. His physical health is not the issue."

Hmm. If Kim is hoping to collect on that disability settlement, that's probably not information he wants spread around.

So what else is he doing during his extended break from being a tour pro? Shipnuck investigated some of Kim's noted hangout spots and discovered the 29-year-old Dallas resident hasn't been frequenting those of late either.

In other words, Anthony Kim is still a mystery. But at least we have one, well, millions of possible reasons for why he's remained out of the spotlight.