PGA Tour Champions Learning Center

VO>> Welcome to this special edition of PGA Tour champions Learning Center. I'm Vince Giulini. Today we hear a conversation among three South African superstars. Ernie Els, Retief Goosen and David Frost. The trio shares stories such as growing up during apartheid, meeting Nelson Mandela, and trying to swing it like sevie.

OC>> Gentlemen, It's been a while.

OC>> we've come a long way. I mean, really, really a long way. Hi. from Africa. Yeah.

OC>> I mean, with this guy, since I was what are we 13 years old

OC>> when we first met, yeah

OC/VO>> we played in his South African boys in Bloemfontein 1983. And what are we now? Yeah, it was 40 years later.

VO>> Yeah, we know each other for a while. That's for sure.

VO>> In those days, he was winning South African opens when we were still juniors. Now we play on the same tour.

VO>>You didn't just catch up you just passed me completely.

VO/OC>>without us even knowing we had a great education in in golf. The way we were brought up the way we you know, grew up you know, we had all kinds of different conditions and we didn't even know about it. So I think that's why

OC>> Such a diverse of climates

OC>> sports growing up. Cricket and rugby, you play tennis, cricket, rugby.

OC>> I played cricket, rugby and tennis, tennis didn’t last long I kept breaking the racket, my temperament.

OC>> I was also terrible on the tennis court. I still am

OC>> don’t you think it’s good to play other sports, I think it's good for a kid not to just stick to one sport, you know, from the age of 6 or 17.

OC>> Now that totally I mean, you can’t get absolutely zoned in on one sport at a very early age.

OC>> You know, growing up in our time, obviously, we didn't really know about apartheid as kids, you know, you just grow up as a kid. And, you know, we were cycling everywhere and doing our thing and and it's obviously not really till Mandela time that we really started to understand what was happening

OC>> we were kind of at the end of it. I mean, I spent time in Europe playing tournaments where we we barred from playing the Swedish open the Scottish open, Dutch open, we will not play there. Even when I was on the on the tour here. I wasn’t allowed to go to Canada or or Japan. Until 1992. We were banned to Canada 93. I was the first time I went back and I won the tournament same in Japan. We're gonna go back until 91, 92. And I won in Japan, the first time any time a South African was allowed to go there was 92 for one day and same with Canada. So yeah, I you know, I didn't grow up. I grew up on a great farm where we had people that worked for us, but I never had like you. We never grew up with a okay blacks there and whites there.

OC>> No, no, we didn't grow up like that.

OC>> We play golf. Alright, we had guys that were from all colors that play golf. So we never would think anything different of somebody of color.

OC/VO>> But isn't it amazing that we three of us all got to spend time with Nelson Mandela. I mean, you know, how he lived his life, how he came out of - brought it together with sports. And I mean, obviously, Gary, and yourself. You played in a little bit of a different era. I mean, obviously Gary there but then you came David. And then the two of us came after you guys and we kind of we were right into the New South Africa. And I remember speaking to President Mandela and him telling us how, what the power of sport You can do to people, how that can bring people together. And the rugby show that in 95. You know, and then I think the wins that we had in that time period, absolutely helped.

OC>> We won the Daniel Cup in 97 the next week I flew to Las Vegas for the tournament. He called me to my hotel room in Las Vegas, goosebumps.

OC>> Yeah, yeah, he called me. He called me off that one the first US Open.

OC/VO>> Yeah, he called me mid party. He called me. Muirfield. 2002. I, we were going nuts. And he called me that kind of that evening. And I'm sure he tried before. We were in the bar. We had a chat. And I'm sure you could hear I was a little tipsy. But he was he was happy.

OC>> He was. He was a boxer. So he was an athlete. He understood. He understood competing.

OC>> Yeah. And you know, and now you you know, when you when you you let it out a little bit.

VO?OC>> Yeah, my greatest moment with him was, after the us open and we had the Nelson Mandela Invitational at beacon wood. And we were all lined up on the driving range. And he came in on his helicopter. And he landed there and he and he walked up to the first tee, to the tee box. And as he got on, the first thing he said, where’s the goose

OC>> is that where the nickname comes from

OC/VO>> they walked up and shook my hand for winning the US Open. And that's my greatest memory of him. And obviously, I always supported the Nelson Mandela Invitational after that, and he was a great, he was so good for the country. And yeah, he really brought people together.

VO/OC>> In talking about heroes. I mean, back in the day, Sun City, the million dollar. We were only two three hours away from sun city. And I remember going there as a kid to see Gary he played and he competed well. Johnny, but Sevie, I wanted to see Sevie and I remember it's 83 I went there, I was like 13. And I just wanted to see this guy. And it was so nice to have these type of guys. Cuz now you're like, you go. I guess I'm gonna swing like saving, you know, the follow through and the chipping.

OC>> Which year did you win the million dollar?

OC>> 89, 90

OC>> I was it was 89. I went on a Saturday, my dad, we drove down and gonna have a look. I stood on the 17th tee right behind you, when you teed off. And you hit a beautiful shot. And I say, well, that's pretty good. This guy could win. I mean,

OC>> that was amazing to have guys from outside. Outside South Africa come. We could see them live

OC/VO>> first time and for me the big thing was seeing Greg Normandy for the first time. You know, on TV, everybody looks so huge, and he wasn't a big guy. But the thing I found the most amazing was his caddy standing out the baseball glove, catching the balls, putting him in the bag. As Greg was hitting it.

