PGA Tour Champions Learning Center

VO>> Welcome to learning center and welcome to major season on the PGA Tour champions. This week it's the region's tradition, the first of a handful of major championships in 2021. The founders course at Greystone Golf and Country Club in Hoover, Alabama is the host venue, located 10 miles southeast of downtown Birmingham.

OC>> Hello, everyone, I'm Vince Giulini. 2020, made for a major drought on PGA Tour champions. Due to virus restrictions, only one major was played. But now we have five on the schedule, including two in the month of May. And as competition is ramping up, the players are hoping the extra prep time will pay off and they are rested and in peak form.

OC>> I feel good about where I am. I have some things I need to work on but, you know, you hope that you put it all together in a real big important week like the like the region's event.

OC>> I want to be peaking by Sunday. And I want to build up, you know, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday, I want I want to build so I’m better every single day. And you know, that happens basically, in tournaments for me.

OC>> You always talk about picking for majors and stuff, some of the greats have been able to do it certainly has been a little bit beyond me my whole career. But you know, we practice every week for that tournament and not just that particular week, but going forward as well. You know, you're trying to get up to a couple of good feelings and go with them. And if they work in the tournament, then you work harder on them. I'm trying to ingrain them a little bit.

OC>> I just put pressure on myself anyway. I mean, I just want to play well regardless of where we are and what the event is. You know, the depth of talent is so deep out here now that you know you got to go out play three or four really good rounds to have any kind of chance to win. And I'm looking forward to try that here this week.

VO>> The region's tradition was canceled in 2020. Steve Stricker one the weather delayed 2019 edition and returns to defend following a brilliant six shot victory to score his first PGA Tour champions major, the first of his two major championships on this tour. The US Ryder Cup Captain closed with a bogey free 4 under par 68 and 18 under total. Six weeks later, he captured the US senior open.

Bernard Langer will be making his 12th starts in the region's tradition in 11 prior appearances, he has two victories both at Greystone and nine top 10 finishes. Langer is trying to join jack Nicklaus as the only player to win the tradition more than once.

With two victories, Kevin Sutherland has been one of the most productive players on tour this wraparound season. His best finish in the region's tradition came in his first start a runner up in 2015 at Shoal Creek. However, the championship moved to Greystone Golf and Country Club in 2016. And since then, sutherlin has yet to break into the top 10.

Another contender is tour rookie Robert Carlson, who finished T two with a job classic. Carlson has been putting in a lot of work and it shows as he's cracked the top 10 and the Charles Schwab cup standings for Robert things are looking up, as fans often do when watching the six foot five inch suite.

OC>> I'm still seeing myself as a rookie and trying to enjoy myself out of here and then take it as it comes.

VO>> And it's coming along nicely. Carlson played in the final pairing at the Chubb classic closing with a 69 to finish tied for second. A great way to springboard into the major portion of the schedule.

OC>> It was a bigger and more important but my goal when I play golf my goal when I'm when I'm out here is to do my best every round so I don't try to make a difference really. So but obviously it's exciting with big events coming and they come pretty close together as well, especially in end of June to July, so it's important to being in good form and prepared for it.

VO>> Carlson's preparation for the PGA Tour champions included a retooled mindset, adjusting to a style better suited for the over 50 circuit.

OC>> The game I hear is quite different, especially in my last year on tour. With the hysteria around Bryson Dechambeau, as well as hitting it so far, the game on the main tour is changing quite rapidly. And obviously, I got sucked into that as well. And out here, played well in Naples last tournament and I hit three drivers a round. So putting in hours and hours to get stronger and increase clubhead speed might not be the most important thing to play well out on the championship.

VO>> And now with so many high profile events on tap, a breakthrough victory could come in the form of a major championship.

OC>> It gives me more satisfaction to play really, really well. And if I do that, sure the wins are going to come and if I do my job, in my practice and the gym in my planning for everything I'm doing, the wins are going to be resolved. It's nothing I kind of chase. I chase what drives me is to be to play my best golf and when I do that, hopefully the wins come and it will be a major will be bonus.

VO>> If Robert Carlson were to pull off a win this week, he would join Jesper Parnevik as the only other Swedish born player to win on PGA Tour champions. Jesper accomplished that feat in the 2016 insperity Invitational.

Coming up on PGA Tour champions Learning Center, it's off to Houston for keys to victory and a rain soaked insperity Invitational. Our winner is all dried off and checks in to help your game.

VO>> It was breakthrough time for Mike Weir in the rain shortened insperity Invitational. Twice a PGA Tour champions runner up Weird dialed in this sensational approach on the par 5 13, he's all over it. Setting up Eagle to catch john Daly at 10 under.

