21CBSRMC – MASTER SCRIPT

(Segment 1)

(Tease)

NATS: Thank you all so much for coming out to be a part of the inaugural event of The John Shippen. We’re so excited to have you all here.

SOTS: We actually need people to start putting action behind their words to say something is just a mere dream. Until action is placed there, nothing will change.

Just minorities getting in the spotlight, I think it’s incredible for the game. If minorities don’t get the opportunity, I think golf fails.

There’s a whole new world and demographic out there for us to create the exposure and get this awareness to this beautiful game that we all love to play.

It’s a great way to get more diversity and inclusion in a lot of the LPGA slash PGA TOUR events.

We hear that all the time in golf. It only one weekend to change your life. This is especially true for someone to win this event.

(Standup)

*WELCOME TO THE 2021 THE JOHN SHIPPEN PRESENTED BY ROCKET MORTGAGE, I’M HENNI KOYACK.*

*FEW OF EVEN THE MOST ARDENT OF GOLF FANS KNOW THE NAME JOHN SHIPPEN, FOR HIS STORY AND HIS PLACE IN THE HISTORY OF OUR GAME HAS LONG BEEN OVERLOOKED.*

*BUT HERE IN DETROIT AT THE ROCKET MORTGAGE CLASSIC, AS GOLF CONTINUES TO HAVE A RECKONING WITH ITS PAST, HIS NAME AND LEGACY ARE ON FULL DISPLAY.*

(Tournament Explainer)

**THE JOHN SHIPPEN INVITATIONAL IS A 36-HOLE COMPETITION BETWEEN THE NATION’S TOP AMATEUR AND PROFESSIONAL BLACK GOLFERS.**

**THE WOMEN’S FIELD FEATURES 12 ATHLETES COMPETING IN A TWO-PLAYER TEAM FORMAT … THE WINNING DUO EARNS AN EXEMPTION INTO THE LPGA TOUR’S DOW GREAT LAKES BAY INVITATIONAL. WHILE THE SECOND AND THIRD PLACE TEAM’S WILL COMPETE IN A SHOOT-OUT FOR AN EXEMPTION INTO THE COGNIZANT FOUNDER’S CUP.**

**THE MEN WILL COMPETE IN INDIVIDUAL STROKE PLAY…21 PLAYERS VYING FOR ONE EXEMPTION INTO THE PGA TOUR’S ROCKET MORTGAGE CLASSIC.**

(Meet the Players)

RYAN ALLFORD: “All my life, man, I've been surrounded with good players. I feel like the game is there, it's just a matter of just getting it done, man, just getting it done. I am Ryan Alford, I'm from Shreveport, Louisiana. My game is pretty good right now, I'm looking forward to this week, hopefully have a good week.”

TIANA JONES: “I am known as the Queen of Green. As a junior, I won a lot of tournaments, even into my collegiate career, and it was all based on short game. Tiana Jones, hometown Alliance, Ohio.”

WYATT WORTHINGTON: “When my golf game's on point, everything's working. I have mental clarity. I am Wyatt Worthington II, Reynoldsburg, Ohio, is my home town and describe my golf game, it depends on the day, but hopefully, it's always trending in the right direction.”

ALLYN STEPHENS: “It's always fun to be one of the younger players in a tournament… I don't think I've ever been at a tournament this big, so it's super awesome to be here. Allyn Stephens from Houston, Texas. And my strength, i'm a very good iron player.”

**(:26)**

**ALLY STEPHENS, THE YOUNGEST COMPETITOR IN THE FIELD AT 16, IS PAIRED WITH FELLOW AMATEUR AND NORTH CAROLINA A&T STATE UNIVERISTY STAR…CHRISTYN CARR.**

**17-YEAR-OLD AMARI AVERY TEAMS UP WITH UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE STANDOUT, BAILEY DAVIS.**

**ON THE MEN’S SIDE, APGA TOUR PRO, KAMIAU JOHNSON IS COMPETING FOR ANOTHER PGA TOUR START…AS IS THREE-TIME APGA TOUR CHAMPION KEVIN HALL.**

(Early Men’s Competition)

BABBIT SOT: “My playstyle going into something like a 36-hole event probably gonna have to tone it back a little bit because with that aggressive play, you can make a lot of birdies. But you can open yourself up to the bigger numbers which I have been prone to do from time to time. Giving myself an opportunity for the last day is really what I'm looking forward to most and hoping to get a chance to do this first day.”

**THE FIELD OF 33 WAS GREETED BY CLEAR SKIES IN THE OPENING ROUND AFTER A RAINY SATURDAY LIMITED PLAYERS’ TIME FOR COURSE PREP – SOMETHING DETROIT LOCAL JOE HOOKS ENTERED WITH PLENTY OF.**

HOOKS SOT: “I’ve won Junior Club championship here three out of four times. Going into the tournament and having so much support from the membership still, it’s a lot of the same people here that watched me grow up. Knowing the golf course, it's amazing.”

