VO>> Welcome to PGA TOUR Champions Learning Center. This week, the TOUR moves to the Woodlands Country Club just outside Houston, Texas. A familiar golf venue as the Woodlands has played host to several tournaments including the PGA TOUR’s Houston Open from 1975 to 2002.

OC>> Hello everyone, I’m Vince Cellini. The Insperity Invitational returns to the schedule this week after a one-year hiatus. Scott McCarron won the 2019 edition and winning was something McCarron knew all about during that season, the finest campaign of his career. He was indeed the lone star in hoisting the Houston hardware.

VO>> Par for McCarron at 18. Scott McCarron picks up hit 10th win on the PGA TOUR Champions, second of the season and he is the winner of the Insperity Invitational for 2019.

OC>> Great to spend time with Scott McCarron, the 2019 Insperity Invitational Champion. When you look at that particular victory, it got you to ten, double digits, of PGA TOUR Championships, but is that part of a bigger picture or did you just look at the individual wins along the way in 2019?

OC>> You know its more than just the individual wins, more than anything else. You’re trying to put yourself in position to win and to get it done. I’m not looking at trying to get to 10 or 20 or 30 or 45. That’s way out there, there’s no way I could get there. I’ve played a lot with Langer and I keep watching him rack up wins. It’s just a matter of putting yourself in position as much as you can, playing your game and hopefully you come out with a victory.

VO>> But double digits is pretty cool. That’s a nice landmark for you. Did you enjoy it?

VO/OC>> It is. I think I tied Nicklaus and Palmer, John Cook, some great players so I thought that was pretty cool to get to ten wins double digit, but I certainly wasn’t thinking oh I got to get to 10 or 15. I’m just trying to have fun here, put yourself in position and have those feelings you get when you have a chance to win a golf tournament, it’s pretty special.

VO>> What a magical season. I remember just how much joy you had during that season, the run. You’re in great shape, you’re a tremendous worker, how do you find the best version of Scott McCarron and sort of recapture that?

VO>> Well I’ve gone through a few injuries over the last year so, I got COVID in February of last year. I’ve got a torn tendon in my ankle at the end of last year so I’ve had some struggle with some injuries and it’s a matter of getting back to being healthy and then playing the game that I know how to play and so you know when you’re battling through injuries, sometimes its tough. You can swing the way you want to and then when you come back, because my ankle is feeling good now, but you still have some of that scar tissue you brain says hey, there’s some pains there or could come back. You know I’m just starting to get over that, the ankle feels good. I’m ready to get back playing some good golf again.

VO>> Can you tell the folks again and we remind them, jus the talent level that is taking place here on PGA TOUR Champions and what you’re dealing with week after week?

OC/VO>> You know the talent level is unbelievable here. You’ve got guys that have played some tremendous golf over the last thirty years or so with Bernhard Langer who has always been one of the best players in the world, Retief Goosen, Ernie Els, Jim Furyk, Phil Mickelson has been known to dabble a little bit with us. These guys are all great players, great players through their entire career. They’re still great players and so the players that are coming up are just really really good and the competition is getting very difficult and its only going to get more difficult. We get older and the guys get younger coming up so. You know its one of those things, you really have to get as much as you can done in the first five or six years but if you can stay in shape look at what Bernhard Langer has done. He’s kind of been that guy that we’ve all been shooting for and emulating because it’s incredible what he’s done.

VO>> Here are the Charles Schwab Cup standings for this week’s event. Four-time Insperity Invitational Champion, Langer. At age 63, is currently second. Kevin Sutherland, a winner in two of his last four starts including the Colorguard Classic earlier this year, remains out in front. And with nine events over the next eleven weeks, we could see some real movement in the top ten.

VO>> From steady standings to a schedule change. After eight consecutive years, the 3M Great of Golf this year. The cancellation due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The traditional Saturday 18 hole scramble competition had featured several golfing legends Jack Nicklaus, Gary Player, Lee Trevino, Annika Sorenstam and Nancy Lopez. The Tournament looks forward to reintroducing the event in 2022.

VO>> No greats of golf, but here’s something great for golf. The return of applause and cheers for Houston area golf fans. For the first time in 2021 on the PGA TOUR Champions, general admissions spectators will be admitted during tournament play Friday through Sunday. Even better, it’s free. Courtesy of United Healthcare. Masks will be mandatory for all fans on site covering faces and no doubt plenty of smiles.

VO>> One player who’s finding some good form and in the field this week is Tim Petrovic who is coming off back to back top tens. He had two holes in one in consecutive rounds at the Colorguard Classic and finished tied for sixth. Then in the Chubb Classic, he shot a final round 65 and finished tied for fourth. Tall Tim Petrovic shows us why he is knocking on the door and gives us a peak at the tools of his trade in “What’s your Edge?”