Daly found the water at 18 a group before while we're continued his precise iron play. His second shot at the last is clutch. And Weir is in control. A short path to close out victory at the insperity Invitational Mike weirs very first PGA Tour champions win. Here's the left hander with more in what's your edge

OC>> I hit a very good drive off the tee on 13 and I had 185 yards in the wind off the right and it was a point in the tournament that I saw John Daly right from me make eagle and I knew I needed a good shot. I was looking a little bit more to the right you know 10 steps or so but the wind was you know going right to left towards the pin and I just you know, caught a very solid shot I stuck with my routine I had a good picture in my head and you know, really hit a solid shot there. So I think you know, what you can learn from that possibly is just be really committed. I was very committed to that shot and seven iron I knew it was a perfect number 185 with a little helping wind and I could just go ahead and aggressive, so nice kind of stuck with the routine and it turned out great.

VO>> Mike, Weir is the winner and no question. It is an official winner. The last 36 hole tournament on PGA Tour champions, the 2018 principle charity classic, which was also shortened due to rain. Tom layman walked away as the champion and the wait is over for Mike Weir, scoring his first win worldwide since October of 2007. Congratulations, Bob Papa and Lanny Watkins have more from the Insperity.

VO>> What a day at the woodlands and the insperity Invitational the 17th edition and let's take a look at some of the highlights, Lanny Watkins, john Daly is only when his PGA Tour champions career came at the insperity Invitational and john puts pedal to the metal at the par 5 13.

VO>> Yeah, terrific tee shot and goes flag hunting here. Just a great shot by john Daly puts it in here about 14 feet right behind the hole.

VO>> That would set up an eagle opportunity for Daly and john rolls this and in at this point it gets john to 10 under par. He's got the out right lead.

VO>> Yeah that was an outstanding read ball moved a good foot to the right there. Mike Weir got a big break land in the bunker chased about 40 yards and then an iron in here for weir and talk about flag hunting. Look at this. Almost holes it in the air and he's got two feet for eagle.

VO>> and Mike Weir would cash in with that Eagle putt. And at that point he too aas it 10 under and he and Dally had a share of the lead. Tim Petrovic was trying to hang in there. He was also involved in the mix and then Mike weir over at the 15th his second shot into the par five and this was really the key Lanny.

VO>> it was it was a big three wood and again just goes right after this flag just a great strike by weir had a two putt birdie from there and then patrovik had about six feet for birdie at 15 he gets this to fall in inches closer.

VO>> Yeah and john Daly did not birdie 15. Mr. birdie putted 16 after a big drive at 18 john second into the park four.

VO>> Looked like nine hours and it was all over the flag it just was the wrong club. So good five yard short of the putting surface and john got fooled by the wind.

VO>> he would make double and fall back to eight under par. Now Mike weir after a perfect tee shot lanny and so steady

VO>> he really was and a very confident swing, exactly the right club at 18 gets in there about 16 feet wonderful shot by Mike weir.

VO/OC>> and he gave it the fist pump because he knew he pretty much sealed the deal. And then he had two putts from here to win rolls in the par putt. And Mike weir in his 14 start on the PGA Tour champions. Turned 50 last spring winds up with a two shot win over David Toms, john Daly and Tim petrovik. Bernhard Langer leads that group at six thunder, you know lanny Mike Weir has had some opportunities on the PGA Tour champions and, you know, had some stumbles late like at the colaguard classic, but he was rock steady today.

OC/VO>> Well, he was rock steady. I think he had a group of players that he could handle that he was kind of the big name in that group, if you will. So I think it worked to his benefit. Also, I think he's learned from being close. He hasn't won in a long, long time. And it was only a matter of time if he kept playing like he was that he was going to get the job done.

VO>> Thank you, Bob and Lanny, the current Charles Schwab cup standings are shaking up a bit. A T five at the insperity has Bernard Langer on top, Kevin Sutherland drops to second and with his maiden victory on the tour, Mike Weir moves up eight spots and into the top 10 in the eighth position.

Another familiar name join the over 50 ranks, Victoria's 2018 Ryder Cup Captain Thomas Bjorn, he made his first start on PGA Tour champions last week. Bjorn turned 50 in February, played three times on the European tour this year where he owns 15 career wins. But with no PGA Tour victories, he doesn't have status on PGA Tour champions taking advantage of opportunities like last week sponsors exemption.

VO?OC>> I kind of tried to balance three tours at the moment play main tour in Europe and some European seniors events and then play the events I can over here and that's a difficult task, you know, you kind of get to 50 and life should get a little bit easier and it actually in golfing terms can get a little bit more difficult.

VO>> Bjorn would be able to play every week on PGA Tour champions and earn the status he desires with a win. And who knows that win could come in a major as he is scheduled to play in two events in July, the US senior open and the senior open at Sunningdale.

