PGA Tour Champions Learning Center

VO>> Welcome to PGA tour champions learning center I'm Vince Giulini let's jump right in with an exciting announcement regarding a new event on the schedule for next year. The World Champions Cup a three-team international competition featuring playing captains Jim Furyk representing the United States squad Darren Clark representing team Europe and Ernie Els will captain team world. Each team will have six members including the playing captain as part of a three day event. Additional details are still being worked out but the captains are very excited about what's ahead.

OC/VO>> Yeah I look back on my career a look back at the Ryder cups I was involved with the president's cups I was involved with the fact that I got to to represent my country to play on a team. Those are some of my best memories and the game those are some of my best memories of my career and and so having the opportunity to do that as a senior or champions tour player and now have you know the best players in the world over fifty whether it's the United States where there's an international contingent weather it’s European players it just sounds like a fun event I mean the guys that will play on those teams played in the presidents cups in the Ryder cups and and they have those same memories as well so now we could do it all over again and to have two good friends is as captains and Ernie Els Darren Clark two guys I admire I spent a lot of time with them during my career to be asked to be part of that you know I guess I I probably would probably all in the right place at the right time at the right age but I was an honor to to be in that position.

OC/VO>> being a captain and a player this is really not going to be a big deal for me. I'm just excited to be able to play to have been asked to play in this format, it might be a little bit loose maybe the first couple of days but I can promise you on Sunday when it's on the line things will get tight and things will get kind of nervy and guys are going to going to be trying to win and that's what we've done our whole careers and believe me this is exactly the same. That's going to happen yeah there's some real great champions are going to be playing in this event it'll be the who's who of of golf or our generations and I think the fans will tune in and you know I think it'll be a big deal come come Sunday.

VO/OC>> Your going to have eighteen unbelievable golf players when you have guys as good as the players as they're going to be anything can happen and I think that’s what what makes the Ryder Cup so enthralling which makes the president's Cup so enthralling is that people want to watch this live it’s happening in front of them and the little nuances of match play whether you give a putt or you don't give a putt. Stuff like that, it’s why everybody wants to see it. I think that’s whats going to make this event even bigger than than than what maybe we think it's going to be it's going to be just so exciting.

OC>> It's always great to spend time with PGA tour champions president Miller Brady but especially with a big announcement on the horizon so what can you tell us.

OC/VO>> Well sure thanks for having me first of all. It's a three day event though earn points each day and then ultimately the the team that has the most points at the end is going to win.

OC>> Can you tell us about the qualifications for this?

OC>> Well we're still finalizing some of those details right now with the captains as well as Peter Jacobson who is a player liaison overseeing the this World Champions Cup.

OC>> You know what this is really exciting because as we've talked about this is something that's been discussed for a long time to actually see it happen must be thrilling for you.

OC>> We we've talked about this type of format for as long as I've been involved with the Champions Tour so to now see it come to fruition is really exciting for us and something we all want to participate in.

OC>> And plus there's pride on the line to for these these guys who actually have Ryder Cup presidents Cup experience don't think there won’t be a carryover right from somewhere?

OC>> No definitely a lot of history I think that's what makes it fun you'll probably see maybe a little bit more camaraderie as we always do out here in the Champions Tour but they're going to compete for a team as well.

OC>> Okay so we're still working on location things like that?

OC>> Were still finalizing some of those details which actually gives us something to maybe talk about in the future once we identify which course we're gonna play and how we're going to select the players.

OC>> yeah but this is great create quite a buzz as we're going to 2022.

OC>> It certainly does.

VO>> PGA Tour Champions Learning Center will keep you informed as more details become available regarding the World Champions Cup. Still to come more from two of the three playing captains but the focus shifts to their experiences at this week's PGA tour event at PGA national, where sometimes you get the bear trap and sometimes the bear trap gets you.

VO>> The intimidating bear, the bear trap. couple balls already in the water today. The sound says it all. So difficult to navigate your way around fifteen sixteen seventeen here bear trap. Is it gonna stop? No. Can you believe it? This 15th hole is just relentless.

VO>> Jim Furyk is one of the most consistent players on any tour and avoidingtrouble at the Honda classic at the bear trap is making life a little easier. No one has played more rounds since 2007 without a penalty then Furyk, let's learn more about staying high and dry.

OC/VO>> I think PGA national is a really good course but I also think it's a very difficult golf course and we’re they're usually a late February March at the time where it was really windy in Florida and that that area seems to get very windy for one reason or another it it seems to be a bit of a wind tunnel through that golf course and a lot can happen fourteen fifteen sixteen seventeen eighteen there you know. Birdies, bogeys, doubles, big numbers and so we don't know no leads real safe down the stretch at that golf course and if you're still two three shots back with three to play you always feel like you're in it you know if you if you can make a birdie you can apply a ton of pressure.

OC>> So we want to get to the finish there but before we do you have an interesting stat were you so many guys have really found trouble water in particular on the bear trap in fifteen sixteen and seventeen. You for the most part have been pretty good about staying out of the penalty area there.