**BUT OTHERS FACED THE CHALLENGE OF TAKING ON DETROIT GOLF CLUB FOR THE FIRST TIME…INCLUDING STEVENS.**

STEVENS SOT: “I came out here looking at all this stuff and it's so professional. I think on the course It’ll probably be okay. But just coming out and seeing everything, it's really just like, whoa.”

KAMAIU SOT: “Playing a PGA TOUR style golf course the week before they get here, and to represent minority golf and to be here on behalf of John Shippen, I think it’s a big opportunity for us.

(Who is John Shippen)

RUBY SIMMONS SOT: John Shippen’s story is a forgotten story to the world of golf. We talk about Charlie Sifford, Lee Elder and of course Tiger Woods, but no one has ever gone back that far to put him in as part of that history.

THURMAN SIMMONS SOT: Shippen was the Jackie Robinson of golf. He transcended golf in an era where no African Americans were playing golf back. He made history three-folds - first American, first African American and the youngest American to ever play in a US Open. John Shippen was born in Anacostia, Washington DC in 1879. He came to Shinnecock with his father and family to minister the Shinnecock Indians. John was nine years old then, and he and other members of the Shinnecock Indian Nation actually built the golf course by hand.

**AFTER HELPING TO BUILD THE NOW-FAMED COURSE, SHIPPEN TOOK AN INTEREST IN THE SPORT. HE QUICKLY IMPROVED.**

**AND IN A FEW SHORT YEARS, BECAME THE FIRST AMERICAN-BORN GOLFING PROFESSIONAL.**

THURMAN SIMMONS SOT: 1896 that was the first official USGA tournament out at Shinnecock and no Americans ever played in a USGA tournament. The Scottish and Irish people were invited over to play and the members of Shinnecock had entered John Shippen Jr. to play in this event.

RUBY SIMMONS SOT: He was ostracized by the players that came from Scotland, calling them the colored boys, that they did not want to play with them.

THURMAN SIMMONS SOT: He was only 16 years old. He finished fifth place and after that he played in five US Opens. But when you look at the history of the game, Shippen should have a place in the annals of golf for what he did.

**SHIPPEN’S GOLFING PURSUITS WERE IN STARK CONTRAST TO THE NORM IN THE EARLY 1900’S, WHEN BLACK GOLFERS WERE LARGELY PROHIBITED FROM PLAYING ALONGSIDE WHITE MEN AND WOMEN.**

RUBY SIMMONS SOT: There was something about him that apparently peaked the interest of those that played the game at that time.

THURMAN SIMMONS SOT: He was always somewhere being snuck on a golf course where he couldn’t play, to play the members. He played this whole eastern seaboard from New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Long Island.

**BUT AFTER YEARS OF PLYING HIS TRADE ON THE ROAD, A NEW HOME EMERGED IN 1921.**

THURMAN SIMMONS SOT: Shady Rest is important because it was the first African American Country Club in America. This is where African Americans came to have a good time and feel free and not feel threatened about anything.

RUBY SIMMONS SOT: Duke Ellington, all of the big bands and they were here. Althea Gibson taught tennis, they had a tennis court here. They had the golf course.

THURMAN SIMMONS SOT: John got to become the pro here in the late 20s. And he stayed the head pro here for 25-30 years. He lived right upstairs on the third floor. He just loved playing golf, and he loved teaching golf to the members of the club.

RUBY SIMMONS SOT: John Shippen’s story to me is very relevant. With everything that’s going on today in our society, I think this is a good time to know about the past.

(Bump #1)

**COMING UP, MORE ON HOW JOHN SHIPPEN’S LEGACY RESONATES WITH EVERYONE HERE THIS WEEK.**

KAMAIU JOHNSON SOT: Just getting opportunities that kind of minorities usually don't get. I'm just I'm truly blessed to be in this situation and just everything that's going on in the world right now, I think it's incredible for the game.

**PLUS, WE GET TO KNOW SOME OF THE PARTICIPANTS AND HEAR THEIR AMAZING STORIES OF PERSEVERENCE.**

TIM O’NEAL SOT: There's been a few times where I thought I wasn't gonna play simply just financially. I was able to scratch and claw and figure it out and keep it going.

SHASTA AVERYHARDT SOT: It gives players like myself an opportunity for late boomers. We need some resources to get us to that level that where we want to be at.

**WITH OPPORTUNITIES TO PLAY ON BOTH THE PGA TOUR AND LPGA TOURS, THE COMPETITION HEATS UP IN DETROIT.**

(Segment 2)

(rejoin)

**NO COPY**

(Round 1 Men)

**DETROIT GOLF CLUB TESTED THE MEN EARLY ON…**

**…AS 15 PLAYERS FOUND THEMSELVES IN PLUS-NUMBERS THROUGH THEIR FIRST FIVE HOLES, INCLUDING 48-YEAR-OLD TIM O’NEAL.**

ONEAL NATS: “283, right at the R of Rocket. 283 is a long way.”