OC>> Okay folks, I want to show you what I’ve got in my bag. I’ve got Tour Edge EXS Blade 56-degree wedge. I’ve got the EXS pro exotics forge cavity back iron and I have that five through pitching wedge and then I have these really cool EXS tie utility clubs and the two, three, and four iron. Now I do have the option of taking the two iron out and putting in a two hybrid incase the course that we’re playing has a little bit of rough, but I have a lot of people ask me, Tim why do you have two holes in your wedge? Well I do that obviously to take a little weight out, but I also do it to move the center of gravity a little higher on the wedge to let me hit a little bit of a flatter pitch shot but mostly for the weight. And this is something I can do myself at home or I have one of the guys do it.

VO>> Next on learning center two time Valspar Championship winner Retief Goosen on playing Snake Charmer taming the Copperhead. And the one and only Lee Trevino on choosing an under 30 player who he believes will become the best on the PGA TOUR.

VO>> You can’t fake it around that place you’ve got to be hitting good golf shots. It’s just three great holes. If you can play at even par for the week, I think you’ll so well. It is the nature of this golf course. It’s one of my favorites of the year.

VO>> PGA TOUR members are in for a test this week at the Valspar Championship. The closing three holes, nicknamed the snake pit rank among the most difficult closing stretches of any tournament that have been on the PGA TOUR. The rest of the course is no joke either. Excluding majors, the Copper Head Course at Innisbrook Resort rank at the third most difficult course on Tour in 2019.

VO>> Retief Goosen has twice tamed the Copperhead Course winning in 2003 and 2009. Goose is one of five players to win the Valspar Championship in his 40’s. Two of his PGA TOUR wins have come at this event. Who better to offer course insight and a core strategy and what players can expect this week.

OC>> With World Golf Hall of Famer Retief Goosen and Retief with two wins at Valspar all be it six years apart, I’d like to talk about the second one because you were over 40 when you won and that was your final PGA TOUR win. When you reach that aspect in a career, how important is it to maintain the ability to win at that level?

OC>> It’s a golf course I really loved, it’s a shot makers course. You need to shape it, you need to hit all sorts of shots around it. You know when you play a practice round on a course you think of 13 under is going to win and then he scores around nine or 10 you know. It’s a really deceiving golf course and really I just love those tough golf courses and really from the first time I played there one day and had a chance to win more than twice, its great. I remember reading an article by some golfer I haven’t an idea, Goosen is over the hill, then he is over the hill and blah blah blah, and I thought you know actually if I could win one more and prove him wrong that would be great and ended up winning the Valspar for the second time which was great. It’s a wonderful place to be and one of my favorite golf courses.

VO>> You talked about really loving the course and you know Copperhead as well as anyone, maybe you could take us through the Snake Pit, those final three holes and the challenges that they present.

VO/OC>> Coming down the last few holes, you’ve got a long par three. Into the wind it could be a three iron, the next hole could be back into the wind hit driver, you’ve got no choice but to hit that snaky little fairway. And then 17 it could be anywhere from a three wood to a five iron. And then 18 up the hill a really tight driving hole too. It’s really how aggressive you feel, how your game feels around that golf course. You could lay back, hit the fairways but you leave yourself really tough shots to get close to those greens. So in a way it really forces you to really shape the shots down the fairway and hit it as far as you can down there and that’s the only way you’re really going to make biridies and score around that course.

VO>> You talked about a shot makers course and the challenges there, do you feel like you have an automatic advantage when things are tough? When conditions really get tough? That a degree of difficulty is raised in any of that? You seem to rise to that occasion.

VO/OC>> Yeah I like golf courses where when you feel like you make a par, you might have gained a shot to the field. Some golf courses you play you make a par and you move back 10, 20 spots. So I like a golf course where I know if I go out there and grind today and shoot a couple three under par, I’m moving up the leaderboard and that’s one of those golf courses. Copperhead is one of those courses. It’s really deceivingly tough.

VO>> Well you’re still an unbelievable player and even past fifty now. You reach another level where you have to adjust who you are, you’re game and so on and so forth. Can you draw any of that magic from past 40 and into past 50 as well? These stages that you go through in your career.

OC>> Yeah I mean golf. Some players play really well really young, from a very young age and not so well later on. I started a bit late although I did win tournaments in my 20’s but really from 30 onwards I really kicked it into another gear and had a good ten year run and then the back started giving me issues and I struggled for a while with the back and finally I had the back surgery and it’s probably the best thing I’ve done. I’ve got my life back from going not even being able to sleep at night to at least getting a good night’s sleep.

VO>> Billy Mayfair is a veteran PGA TOUR Champions player and a five-time winner on the PGA TOUR, but recently revealed what might be his biggest victory. Recognizing and coping with an autism spectrum disorder. He has long struggled with processing information on the course, slow play, and communication with officials all which came to a head at the second round of the QQQ Championship in 2019 where the TOUR disqualified him for misrepresenting two separate rules infractions. At the urging of his wife, Tammie. Mayfair sought help afterward and got it. Hoping a pathway to processing information will help him slow down thoughts and responses. Mayfair is working with PGA TOUR Champions to ensure better communication in hopes by revealing his diagnosis it will change perceptions of him and possibly lead to charity work supporting other autistic athletes.

VO>> Still to come on learning center, advice from one of the game’s greatest players, Lee Trevino. The Merry Mex on which club gains more importance as players age and the idea of self-belief. Lee on that most essential winning component, confidence. Stay with us.