The youngest player in last week's field was Ozzie john senden, who turned 50 April 20, and made his first career PGA Tour champion start. For senden it's reconnecting to the game as the two time PGA Tour winner stepped away from competition for around 18 months to help care for an ailing child. The good news, both father and son are back strong.

VO/OC>> I was first on tour in 2002 when I played 15 years straight on the PGA and in 2017 in march my son Jacob was diagnosed with a malignant brain tumor and it was a life changing experience traumatic, and as a family, we just had to get close together and try to get him healthy again. We have had tremendous support from family and friends and also from the Children's Medical Hospital in Dallas and they were fantastic. The neurosurgeons, oncology team that really helped us out tremendously and got him healthy again, because Jacob was in a really bad position. He had tremendous headache pain, and he was he was pretty much you know, knocking on Heaven's door so fortunately for us the medicine that he that he received, chemotherapy and radiation that really helped and saved his life. Now he is 17 years of age, and he's enjoying life at school and playing golf. And he loves it. He's just you know your typical teenager now, which is great.

VO>> perhaps someday Jacob will follow in his father John's footsteps. We can expect to see more from senden this season as he plans to play 12 to 15 events on PGA Tour champions, given his career moneyless status, as well as playing select events on the PGA Tour.

Well, look here. It's Mr. October in May. Baseball Hall of Famer Reggie Jackson was part of last week's pro am at the insperity Invitational, helping to raise money for Houston area charities. Jackson recently joined the Houston Astros organization to work for owner Jim crane, focusing on his charity work. Jackson's group included Paul Broadhurst who helped the straw stir more effectively, as you'll see in ambush an amateur.

OC>> Could have been a little better. Just loss of balance on a little bit, you know, early on, but following, you know, holding the follow through, right. Didn't really just lost the balance. But I mean, I said to you before, you know, when you when you play baseball, I mean, I'm no professional at baseball. But you want to get to baseball, you want to be over here, right? Right. I think there's a little bit of that in your long game where you just move off it a little bit. And then you know, to get back at the ball, you got to move back on to this, you get away with a baseball but with a golf ball. You can't do it, you're gonna catch the ball thing, you're gonna catch it heavy. So to try and just stay, stay still there. Still, still as you can be, and not move off it and move back onto it.

OC>> A lot of times I’ll practice at home without a ball to swing and to look like a golfer. Yeah, just these.

OC>> Then you held your finish there. I was guilty. I'll be finished but shot you here. It sort of went right. Obviously backward.

OC>> not athletic.

OC>> So just hold your finish. And just try and stay a little bit still over the ball. And you'll you'll find the middle of the club a lot a lot more consistent that more consistently.

OC>> Right now I'm a mess.

VO>> still to come on PGA Tour champions Learning Center, a health update on the ever popular and recent birthday boy, john Daly.

VO>> John Daly has much to celebrate. He turned 55 back on April 28. And more importantly, his bladder cancer diagnosis, first discovered in September is improving. A follow up test last month showed it was benign. So, he will return in October for another exam. The beard has been a reminder of the battle at hand.

OC>> It’s incredible. I mean, you know, kidney stones is a good thing, but I don't think they would have found it if I didn't have that in Branson. So they caught it early, which is great. And then, you know, but I've been staying on top of it and the docs have been great. So it's good news.

VO>> Speaking of health scares, Tom Pernice Jr. had one of his own following the colaguard classic in February. During bike training, pernice felt something had gone terribly wrong. Making for a very close call. what appeared to be a headache was actually something much worse. Pernice details, just what happened.

OV>> I was doing some speed training, just doing 30 second bursts. You know, it was late one night, and all of a sudden I got this massive headache like a brain freeze, like from eating ice cream, and it wouldn't go away for about two and a half hours. I said I got to go the emergency room. So, I went to the emergency room. Doctor says I'm gonna take a CT scan, took a CT scan, he says I believe you had a vein that burst and you got some blood in that little area between your brain and your skull. And I don't think it's anything major, but I'm gonna send you down. I was in Scottsdale, let's send it down to Phoenix Barros neurological. They're one of the tops in the country there. So they sent me down there and they kept me in there for four or five days. They did a couple more CT scans. They did a couple angiograms to make sure there was no wasn't the arteries or anything like that. So after about five or six days, I got a clear bill health and he says everything will be fine. He says there's no way you could have ever thought that it would have happened. It couldn't have prevented it. It's just a rarity. Sometimes, you know veins just kind of pop and once that blood started getting through and out of there, I was fine.

VO>> Wonderful to see both daily and pernice, healthy and at full go. Next week the competition continues. PGA Tour champions moves to the Atlanta area for the Mitsubishi Electric classic at TPC Sugarloaf. I'm Vince Giulini. Thanks for watching and we'll see you then.