**O’NEAL MADE THE TURN IN 2-OVER PAR, AS DID FELLOW APGA TOUR CHAMPION KAMAIU JOHNSON, AND LOCAL WAYNE STATE ALUMN JOE HOOKS – WHO BOTH HAD FAR DIFFERENT INTRODUCTIONS INTO THE GAME.**

KAMAIU JOHNSON SOT: “A lot of us didn't get started in a game from our parents taking us to the golf course or anything like that because most of us couldn’t afford to play golf. I know myself; I was fortunate to get charged $1 a day to play golf.”

JOE HOOKS SOT: “My dad joined here in 1992 the year before I was born. Things got a little tough and we ended up having to leave in 2012, but it was just, like, unbelievable for me to have the opportunity and the sacrifice he made to drop me off and practice every day - absolutely a blessing.”

KAMAIU JOHNSON SOT: “The opportunity that we're getting this week just goes to show you which way the sport's moving and the opportunity that the PGA TOUR and just all other programs that are starting to provide for minorities.”

**HOOKS’ PLAYING COMPETITOR KEVIN HALL FOUND A RHYTHM PARRING EACH OF HIS FIRST 14 HOLES…**

**…WHILE GREGORY ODOM BATTLED AN UP AND DOWN FRONT-NINE – BUT A BIRDIE TO START THE BACK MIRRORED THE RESILIENCY HE DEMONSTRATES IN EVERYDAY LIFE.**

(Odom Feature)

GREG ODOM SOT: I eat, breathe, and sleep golf. The game of golf for me is a daily challenge with the ups and downs. Hitting the one shot and the moving onto the next shot, it's just a game of life.

COACH NATS: If you try to maybe even roll that foot in or bring break the left knee inward a little bit, I think they'll help you un-weight. There you go. Way better.

GREG ODOM SOT: Life has its highs and lows, but I just feel like the game mirrors the journey of life which is basically about your actions and your mindset.

SHIRLEY ODOM SOT: Gregory, he has been through a lot. Lately, he's really been through something. The game of golf has been a tremendous support in Gregory life. ‘Cause if it hadn't been for golf, no telling where he would be right now.

GREG ODOM SOT: Going into the PGA Works Championship, I was kind of on edge about my golf game at the time. I really wasn’t hitting the ball like I normally hit it or like I wanted to hit it.

SAMUEL PURYEAR SOT: His father been sick for a while. His kidneys had failed on him many, many years ago. They just started giving him a lot of problems. So, it was almost, that stuff was going on at the same time.

**AFTER ARRIVING IN FLORIDA FOR THE PGA WORKS COLLEGIATE CHAMPIONSHIPS AT TPC SAWGRASS, GREG RECEIVED TRAGIC NEWS FROM HOME.**

SHIRLEY ODOM SOT: I called the coach and I told the coach, I said his father had passed now.

GREG ODOM SOT: It was our first practice round, and he called me in the morning and was like he kind of passed. At that moment, kinda thought about it and things and was like he’s in a better place and everything gonna be alright. I knew I wanted to play regardless ’cause I know that's what he wanted me to do.

SHIRLEY ODOM SOT: He said, coach, I'm going to go out here and win this tournament for my dad.

GREG ODOM SOT: Romans 8:18. It basically says the sufferings of this present time are not need to be thought about, because it's blessings to come in the future. So that's what I kind of like took into the golf tournament. It's mind over matter every day, every shot.

SAMUEL PURYEAR SOT: What I learned through the entire process is Greg’s outlet had been golf. It kept him sane when dealing with a lot of problems that young people are probably not acclimated or are able to deal with at that age.

**JUST DAYS AFTER THE DEATH OF HIS FATHER, GREG FOUND HIMSELF ATOP THE LEADERBOARD.**

GREG ODOM SOT: Coming down stretch like 16, 17, 18 my AD came to me like you're winning, you're doing this.

SAMUEL PURYEAR SOT: Coming into 17, wind is really, really strong off his left. A huge gust. We walk up on the tee. He just looked at me and said, bet, got it. To see a young man experience what he experienced in Florida, where your father passes before your first practice round. To live with those emotions, and to be able to take that forward, and win the biggest tournament of your college career, I just don't know what's bigger than that.

GREG ODOM SOT: I mean, as soon as I won it me and my coach hugged, ‘cause he already knew what this meant for me. And then the trophy ceremony it kind of like sunk in that I actually won.

SHIRLEY ODOM SOT: I think what his father has instilled in him that, don't give up, persevere through everything and just give your best in and do your best.

(end of men’s round 1)

**AFTER A 2-OVER START, ODOM SHOT AN EVEN BACK-NINE TO CARD AN OPENING ROUND 74, ONE STROKE BEHIND KAMAIU JOHNSON.**

KAMAIU JOHNSON SOT: “You show up to win. And if you win you get to play in a PGA TOUR event. I mean I think that’s what we’re all working towards. That's all we dream of when we wake up in the morning.”

**JOHNSON FINISHED THE DAY 2-STROKES OFF THE LEAD, 1-BACK FROM KEVIN HALL WHO ENTERED THE CLUBHOUSE WITH AN EVEN SCORECARD, WHILE 4 PLAYERS TOOK A SHARE OF THE DAY-1 LEAD.**

BABBIT SOT: “This could change someone's life. It only takes one weekend to change your life, but this is especially true for someone to win this event because not only will they get into this tournament, but the world's on notice right now.”