VO>> Lee Trevino’s playing career has been impressive both on PGA TOUR Champions and the PGA TOUR, winning 29 times on each circuit. His first win as pro was the 1965 Texas State Open as Sharks Town Golf Club in Houston, about an hour south of where the Insperity Invitational will be played this week. The 3M Greats of Golf will not take place this year. Saturday Tradition at the Insperity where Trevino has been a headliner, but on learning center the show must go on as we catch up with the legendary Lee Trevino.

OC>> You look fantastic. What’s great about being 81?

OC>>  (LAUGHS) Oh my god. I think…

OC>> Being you

OC>> I’ll tell you what you try to do, you try to take care of yourself. You try to be productive. This is, it’s very important when you’re in your 70s, especially if you seem to be in pretty good shape, or somewhat good shape, is to think a little bit. Now am I going to do this the rest of my life or would I like to have a little bit better life? Play a little bit better golf. It’s real easy to do a little bit of yoga, do some stretching, do some weightlifting. In other words, stay busy, stay busy, stay busy, you know? Everybody say, what are the biggest things in the world about people and being our age is they tend to get shorter and they tend to gain weight. And for some reason, what happens to them is when that happens, they get to the point where they’re exhausted, where they’re tired. So, they can’t do the other things. I told a friend of mine the other day, he wanted to call me up and he wanted me to teach him how to play. And he’s a big man, he’s gained a lot of weight. He’s the one that admitted that. He said to me, he said, I’ve gotta lose this weight. I said it’s real easy to lose weight. One of the easiest things in the world is to lose weight. And how you do that is you take a pencil and paper and you write down what you’ve eaten the last month. Then don’t eat any of that stuff. You understand? Because evidently, what you’ve been eating is what put the weight on you. So, let’s change our diet. There’s no such thing as exercise. If you eat three meals a day, two meals a day and you eat the wrong things. You can run a marathon everyday and you’re not going to lose any weight. That’s the whole thing. I know I sound like Gary Player sitting up here.

OC>> No, no. It’s good stuff. It’s wisdom. To hear it from you, who I consider, you may be the most unique, great player ever. I don’t know that there can be another story like yours beginning to now. Do you agree? Can that ever happen again? Can someone become famous like you

OC>> When I won the US open in 1968 and I became a member of the PGA. I started getting a little bit of fame and following and what have you. I decided right then that I wanted to be better and I’m still trying to be better at the age of 81, believe it or not. I still hit as many golf balls, not as many golf balls, but I practice almost daily. I got the yips a little bit with the putter, But I’ve tried the arm like, I’ve tried everything in the world. I’m starting to do a little bit better with the putter. I always practice a lot with wedges, not as much bunkers, but with wedges.

OC>> You’re a wizard with the wedges.

OC>> That’s what saves you. There’s nothing better in life than confidence. The more confidence you have, regardless of what it is, the better the life is going to be. And so, I don’t wanna lose that. I’m still striving to play better at 81 and I know it’s going backwards. I have a friend of mine that’s 95 years old, 96, and he’s blind now. He wants me to take him to the club and hit some balls. And when I get home, I’m going to take him out there. I’ll tee the ball up for him, put the driver behind him and help him swing at it. He’s a great guy, great guy. Herb Dorn is his name, he’s my best friend in Dallas.

OC>> You know, you talked about your wedge game and of course now, everything today is power power, length and distance. But yet still

OC>> You’ve gotta hit the wedge

OC>> Right. That’s what I was going to ask you. I mean, that part of the game has gone unchanged.

OC/VO>> Tiger changed it. Tiger was the one that changed the game. Tiger came out on TOUR, didn’t quite hit it as long as John Daly did when he came out. John Daly was probably the longest hitter and stayed the longest hitter longer than anyone. Nobody caught up to him for what? Ten years. Tiger came along and naturally in the media they were always asking him about how far he hit the ball. But he didn’t hit it straight. And Tiger says, I would like to hit it straight, but it doesn’t really matter that much to me because if I can hit the ball 325 to 350,  I will manage it from there with a wedge. The thing that they found out, case in point with Dechambeau at the Open, is they have such club head speed that they can take a wedge out of full rough and still spin it. To where in my era, with the Bermuda grass, our club head speed wasn’t fast enough, so we had to maneuver the ball to the front or over the edge of the green. But it’s turned out to be a power game. They still have to hit wedges, sure. One of the best wedges in my opinion, on TOUR, today is Justin Thomas. I think Justin Thomas is probably as well-rounded of a golfer as anyone that I’ve seen down the pipe. When you look at, you look at Dustin Johnson being number one, winning what he’s won, I don’t think that Justin Thomas is too far behind him. I really don’t, as being the best player on TOUR. I think he’s phenomenal, this young man.

VO>> Justin Thomas by the way currently stands at number two in the Official World Golf Rankings. Next week on PGA TOUR Champions, it’s the first major of the year, the Regions Tradition from Birmingham, Alabama. We will have a preview. I’m Vince Cellini, we’ll see you next time.