**P. G. A. Tour Champions Learning Center Show 6/22/2021 Transcript**

VO>> There are no strangers to this game. Or to stakes like these. When it comes to golf they’ve truly done and seen it all. But weeks like these are what they play for. Cause winning now means more than anything else. This week a legendary field will play in a story place. For yet another piece of history. This town, this course, this tournament has crowned illustrious champions. But who will be next? The one-man experience, a career defining moment. Or will another build upon his legacy. Either way greatness will be realized here in Akron. Where history will be written and continued once more.

VO>> It's another major week on the PGA Tour Champions and the famous south course at Firestone Country Club in Akron, Ohio serves as the post for the thirty ninth Bridgestone Senior Players Championship. The only major to be played twice during the combined season. And the player to watch is Jerry Kelly. Not only coming in this week off a win in his last start but also as the defending champion of the Bridgestone senior players. He won the only major played in 2020 which was also the first major of his career. Kelly took control of the championship in style with a final round hole in one on the twelfth at Firestone. Kelly hit a soft cut five iron that landed in front of the hole and rolled in for the ace. The eventual winner finished with a one under sixty-nine and a two-shot victory.

OC/VO>> Here we are with Jerome Patrick Kelly the defending champion 2020 Bridgestone Senior Players Championship or as you like to call it the Kelly slam. Which is forever known in the annals of the golf.

VO>> Pretty cool moment in that particular event on twelve on the final day and I the hole in one in I’m wondering where it ranks for you all time moments Jerry Kelly moments.

VO>> Oh it's got to be one of my top I mean he had just closed within one. I think I made one of my first bogeys and then you know he knocked it in there about six feet on top of that too.

OC/VO>> So I knew I had to answer with something and to answer like that was kind of yeah that's a dream moment, so it was really cool.

OC/VO>> What makes Firestone Country Club unique for a player?

OC/VO>> It's just such an old classic tough right in front of you no gimmicks.

VO>> It is just you got to hit every shot the way you want. There's no resting even on the short holes which are not that many of those. You can't rest you just have to play like crazy the whole time.

OC/VO>> Well looking at your season and part of your success correct me if I'm wrong is fairways and greens and it looks like you're giving yourself a chance and and you know fairways greens in reg.

OC/VO>> Yeah, I actually broke my driver a few weeks ago and it's been work trying to put something back in.

VO>> I couldn't just fit a shaft into the same head that I didn't know which it was.

OC/VO>> You know I think we got it straightened out I hit some of the lowest percentages of fairways my last two terms that I've played so I've got something to prove myself that that everything's good that you know it wasn't really the swing it was it was definitely the club. So I’m going to go with that anyday.

OC/VO>> I love it you know years ago when I first met you on this tour, we talked about rookie of the year honors but now your big game hunting now. I mean how much do you think about the combined season that the race the entirety of this whole thing?

OC/VO>> I think about it a lot I mean that's what drives us every single one of us. We want to be number one at the end of the year. I mean there's always those goals to chase if you're not chasing a goal then what are do you doing? We're all trying to win each tournament with that we enter but there's a great goal to be had at the end of that too. if you do have the success in the winning of the tournaments you've got to put the onus on that final championship yeah, it's pretty cool.

OC/VO>> Yeah and when you're in the chase I would imagine that's obviously incentive enough but how do you after all these years how do some guys go complacent and other guys are like Bernard Langer and they're still they're still out here grinding the way they grind?

OC/VO>> I will have to say that you know my doctor is pretty amazed at my adrenal glands are still firing away they are. Hey you know that it was the whole thing for me when I was exempt going from the regular tour on the Champions Tour and I played my first Champions Tour event and I'm like hey if this one gets me jacked up like a regular tour event does this is going to be my home. And I remember Naples I was like teeing it up like this and I'm like all right that's awesome this is this is where I belong this is great and I left that exemption and I left this year's exemption just played a few of them the Sony. And my old new hometown of Phoenix. But it is being able to bring it up from inside I mean it's all about that adrenaline that that will to compete that's what we live for in that. And I’m a pretty good two handicap you know Monday Tuesday Wednesday but put me in coach when the horn blows-

OC/VO>> You’re a gamer.