**BARRY BABBIT’S STEADY 1-UNDER ROUND PUT HIM IN THE FINAL GROUP ON MONDAY ALONGSIDE MARCUS BYRD AND MICHAEL HERRERA.**

**BUT IT WAS TIM O’NEAL WHO DISPLAYED THE MOST IMPRESSIVE TURNAROUND OF THE DAY WITH A CLEAN 3-UNDER CLOSING NINE TO GET TO RED NUMBERS FOR A PIECE OF THE LEAD.**

**HOOKS CONTINUED TO STRUGGLE ON HIS SECOND NINE, FINISHING THE DAY IN A TIE FOR 13TH AT 3-OVER PAR, WHILE AARON BEVERLY AND ANDREW WALKER CARDED EVEN ROUNDS TO SIT ONE BACK ENTERING THE FINAL DAY.**

(Segment 3)

(Overcoming Challenges)

MLK QUOTE: I choose to give my life for those who have been left out of the sunlight of opportunity.

CAMIKO SMITH SOT: People getting to see us play learning that there are good black golfers out there, male, female, it’s a really good thing what Rocket Mortgage put together and hopefully we can all perform…

NATS: Get in the hole!

CAMIKO SMITH SOT: And show everybody what we can do.

KAMAIU JOHNSON SOT: Just getting opportunities that minorities typically don’t get. I’m just truly blessed to be in this situation, just everything that’s going on in the world right now, just minorites getting in the spotlight, I think it’s increcible for the game.

ALLYN STEPHENS SOT: It’s a great way to get more diversity and inclusion in a lot of the LPGA slash PGA TOUR events. If you look at the TOUR you obviously don’t see a bunch of African American players, and so I think it’s a great way to give you opportunities.

BARRY BABBITT SOT: I just hope that we continue to build on this momentum that we’ve made because it’s been a great momentum that we started. But it’s important that we keep pushing the envelope to have more difficult conversations.

WYATT WORTHINGTON II SOT: Having this type of opportunity you need access, resources and just chances. It’s kind of like, you know no pun intended, since we’re in you know Detroit it’s like 8 mile, you only got one shot.

TIANA JONES SOT: There’s places that I’m still not welcomed to play golf there or feel welcomed when I do arrive there and what I hope is more sponsors, more opportunities, more financial assistance, more awareness that’s out there for people to step up and actually do something. It’s just like Martin Luther King, he said he had a dream but he was also out there marching, he was also out there doing something about inequality that we actually experience.

(Stand Up)

*THE OBSTACLES MANY MINORITY GOLFERS HAVE FACED ARE CERTAINLY REAL AND WHILE EVENTS LIKE THE JOHN SHIPPEN BEGIN TO OFFER SOME OPPORTUNITIES, THERE ARE STILL MILES TO GO.*

*FOR THE WOMEN, THOSE MILES SEEM EVEN LONGER.*

**THE OPENING ROUND FEATURED SIX FEMALE TEAMS LOOKING TO EARN AN EXEMPTION INTO NEXT MONTH’S LPGA TOUR EVENT, THE DOW GREAT LAKES BAY INVITATIONAL…**

NATS: Let’s go, let’s go, ha ha ha!

**SIERRA SIMS AND BREANNE JONES CATCH FIRE EARLY WITH THREE BIRDIES…**

**HOWEVER THE REST OF THE FIELD STRUGGLED TO FIND THEIR GAME, COMBINING FOR ONLY FOUR BIRDIES ON THE FRONT…**

**BAILEY DAVIS AND AMARI AVERY QUICKLY SETTLED DOWN, POSTING 6 PARS ON THEIR OPENING NINE.**

NATS: Just rolling it in ha ha.

**SHASTA AVERYHARDT AND ANITA UWADIA FOUND SUCCESS AS WELL, MAKING THE TURN JUST 5 SHOTS OFF THE LEAD.**

NATS: Good!

**WITH A WIN, AVERYHARDT, A LOCAL PRODUCT FROM JUST DOWN THE ROAD, WOULD SECURE HER FIRST START ON THE LPGA TOUR SINCE 2013.**

SHASTA AVERYHARDT SOT: I'm from the city of Flint. So, I'm like a Michigander, and I am very excited to be a part of the inaugural John Shippen Invitational. I had this whole plan for my life, and it just didn't happen the way I thought it was gonna happen. Some people may not understand that right now, but anyone that has been on that journey knows that its life changing.

**AVERYHARDT’S PASSION FOR THE GAME STARTED EARLY, AS SHE COMPETED IN JUNIOR AND AMATEUR EVENTS ACROSS THE GREAT LAKE STATE… HOWEVER, GOLF’S EARLIEST REWARD? BEING COMFORTABLE IN HER OWN SKIN.**

SHASTA AVERYHARDT SOT: I'm a mix individual, so my mom is Native American and Lebanese and then my dad is black and creole. Growing up I didn’t really understand why I was around people that didn’t look like me because going to school it’s either black or white kids. When we started traveling with golf, I started to really get more comfortable like, okay, like you can be yourself, like there's other people who look like you. My parents always affirmed me, you know that you're beautiful, you're smart, you're talented. And so, I always had that confidence and self-esteem growing up which was very helpful.