OC>> I consider myself a pretty good iron player and a pretty accurate player but too I I you know I I think the stat that would probably most impressive is like who has the best greens in regulation percentage on say fifteen sixteen seventeen like because you have to strike the ball you have to hit good solid iron shots on fifteen and seventeen control the flight in the wind sometimes you know not only trajectory but also the curvature of the ball because of a cross wind and then sixteen is a pretty tough drive and a and a good second shots of the guys that can hit the greens on fifteen sixteen and seventeen let alone just stay out of the water is most important and there's some there's some pins on fifteen and seventeen where bailing out of the bunker it's better than being in the water but not by that much there's pin placements they're say in the left to right wind with the pin tucked on the left side of either green and left to right wind when you put them on the left bunker there's no chance of getting a bunker shot close so it's an instant four. Now I realize the waters probably an instant five but you know you see a lot of those shots going in the water because guys know they can't make par for bailing out so hitting the greens is key in those situations or putting them on a position where you get the ball up and down.

OC>> What is it like to have this stretch of holes not only there but anywhere I mean are you thinking about that and how do you avoid thinking about that stretch that can really tilt around.

OC/VO>> You really can't I mean there's a big statue right there on the fifteenth tee with the bear trap so when you get there there's a giant bear and it's kind of hard not to think about it. You're staring at a lake and a green that's cut of a very awkward angle of tee box and we all know I mean that's where all the corporate hospitality is that's where the mass of fans are the you know the the area around sixteen and seventeen, sixteen green seventeen tee seventeen green that I mean it has like a a stadium like feel and and so yeah you really don't get around the fact that it's there you just realize you're going to have to get you know buckle down and had some really good shots if you're gonna get through that stretch.

VO>> Thirteen years ago Ernie Els won the Honda classic ending a four year drought between PGA tour victories PGA National play tough that week with a scoring average of nearly two strokes over par. The course ranked as the ninth hardest on tour in 2008. Els shot a final round sixty seven to win by one stroke over Luke Donald.

OC>> Always good to spend time with world golf hall of fame member Ernie Els and let's narrow this point down a little bit. In your ten starts career at PGA national in the Honda classic one top ten but it was really a good one. 2008 when you won it and I wanted to ask you about winning there and really what that meant because it had been a while since since you had won. what it mean to you.

OC>> That kind of period I wasn't playing really great golf just started working with Claude Harmon and and and Butch Harmon but really with Claude Harman and working on a couple of swing changes and so forth and going into that week I think was my first time playing there also. I'm not sure I think it was, but at that time the autism world was really on my mind with Ben we were thinking about moving to that area which we did but that's kind of how something that week for my wife's going to check the place out because we used to be in Orlando and then you know kind of took my mind off the golf a little bit then had a really good week I remember the really played very tough it was playing very firm and very fast and I had a really good Sunday I think that's a three under par and kind of prevailed.

OC>> What does it take to to be a finisher at at events you know Jack Nicklaus always talked about guys finishing events like that what what what is that separation of great players were able to do that?

OC/VO>> I think it's a belief in you’re game and a trust in your game and certain golf courses like PGA national really challenges all the disciplines in your game you know. Especially second shots it's a really a great second shot golf course there's a lot of water hazards but also you have to trust the shot that you have to pull off because there is certain areas that you just can’t go and if you go there it's a double bogey we’ve seen the bear trap and all those things. So you have to have a golf swing that you can trust and you can trust your ability to pull this shot off and especially around that golf course.

OC>> So let's focus on the bear trap since you mention that I'd like you to talk about the the par threes sandwiching that par four so fifteen your tee ball there and then the second shot at sixteen in the tee shot also at seventeen what what provides that challenge. you mention how can play firm there's water and wind so a lot of factors are involved.

OC>> Exactly the wind is a big factor it always blows they but the direction makes a huge difference the bear trip is really not much to talk about you know you're hitting short irons in but most of the time the winds coming into your face mostly into you of the left side and all the trouble is on the right and then you go bunkers left on on on all three holes but is based on the par threes. I actually even found the fifteen hole which is a shorter one of the two par threes more difficult because of the angle. You've gotta go more to the right it's very tough to kind of get yourself to bail out to the left side. Number fifteen is probably the par three I’ve hit more golf balls in the water than any hole on the tour. Sixteen I’ve played it pretty good it's a par 4, you don't really have to hit driver so you just want to place your ball in the fairway on the left side. Then you normally have about a six iron in for a second shot into the wind. Big slope in the green but probably the biggest target of the three iron shots that you have to play and then seventeen is the longer hole. I remember that I hit 4 iron in 08 the wind was in my face and I actually hit it in the bunker the bunker is there but if you really need a poor shot into the bunker the ball goes through the bunker onto the other side it's a very very difficult second shot towards the water. So very small targets and as the week goes on the targets become smaller because the tension grows a lot in in the in the tournament. So three of the really best holes on the on the tour to make you think.