OC/VO>> You better have it you better have it brought up.

VO>> Jerry Kelly has been on the PGA Tour Champions since 2017. His consistency is impressive. With at least one win each year he has been on the tour. And on average he finishes in the top ten in every other start. His performances not gone unnoticed by his playing competitors.

OC/VO>> Jerry is a great player and I think when he gets a little confidence like he has you know right now he's playing well he he's a tough guy to beat.

OC/VO>> Jerry's he’s a fun guy he's entertaining he's never lost for words in a good way he can keep the conversation going.

OC/VO>> Jerry’s a good guy and a good player and he's good to have out here. I think he's good with the with the fans and he's entertaining to watch.

OC/VO>> I’d say Jerry's got two personalities. One on the golf course and one off the golf course. He’s very hyper on the golf course who knows whenever he hits a putt he’s always moving as if the you know as if he was going to move the hole in front of the of the ball. And then and then off the golf course is a total nice and relaxed guy.

OC/VO>> He's under rated because he doesn't play a flashy game. So, he he's not a player that always comes to the forefront your mind you think you were the best players out here. Even though his track records proving not only and always years on the PGA tour but out here on the Champions Tour he's solid and that's one of the strengths of his game and that's why I would say he gets a lot out of his game because he doesn't make a lot of mistakes. So, it’s just depends on which way you look at it guys just steady it's annoying.

VO>> Tee to green Jerry Kelly is one of the best players on tour this season. He's ranked in the top five in some of the most critical scoring stats including ball striking, driving accuracy, and greens in regulation. All this and an animated style making him an entertaining watch each and every event. When learning center returns, we take a deep dive into one of the most difficult holes players will face all year the eighteenth at Firestone. Which has challenged some of the best of all time. That's next stay with us.

VO>> For the second time in this wraparound season players will get another crack at Firestone Country Club. When it was played last year, the field averaged three strokes over par per round. That makes it the second most difficult course on tour trailing only southern hills. Firestone's final exam comes within the form of a long and narrow par four eighteenth. Something sure to get players attention all the way to the very last putt.

OC/VO>> Eighteenth hole at Akron is very demanding off the tee.

OC/VO>> If you don't hit the fairway, you're going to have a tall order hitting the green.

OC/VO>. Even if you hit the fairway the left side sometimes you can get to the pen because the trees are in your way.

OC/VO>> It's a driver or three wood depending on the wind.

VO>> Ideally, you'd like to have it in the right center this is pulled left.

VO>> Wow.

VO>> Right at the tree.

VO>> Tee shot tee shot tee shot.

OC/VO>> It's a tee shot golf course your driving it good there. You’re going to hit some greens. Course is in beautiful condition but yes, it's all about the tee shot there on eighteen for sure.

VO>> Not a good tee shot for Colin Montgomerie.

VO>> No way out to the right and he's got roots, he’s got trees, he’s got rough.

VO>> If you miss the fairway good chance you're punching out.

OC/VO>> You know putting the drive in the fairway and sometimes in the correct side of the fairway according to where the pin is, is crucial that hole and then you still have a good second shot in there but I still think the drive is the big shot on that hole.

VO>> Hanging out to the right a bit. And that catches the fairway bunker on the right-hand side.

OCC/VO>> It's just one of those holes where you got to hit a long drive so you can hit a wedge in. Left flags wind is back left.

VO>> You’ve got to hit a six iron around that tree to the back of the green is going to play for the front third of the green hopefully two putt down the hill.

OC/VO>> Arnold Palmer said, “Hey man when I was your age I used to hit it over that tree.” And Tiger hit it right in the tree and he says, “When I was your age the tree was only this high.”

VO>> He's got a shot going up over the trees.

VO>> He got lucky though-

VO>> This is right in the middle of the green towards the center perfect.

VO>> That's quite a play from over there.