**AFTER A STELLAR COLLIGATE CAREER AT JACKSON STATE, AVERYHARDT SECURED HER LPGA TOUR CARD FOR 2011, BECOMING THE 4TH AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMAN TO EARN TOUR STATUS.**

**UNFORTUNATELY, INJURIES HINDERED HER ROOKIE SEASON, LOSING HER CARD IN THE PROCESS.**

SHASTA AVERYHARDT SOT: I get through rehab, everything’s healthy again. I’m playing pretty well in 2012, so I earned my card back at the end of the year at Q school. And then in 2013 I went through some situations with some investors that you know claim they’re going to help and then it was time to cut the check, nothing. After that I just started to get really depressed, and just felt like the dream was just shattering. I’m out of money. I’m upset with golf. I need to fall back on this accounting degree, and so I’m gonna have to get a job.

**AVERYHARDT JOINED PRICE WATER HOUSE COOPERS IN 2014 AS A TAX ASSOCIATE, BUT AFTER 3 YEARS WITH THE FIRM SHE DECIDED TO PURSUE HER DREAM INSIDE THE ROPES.**

SHASTA AVERYHARDT SOT: This is my dream. I'm gonna go for it, gonna make it work. I really didn't have a lot of money. One of my best friends was like you're gonna have to create a GoFundMe page. People were so supportive of it, like they just jumped on board, they were totally for me going back to Q school. Golf is expensive. And I'm not gonna sell a dream on it, if you wanna play you can't do it while you don't have any money. You need to have some financial backing. But if you love the game, and you know that you're talented, and you're good at it, and you just put it out there, like somehow things are gonna happen for you.

**SHASTA AVERYHARDT AND ANITA UWADIA HEATED UP ON THE BACKSIDE OF THE DETRIOT GOLF CLUB. THE DUO CARDED 3 BIRDIES AND NO BOGEYS ON THEIR SCORECARD.**

SHASTA AVERYHARDT SOT: We played together earlier this year in a Symetra event final round. And uh she played great, she's playing well, she's a long ball hitter. We can feed off each other, we have similar personalities, like I think it’s gonna be perfect.

**UNLIKE THE FRONT NINE SIERRA SIMS AND BREANNE JONES FOUND TROUBLE AFTER MAKING THE TURN, RECORDING 3 DISSAPOINTING BOGEYS.**

**AMARI AVERY AND BAILEY DAVIS CLIMBED UP THE LEADERBOARD, FINISHING THE DAY ALONE IN THIRD. JUST FOUR SHOTS BACK OF SIMS AND JONES, WHO SAT TIED FOR THE LEAD WITH AVERYHARDT AND UWADIA CLOSING WITH A 1 OVER 73.**

(Segment 4)

(Round 2 Men’s)

**THE FINAL ROUND BEGAN WITH A 4-WAY TIE AT THE TOP, AND JUST 2 HOLES AFTER THE LAST GROUP TEED OFF, MORE THAN HALF THE FIELD WAS WITHIN 2 STROKES OF THE LEAD.**

WORTHINGTON SOT: “When my golf game's on point, everything's working. I have mental clarity. It's pretty much playing a video game in a good sense of the word, right? Everyone just has this idea of their golf game, of what they want to do, and I've been fortunate to actually express it out from time to time.”

**PGA PROFESSIONAL WYATT WORTHINGTON II MADE AN EARLY CHARGE, FIRING A 4-UNDER FRONT-NINE TO JOIN A CROWDED LEADERBOARD.**

**BARRY BABBIT’S ROUND STALLED WITH AN EARLY BOGEY, BUT THE FORMER COLLEGE BASKETBALL PLAYER HAS LEARNED PATIENCE WHEN IT COMES TO REBOUNDING IN GOLF.**

BABBIT SOT: “In basketball, if you're playing poorly, you could always try harder to get a steal on defense or whatever. But in golf, if you start trying harder, that's when, that’s when it hits the fan so it's definitely given me a competitive edge though. I started my college career playing basketball then got hurt. Then picked up golf. I was like a six handicap. Walked on to Rollins team. Then a couple years later found myself in the starting lineup. Went to Q-school for the Canadian Tour and got some status. Two years in, didn't have a great summer of golf up in Canada and I was just like, I don't know if I'm built for this. Quit golf ‘cause the highs and lows of golf are just so brutal. Taught high school math for a year, 12th grade statistics, got a chance to come back to golf with COVID like shutting all the schools down and making online learning a thing. So it forced me to get outside, like there was so much free time and golf was really the only thing open. I got an opportunity to come back, and now I'm here. So, super grateful to be here.”

