In search of his first major championship since the 2008 U.S. Open, Woods came in playing well. Two weeks ago, he won his first PGA Tour event in 30 months. But on the driving range before his round, he said he felt something creeping up on him.

AUGUSTA, Ga. - Lee Westwood has a first-round lead at a major for the first time in his career.

Not really the distinction he's looking for, though.

Westwood rattled off four straight birdies on the front side Thursday en route to a stress-free round of 5-under-par 67 at the Masters, where he's still trying to win his first major championship.

"I've come close," Westwood said. "I've won all there is to win other than a major championship. That's my primary focus and it's been a long time coming around since the PGA last year."

One of Westwood's closest calls came two years ago at Augusta, when he started the last round with the lead. But he made a three-putt bogey on No. 9 to give it away and ended up as a bystander while Phil Mickelson was handed his third green jacket.

This time, Westwood heads into Friday with a one-shot lead on Louis Oosthuizen and two ahead of a group of six, including Paul Lawrie, Miguel Angel Jimenez and Francesco Molinari.

The Brit, winner of 36 tournaments worldwide, hit 16 greens in regulation after a light week of practice at a course he's always felt suits his game. He made four birdies in a row on Nos. 5 through 8 and never needed a putt longer than 10 feet.

"It's nice to get off to a good start and have a platform to build from," Westwood said.

He attacked the course on a soft, wet day that seemed ideal for scoring but also included tougher pin placements than usual for a Thursday, along with golf balls muddied when they landed on the saturated fairways.

Ranked third in the world, Westwood could very well be the Best Player Without A Major. He has finished in the top three six times since 2008, and has had plenty of time to think about what he needs to get over the hump.

"When you're in contention and don't finish it off, you go home and assess what you didn't do and what you can improve," he said. "And that's what I did."

Bubba Watson, Ben Crane and Jason Dufner were the other players in the tie at 3-under, with Peter Hanson also at that number but still on the course.

Rory McIlroy shot 1-under 71 and Tiger Woods finished with a pair of bogeys to shoot even-par 72. The bogey on 18 was actually a good save after his tee shot went into the trees and resulted in an unplayable lie.

Woods opened his round by clanking his first tee shot off a tree and putting the second one in the creek, well to the left of the second fairway. He salvaged pars on both and felt pretty decent about the round, all things considered.

"I hit some of the worst golf shots I've ever hit today," Woods said. "That's OK. I just hung in there, grinded my way around the golf course, stayed patient, stayed in the moment. I could've shot one, maybe two better but I got a lot out of that round."

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"Old patterns. Some of my old stuff from a few years ago," he said. "I'm trying to work through it. Every now and again, it pops up and today it popped up again."

Before Westwood closed out his 5 under, it appeared the day's biggest story would be Henrik Stenson, who spent most of the day in the lead and was at 5 under with a two-shot advantage when he stood on the 18th tee box.

He hit that shot deep into the trees on the left and needed two more shots to reach the fairway. All part of an ugly 8 -- a snowman -- that dropped him to 1-under 71 and in a tie for 15th.

"That's what happens here," Stenson said. "It keeps on snowballing and I got the snowman at the end."