OC/VO>> It takes everything together to stand up and hit a good tee shot and then the green is very demanding you got to be in the right quadrant on the green.

VO>> How about that? Scott Parel with a birdie at eighteen.

VO>> Good shot there.

OC/VO>> You got to be in that fairway otherwise you can't get to the green you’re going to have to get up and down. You’re going to have to try to chip somewhere up in front of the green there's a big false front so.

VO>> It's just a narrow green it's just a tough hole.

VO>> That's what I love about Firestone just every shots right in front of you.

OC/VO>> Difficult (INAUDIBLE) and get after it.

VO>> If you can get it in the fairway it's not so bad depending on the pin locations.

OC/VO>> But the majority of the difficulty comes from the tee ball on that hole.

OC/VO>> It's a challenging finishing hole. I know with the changes in technology the distance it doesn't play quite as long as you used to but you still have to hit two precise shots to have a decent shot at birdie and pars always a good score there.

OC/VO>> It's just a good finishing hole you got execute two good shots and makes it tough.

VO>> No question players are thinking about the finish at Firestone long before arriving at the eighteenth hole. And with good reason. It is not a forgiving hole under pressure and birdies are rare while bogey or worse can happen upon you quickly. Ruining the hole and in some cases a chance of victory. Clearly eighteen at Firestone has stood the test of time.

VO>> Up next on learning center more on this week's major championship venue including why it is so revered. But before we go to break Tom Lehman gives you some advice on executing with the hybrid in this week's what’s your edge.

OC/VO>> You know the beautiful thing when you find a rescue that really works for you can either hit high or low so the CXS pro exotics gives me that. The perfect shaft the perfect looking head. Tons of confidence just looking at it and the performance is exactly what I want. You know so when you have a club like that where you can hit it high or low really becomes pretty simple you know. And think about this you want to hit high finish high. You want to hit it low finish low. You know so when I think about the shot that I'm hitting I want to put the ball way up in the air I simply think about a high finish. If I want to hit the ball way down low, I put the ball back and I finish low. But either one when you have the confidence of the club confidence in the club to be able to hit either it really makes the decision making so much better. You don't have to play around a weakness you can play to your strengths no matter what the shot is.

OC/VO>> In 2018 the WGC Bridgestone Invitational played for the final time at historic Firestone Country Club. One year later the venue was the stage for a major as this Ohio gem began hosting the Bridgestone Senior Players Championship.

VO>> Rich Lerner takes a deeper dive into the backstory of the course and why the signature water tower is just one of the reasons Firestone Country Club is unique and renown. Firestone one of the bedrock names in professional golf for more than half a century.

VO>> You watched Pebble Beach and you watched Augusta and you knew that there was the light house at Harbor Town.

OC/VO>> The water tower at Firestone is iconic to the game of golf.

VO>> You see that water tower you go Firestone Country Club. It's got to be a tournament there.

VO>> John cook grew up as a member of the club in Akron, Ohio. Built for the employees of the tire company were John's dad Jim worked before eventually moving on to run the World Series of golf.

VO>> Three hundred dollars a year to join Firestone.

OC/VO>> I think Firestone probably is the first corporation or big company that supported the game of golf.

VO>> The company really embrace the game and got their employees to join the Country Club and be part of that.

VO>> The first professional tournament at Firestone the rubber city open from 1954 through 1959. Arnold Palmer made the short drive from western Pennsylvania to win in 1957. Also, at Firestone the CBS golf classic beginning in 1967 with Sam Snead and Gardner Dickinson winning. The PGA championship contested on the south course three times with Ohio's favorite golfing son Jack Nicklaus winning in 1975. Jack's name also on the trophy for the American golf classic played at Firestone from 1961 through 1976. The World Series of golf was played at Firestone first as a four-man event from 1962 until 1998 followed by the WGC Bridgestone Invitational.

OC/VO>> It’s never been just a regular tournament on PGA Tour.

VO>> So it's always been something special to be part of.

VO>> Still special just no longer being played at Firestone.