**BABBIT RESPONDED WITH BACK-TO-BACK BIRDIES ON HOLES 5 & 6 TO GRAB A SHARE OF THE LEAD**

**AN OPENING BIRDIE GAVE TIM O’NEAL THE SOLO LEAD BEFORE A PAIR OF BOGEYS SET HIM BACK. BUT DECADES IN THE GAME OF GOLF HAS TAUGHT THE 48-YEAR-OLD TO KEEP PUSHING FORWARD.**

(O’Neal Feature)

TIM ONEAL SOT: Just something about golf that keeps you coming back. You never really get it. It's always a work in progress. So, you never really master golf, but you just, it's always something, you think you got it, nope, you don't. That's what makes golf so hard and fun at the same time. Sometimes you can go through a stretch where you're really good. And then other times, it's like you don't know which part of the club to hold.

**TIM O’NEAL CERTAINLY KNOWS THE UPS AND DOWNS OF A LIFE IN GOLF.**

**FOR HE HAS SPENT A LIFETIME CHASING HIS DREAM.**

TIM ONEAL SOT: If you set a goal, don't give up, just be resilient and then give it 100%. Some people, they start something, and they quit. But when you know when it's right there, and if you work hard, I believe that you can attain anything. So just a matter of working hard and being consistent and just trying to make it.

**AT ONE POINT O’NEAL WAS A CAN’T MISS KID… WINNING 16-TIMES IN COLLEGE AT JACKSON STATE AND THEN NEARLY GETTING HIS PGA TOUR CARD TWICE AT Q-SCHOOL.**

**HE WON 3-TIMES ON PGA TOUR LATINOAMERICA BUT HAD LIMTED SUCCESS ON THE KORN FERRY TOUR AND HAS NEVER MADE A CUT IN SEVEN TRIES ON THE PGA TOUR.**

TIM ONEAL SOT: It's tough, it's tough. Golf can beat you up, it really can, and I've been really down, too, and didn't know if I was gonna play anymore. Kinda going through a stretch right now where I'm not playing the best but you just have to get through it and you know that the good times are coming.

**ITS THAT ETERNAL OPTIMISM THAT SEEMS TO CARRY O’NEAL THROUGH THE DARK TIMES. THE DEATH OF HIS MOTHER LAST NOVEMBER AND A RECENT DIVORCE, JUST MORE OF LIFE GETTING IN THE WAY.**

**AND NOW HE FINDS HIMSELF IN DETRIOT, EVER SO CLOSE TO HIS PGA TOUR DREAMS…BELIEVEING, DESPITE ALL THE SET-BACKS… IN THE UNBELIEVABLE.**

JAMES BLACK SOT: You got to believe in it. Is the closest thing to religion that I know. Golf is, because you gotta believe in yourself, your spirit. Trust your spirit, believe in your spirit.

TIM ONEAL SOT: It's tough sometimes when you when you're going through those those bad stretches where you aren't playing the best and you know you have stresses of the world. But my kids definitely keep me going. Having them around and having success in them seeing me have success, it's more for them than me. It makes me happy to be able to play well and be able to see that too.

JAYDEN ONEAL SOT: I'm very proud of him. The man he is today is everything. Everything about him. Very, very good person. I don't know one single bad thing about him. I really don't.

JORDAN ONEAL SOT: I'm pretty sure he'll be doing this for a very long time until he really can't be more, but He loves his job, and I like that he loves his job a lot.

TIM ONEAL SOT: It's all about, for me, just trying to stay positive. I've had setbacks. There's been a few times where I thought I wasn't gonna play simply just financially. And I didn't know what I was gonna do after that, and luckily I was able to scratch and claw and figure it out and keep it going.

(Competition cont.)

**O’NEAL BOUNCED BACK WITH A PAIR OF BIRDIES TO ROUND OUT HIS FRONT-NINE, FOLLOWED BY 2 MORE TO START THE BACK, BUT TROUBLE FOUND HIM AT THE 14TH.**

O’NEAL SOT: “Had a hiccup on 14 and had a ball spin back in the water.”

**WITH HIS 2-STROKE LEAD IN JEOPARDY, HE SHOWED POISE IN THE FACE OF ADVERSITY, SALVAGING A BOGEY TO MAINTAIN A 1-STROKE LEAD ON THE FIELD.**

O’NEAL SOT: “I wasn’t really paying attention to the scores I was just trying to play solid. Obviously, it was stacked up pretty close.”

**WITH 4 HOLES TO PLAY KEVIN HALL REMAINED BOGEY-FREE AND SAT JUST 1-BACK OF O’NEAL.**

**THE JOHN SHIPPEN TROPHY AND THE OPPORTUNITY TO PLAY IN THE ROCKET MORTGAGE CLASSIC WERE STILL ANYBODY’S FOR THE TAKING DOWN THE STRETCH.**

(Segment 5)

(Hooks Mini)

JOE HOOKS NATS: You know growing up here, we dreamed and joked about a PGA TOUR event being here. I’m Joe Hooks, from Detroit Michigan. I think I can make anything. Amazing opportunity, and I’m always repping, always repping home.

NATS: I’ll walk down one and come back you know?
NATS: I think that if you can remind me like, okay, all we need to do is get this probably front edge or whatever or if I’m in the rough hitting front edge or something like that.