VO>> It's not only water but the wind that could trip you up in Palm Beach gardens it factors in the club selection and just how certain holes will play in competition. Here's some advice on how to execute shots in the wind from Jerry Kelly who finished third in the Honda classic in 2011 in this week's what's your edge.

OC>> One of the biggest things you have to deal with in Florida is the wind and it is a heavy sea level wind. It’s blowing fifteen there it could feel like a thirty mile an hour wind in other places so on par threes we kind of have to create shots we have to do things that make it make a cut off swing come out that may not look that pretty but it becomes extremely effective because all we care about is how we control that face at the bottom. Number one if you're on a par three use a Tee it's like cheating that is legal cheating right there. Okay now basically when it's coming in obviously we're gonna fly it low, sometimes maybe a front pin we hit too much club flight it high so it actually comes back to the pin. It is a little scarier I'd rather have something low and penetrating doesn't curve too much one way or the other even with the cross wind I like to play against the wind a little bit right to left on the left right left right right to left. It was even hard for my brain to comprehend, but key is impact key is making sure that we hit the center of the club. I'm gonna shorten up a little bit more than normal on my backswing and I'm also going to abbreviate the follow through letting me know that this right here is really the only part of the swing the matters. I'm not gonna look pretty up here I wanna look pretty right down there.

Go in, I can't see that far. So know when you're playing in the wind shorten the swing a little bit try to hit a low penetrating flight, use a tee, legal cheating. Have fun in the wind, hit some fun shots never know what happens might go in.

VO>> Coming up on PGA tour champions learning center Fran Quinn was rolling not long ago until an unexpected New York City misstep nearly derailed him. Quinn on his strange but true adventure.

Welcome back to learning center. PGA tour champions has hall of fame members, major champions and PGA tour winners. It also has players who are less decorated yet seeking the great second chance. Fran Quinn is a four time winner of the Korn ferry tour but it's still searching for his first win on PGA tour champions, that elusive first victory is on hold after an injury detour that happened on the mean streets of New York City.

OC>> Well Fran Quinn has a story and it's it's a real doozy and Fran I knew New York City could be a tough town but you know it can be really really rough and you were injured there and I'm not to make light of the situation but kind of walk us through what happened to you just a short time ago.

OC>> Well actually as a Red Sox fan it's always been a tough town okay they've had our number too many times, but having said that I played really well the open out at Notre Dame I finished top fifteen finish fourteenth in the tournament at a top ten the week before was well up on the money list and as I made my way back home my wife a call and said my youngest son was performing in New York City. Sean and he's a ballet dancer and so we went down and she asked me to come in and spend a couple days I came in and I was leaving from there to go to the Bridgestone the Players Championship. Well as I was leaving that morning July third in the crosswalk this is 2019, July 2019 I was making my way across a crosswalk rush hour traffic in my foot went into a possible I twisted I fell landed on my shoulder and there went my 19- 2020 season. I fractured my Glenwood which is your shoulder socket about thirty five to forty percent of it was completely smashed I was very fortunate to have Dr Price who's the head orthopedic for the New England patriots do the surgery he did the first one and a year later I could get my hand to about here. So it really didn't look promising on whether or not I would return to professional golf never mind getting out playing golf with my oldest son who's an accomplished player and so as we went into the second surgery in June he said to me goes look I feel good about this but you know we gotta stay positive and and I was and I was very positive doing all the rehab all the way through but still you have the doubt and after I had that surgery in June in mid July I started playing some golf and towards the end of September I started having really full range of motion.

VO/OC>> and this wasn't without complication too I know that I saw a photo of you, as you were recovering where you picked up double pneumonia.

OC>> I did so after the first surgery which was July twenty third 2019 I came out of that which was a very was ended up being about five and a half hour procedure and it was you know they were hoping it was gonna be a couple hours but it was very extensive and we came out of that surgery and I ended up with double pneumonia and I you know I went and I had a whole probably two weeks where I was running a fever anywhere from 102 to 104 and just very very sick and so that kinda slow down my recovery also.

OC>> So great to see you out here. When something is almost taken away finally how do you look at it when you returned and we're out here right now?

OC>> Oh it’s just a great opportunity and I mean I feel and quite frankly I mean I felt blessed to have the opportunity to play out here when I was fifty and then to play out here for three and a half seasons and and be highly competitive it was just a really a dream come true for me and and to look at it now and to have another second opportunity I'm really really looking forward to what this year brings and hopefully for the next three or four years.

VO>> Fran Quinn is not playing on a major medical extension, meaning he's relying on sponsors exemptions like the one he received recently in the Cologuard classic or he must Monday qualify into events. A tougher path for sure but at least now he's healthy enough to take it. Fran Quinn is just one of the many stories worth following on PGA tour champions the players live it and we deliver. Thank you for watching learning center I'm Vince Giulini and we'll see you next week.