OC/VO>> I think it's really just sad because there's so much history there. Tiger has added so much to that tournament with some of the shots he’s hit.

VO>> None more famous than the one he hit in his forever season of 2000. The shot in the dark one hundred sixty-eight yards at eighteen turn the lights out.

VO>> That’s just give me a number and I’ll hit it that far.

VO>> The next year at Firestone Jim's Furyk threw everything he had at Tiger pushed to seven extra holes. But Woods just didn't lose back then or much at all at Firestone. In the dark, in a playoff, on the roof.

OC/VO>> It’s on the roof.

VO>> Eight wins there in all. Firestone built for great players said Lanny Watkins who won there several times the course never let up.

OC/VO>> Its tough. Narrow fairways the rough’s pretty deep, pretty small greens.

OC/VO>> Firestone's pure. Just a classic older golf course that demanding off the tee. Just a great course.

VO>> Which is why Jose Maria Olazabal round of sixty-one in 1990 on his way to a twelve-shot run away at the World Series of golf was so stunning.

VO>> You can't believe that someone could go around here shoot nine under par that was nuts.

VO>> Olazabal sixty-one matched in 2017 in the final round by the champion Hideki Matsuyama.

OC/VO>> I believe that Akron is going to really embrace the Bridgestone Senior Players Championship just because of the history of the PGA Tour.

VO>> And the history and the experiences of those great players that are now getting a chance to go back and play it again.

VO>> This week on PGA Tour it's the Travelers Championship in Cromwell Connecticut. TPC River Highlands has hosted this event since 1984. The par seventy layout measures about sixty-nine hundred yards and is one of the shortest courses on tour. It's also known for producing some low numbers.

VO>> Hall of fame career with a new chapter on the way. Mr.Fifty eight is Jim Furyk.

VO>> Five years ago Jim Furyk shot a record breaking fifty-eight during the final round of the Travelers Championship at TPC River Highlands. He made ten birdies and one eagle and hit all eighteen greens that day. Now half a decade removed from shooting what still stands as the lowest round in PGA Tour history Furyk reflected back on why the mental aspect of his game was essential in allowing him to post that record score.

OC/VO>> You know I think I've got some pointers and tips and hints along the way of how I could maybe improve mentally and also physically say for my father but you know my wife my dad you know they would tell me things about my attitude about the way I approached it about the pressure I put on myself. You know when someone that loves you that much and someone that you're that close to tells you things you tend to say oh okay but it doesn't sink in it at times you know you feel like they love you and they're kind of sticking up for you and they're you know they're there bringing you along but you know. About I don't know six years ago seven years ago I sought the help of doc Otella. And was kind of funny he told me a lot of the same things that Tabatha and my dad told me but when a total stranger tells it to you at the time I considered doc a friend but when someone I didn't know very well told me kind of the same thing it was like a slap in the face that kind of making a mistake here. So, I think what I'm better at at fifty is I'm a little bit more mature a little bit more prepared.

VO>> You know I don't think it's any secret that late in my career and at forty-three I shot fifty-nine at forty-six I shot fifty-eight on the PGA Tour. Those things happen because I was physically in a good spot and playing well. But I still had to get over the mental hurdle to break that barrier to break sixty and I was just I was better prepared for it.

OC/VO>> And you know early in my career I wasn't and so I think that from a decision-making standpoint from you know processing info and just playing the game I'm wiser. And I think I do some of those things a lot better. I process that info a lot better now and a lot quicker. You know am I as physically strong as fast and you know the bodies probably not doing the same things but mentally, I'm a lot stronger right now. And you know equipment allowed me to keep some distance in there so been in the same spot.

VO>> Furyk will be in the field in this week's Bridgestone Senior Players Championship at Firestone Country Club. It's the twenty-year anniversary of his seven-hole playoff loss against Tiger Woods. it's also a place where he has finished in the top ten on ten different occasions when it hosted a WGC event on PGA Tour. That will do it for this week from the Rubber city. I'm Vince Cellini thank you for watching. We'll see you next time with an all new PGA Tour Champions Learning Center.