JOE HOOKS NATS: This might be the best I ever felt like something with such significance because of the comfort of being home. I would spend like 30 straight days here for 10, 12 hours a day you know when I was younger that was the norm. When I got dropped off here I was golfing and practicing. I’m thrilled that my parents are going to be here. It’s going to be so reminiscent for them. I’m thrilled to have so much support it’s a blessing.

JOE HOOKS NATS: My mind set is so clear right now because it’s like just go out and do your thing you know? Because I’m at home.

(Round 2 Completion)

**JOE HOOKS IMPROVED HIS SCORE BY 4 STROKES ON DAY 2. MEANWHILE TIM O’NEAL HELD A 1-STROKE LEAD COMING DOWN THE STRETCH.**

O’NEAL SOT: “I didn’t know what everyone else was doing but in my mind, I was trying to make as many birdies as possible. On 16 Kevin almost holed it from the fairway and he was one back and he hit it to like, a couple of inches, then I hit it in there about 8 feet, made birdie on top of him, then I made birdie on the next hole.”

**KAMAIU JOHNSON HAD A BIRDIE PUTT ON THE 18TH TO TAKE A SHARE OF THE LEAD..BUT CAME UP SHY. KEVIN HALL KEPT HIS SCORECARD CLEAN IN ROUND 2, CARDING JUST ONE BOGEY OVER THE COURSE OF 2 DAYS. BUT HIS 3 BIRDIES ON MONDAY WEREN’T ENOUGH TO CATCH O’NEAL.**

O’NEAL SOT: “There’s definitely a difference playing a PGA TOUR course than playing just a regular golf course. Guys getting exposure playing courses like this is going to help them down the stretch for sure.”

**WYATT WORTHINGTON II’S MOMENTUM STALLED ON THE BACK, AS HE FINISHED IN A TIE FOR 9TH ALONGSIDE BARRY BABBIT – WHILE THE OLDEST PLAYER IN THE FIELD CAPPED OFF THE VICTORY.**

O’NEAL SOT: “Age is nothing but a number right? It’s huge for me being able still to play at a high level and have an opportunity to play in the Rocket Mortgage. Hopefully it’s going to inspire guys not to quit and keep grinding.”

**ROVONTA YOUNG MATCHED O’NEAL’S LOW ROUND OF THE DAY TO CLINCH A SHARE OF THIRD, WHILE MARCUS BYRD RALLIED FROM A 3-OVER START WITH A PAIR OF LATE BIRDIES TO SETTLE IN A TIE FOR 6TH.**

(women’s completion/awards)

NATS: “The winner of the John Shippen National Invitational will be playing in the Rocket Mortgage Classic, Tim O’Neal!”

**MEANWHILE, IT WAS A FOUR-BALL FORMAT THAT CHALLENGED THE WOMEN IN THE FINAL ROUND.**

**AMARI SMITH AND ZOE SLAUGHTER FIRED A BOGEY FREE 3-UNDER FRONT-NINE – MAKING UP GROUND AFTER A BOGEY FILLED DAY 1. BUT ULTIMATELY IT WAS A TWO-TEAM RACE ON DAY 2.**

**ANITA UWADIA BIRDIED 3 OF HER FIRST 6 HOLES AS SHE AND SHASTA AVERYHARDT TOOK A COMMANDING LEAD OVER SIERRA SIMS AND BREANNE JONES, WHO STRUGGLED TO FIND THEIR GROOVE IN BEST-BALL.**

**AFTER BEGINNING THE DAY TIED FOR THE LEAD, THE PAIR MADE THE TURN 3 STROKES BACK. THEY ANSWERED WITH A BOGEY-FREE 3-UNDER CLOSING-NINE, BUT UWADIA WAS FAR TOO UNSTOPPABLE DOWN THE STRETCH.**

**WITH BIRDIES ON 2 OF THE FINAL 4 HOLES, THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA ALUMN SECURED A 2-STROKE VICTORY FOR HER TEAM.**

ANITA UWADIA SOT: Shasta, I mean, she’s been a great partner. She was really good off the tee this week where, you know, I kind of struggled a little bit. And I was a bit of a better ball strike this week. So we just fed off each other’s energy, and she’s like a big sister to me.

**SMITH AND SLAUGHTER MATCHED THE WINNING TEAM’S LOW-ROUND OF THE DAY TO FINISH IN A TIE FOR 3RD ALONGSIDE BAILEY DAVIS AND AMARI AVERY WHO ALSO CARDED A SUB-70 FINAL ROUND.**

NATS: “John Shippen National Invitational, the winner from the women’s division, Shasta, Anita, congratulations on some amazing play.”

(Segment 6)

(Practice Round)

**AFTER WINNING THE INAGURAL JOHN SHIPPEN PRESENTED BY ROCKET MORTGAGE, TIM O’NEAL GOT BACK TO THE BUSINESS HE’S BEEN WORKING AT FOR OVER 20 YEARS.**

**FINDING SOME OLD FRIENDS ALONG THE WAY.**

WATSON NATS: Mr. O’Neal.

ONEAL NATS: I’m mic’d up by the way so.

ONEAL SOT: Bubba’s been my friend for a long time. We played Korn Ferry Tour we played together, we traveled together a lot.

WATSON NATS: We were just on the range now, I never saw you!

WATSON SOT: I was on the mini tours trying to make it, just like he was trying to make it. It brings back so many memories getting to play with him. We’ve played a couple of times over the last few years.

ONEAL SOT: Whenever I’m playing in a tournament he’s playing in we usually play a practice round so it’s nice to kind of pick his brain on a course I haven’t seen before and just kind of catch up.

WATSON NATS: It’s not my first time here, I’ve missed the cut twice, I know this course.

WATSON SOT: We struck up a friendship, started playing some golf, traveling the same areas, spend a lot of time together. Obviously, our paths went different ways and different things in our lives happened but we still kept in touch.

ONEAL SOT: Practice round just having some fun and getting a feel for the course so my game’s feeling good.

WATSON NATS: Where he’s putting to and then just below where he’s standing.

ONEAL SOT: Just him having course knowledge and just knowing where some of the pins are gonna be kind of helps me out.

WATSON NATS: It felt like it wasn’t going to break, like I felt like, I don’t know how to explain it.

WATSON SOT: The smile on his face, it seems like he’s never disappointed. He had ups an downs in his life and he’s always smiling, always bringing joy to other people so I love spending time with him.

**AFTER THEIR PRACTICE ROUND, BOTH O’NEAL AND WATSON TEED IT UP IN THE AREA 313 CELEBRITY SCRAMBLE.**

Watson Nats: Oh that hurt so bad. Holy cow.

Mickelson Nats: Oh, no, no, oh you’re crushing my dreams Bryson. (Sorry!)

Varner Nats: You tried to smoke that one.

Fitzgerald Nats: I tried. I tried! It didn’t work out well.

Mullins SOT: This is my 3rd 313 and every year it gets better.

Izzo SOT: I’m gonna ride every pro that I got.

Mickelson Nats: The whole thing is it’s not hard on the course, it’s hard between rounds.

Izzo SOT: Better players make you a better coach, so I’m not one of the better players, so I think I’ll coach my team!

Nats: Fore! That’s actually a good angle.

Sanders: For Rocket Mortgage holding this event, for me it’s just exciting to be a part of it.

Mullins SOT: I love that it’s grown and there’s more teams and more visibility of what’s happening in Detroit.

Izzo SOT: I think what I’m most looking forward to is what this is going to do for the city of Detroit and what’s happening in the city of Detroit; and that’s probably most fun thing and the proudest thing I am of it.

Fitzgerald SOT: Like golf always does, it connects good people. And you know I think just being able to walk around for three holes, you get a small glimpse into what makes people special. And I think that’s the thing I enjoy most.

Day SOT: Last year, Bubba and Harold beat us so it’s nice to be able to have a little bit of redemption. With all of the fun and stuff aside what Rocket Mortgage, you know what they’ve done, not only here in Detroit, but the PGA TOUR, it’s been pretty special.

(O’NEALS WEEK)

ANNC NATS: “Here is Tim O’Neal, his first hole of the Rocket Mortgage Classic. The 48 year old from Savannah Georgia off to a solid start.”

**TIM O’NEAL’S WEEK WAS CERTAINLY ONE TO REMEMBER AFTER FIRST WINNING THE INAGURAL JOHN SHIPPEN PRESENTED BY ROCKET MORTGAGE ON MONDAY, THE AREA 313 CELEBRITY SCRAMBLE ON TUESDAY, AND THEN PLAYING IN HIS 8TH PGA TOUR EVENT.**

ONEAL SOT: That was nice playing in the celebrity tournament there and we were able to win. The people here in Detroit have been unbelievable, you know they embraced me like one of their own.

ANNC NATS: “An amazing week already here.”

**A WEEK THAT O’NEAL KNOWS IS EVEN BIGGER THAN HIS OWN CAREER ASPIRATIONS…**

ONEAL SOT: Just to get a chance to play in the Rocket Mortgage and tee it up with the best players in the world, it’s been an awesome week.

**…BIGGER THAN THE GAME ITSELF.**

ONEAL SOT: For the most part I hit it really well. I only missed two greens the first day. Today I made a few birdies but I just missed too many putts. I wish I would’ve played a little bit better but sometimes that’s golf and you just move on to the next tournament. Sorry I have to leave on Friday but hopefully I’ll get a chance to do it again.

ANNC NATS: And he has bounced around many tours all over the globe. It’s a life that’s been well played.

(Henni Close)

*WHILE TIM O’NEAL’S WEEK MAY HAVE ENDED EARLIER THAN HE HAD HOPED, HIS PLACE AS THE CHAMPION OF THE INAUGURAL JOHN SHIPPEN IS SECURED.*

*CONTINUING HIS OWN GOLFING JOURNEY WHILE HONORING A FORGOTTEN PIONEER OF THE GAME.*

*{into rollout}*

*THANK YOU FOR WATCHING THE JOHN SHIPPEN - I’M HENNI KOYACK.*