OC>> I mean, just about every or any superstar golfer. Back in the 80s and 90s. came down then

OC>> Tiger was a big thing for playing at sun city. That was big for the country

OC>> and who was your idol?

OC>> Oh, wow. Oh, yeah, yes.

OC>> Yeah. I can say sevie without a doubt. Yeah, I don't know who you are.

OC>> We did. He was I did get a bit of sevie out of my swing because he was a little handsy and I got a little handsy.

OC/VO>> for me it was Nicholas. I mean, I grew up learning golf from jack Nicklaus golf book and I didn't have the video cameras you didn't have the TV. So you just had a mirror my dad had a practice mirror in the backyard and in the book jack grips it like this so I looked in a mirror and Jack grips it like that can i grip it like that, jack swings like that can I swing like that . And that's why I learned my stuff.

OC/VO>> I mean those guys. I mean sevie I mean Gary Player still, I mean, he was just a unique guy just to his wins and these his drive and so on. I was probably the absolute opposite of Gary the way you know i went about things but I mean, you guys I mean you and pricey and, and Greg played a lot of practice rounds with greg and pricey and you

OC>> I mean, that's what brought me to America was pricey and Watson and McNulty because I was playing Europe.

OC>>I mean, McNulty was unbelievable

OC>> he’s an America, why can't I be in American? So anyway, Yeah, I looked up to I competed against them once upon a time, and then I saw them in America and I thought, then I'm gonna go there, too.

VO>> Still to Come. Ernie, Retief and David discuss how the game of golf is evolving. And where the PGA Tour champions is headed over the next five years.

OC>> So what do you guys think of the champions tour?

OC>> I'm starting to find my feet with the guys. I mean, it's so nice to I mean, I haven't seen frosty for so for so long and some of the other guys and to reengage and play and see yes see these boys are up for

OC>> they can play out here

OC>>absolutely these guys

 OC>> you gotta shoot 15 16 under for three rounds you know

OC>>no lose you just go for it.

OC>> You got a play no, but it was great coming out you're seeing guys that were 10 years ahead of you. You know, frost you haven't seen for a long time. And we spent a lot of time together and play. I mean, yeah, he's showing me all the, he’s my tour guide, basically. Yeah. And he knows where all the best steaks are. But no, it's been it's been great moving from the moving into the Champions Tour for me. I mean, it's been good seeing the guys. It's just as competitive. Really a couple of weeks ago in Punta Cana and you got all the young kids, you know, 80% of them. I didn't know. Yeah. And they all eat at 40 yards past you. And I was just like, Okay,

OC>> 40 yards past you? come on. Yeah, there's nobody hitting 40 yards past you.

OC>> There in the first two rounds, and this kid was hitting it 40 yards past me into the wind here, it's just bulleting perfect

OC>> that’s into the wind. Down wind you’re hitting it 40 yards past him believe me.

OC>> It's, you know, what it's, it's, it's a case where, again, the game of golf, you know, there's the bar is set, for the next generation to lift the bar again. And move that's golf from when we were youngsters, you know, we look up to this guy, the next guy looks up to you. So we got to keep lifting the bar. And that's how the game moves forward. I think we've got good people around that

OC>> a great champion tour guys coming and that is on the tour now too. And you know, I think that's just going to take the Champions Tour to another level too. I mean, the guys is going to come in in the next five years. Not too far away from being a champion too. But as

OC>> is being played in the right spirit we try to win but we add they're helping each other you know, off the golf course. You know, and that's that's the way

OC>> boys are helping each other. We’re helping each other. You give him a tip and you’re trying to beat him.

OC>> The whole thing evolves Eventually, the better everybody plays a better for the whole product. I think the guys really get it.

VO>> Still ahead els, Goosen and frost go the way of the grape and discuss why their respective wine businesses have become such a passion.

VO>> These players are aging like fine wine on PGA Tour champions. And fine wine is something with which they are all familiar. Among They're off the course interests are wine businesses, grape to bottle. We listen in as they discuss this facet of their lives, including some history behind the path to Ventnor.

OC>> I grew up on a grape farm my grandmother, my mother grew up on a grape farm. So it was in my blood to to drink since the age of 12. Yeah, so my dad would serve us wine at lunch on a Sunday night it was a little pour that's all we got. Got to drink. But yeah, I grew up on the vineyards.

OC>> where now which region

VO/OC>> between just outside Stellenbosch. So it's almost towards cows, -- that region. So it was second nature for me. I enjoy it. I enjoy it. But for you guys coming from Johannesburg. Yeah, it must have been a beautiful sight to see all these venues in Capetown and, you know?

OC/VO>> No, well, my my deal. The first time I went to Stellenbosch was for the South African Junior event. I was back in 85. There to a yoga selling event was there. I came back I applied as an amateur in88 or something. That's kind of when I started coming down there. You know for golf tournaments and so forth. And I met liezl my wife, now she's from Stellenbosch like you. met liezl back in 1992. And with liezl I met the ?? family. Now the ?? family is very prominent winemaking family. Johnny, obviously, quite a legend rugby player got into the wine business, early on in the probably the 70s. His son john became a good friend of mine through Liezel and then, you know, I never had a clue about wine. I still don’t have much of a clue about wine. But I know what I like, you know, and in those days, as you know, the French we were drinking really big European French kind of wines. Okay. I mean, we got big Cabernet, they, you know, we've got great varietals, but carbernet’s big, I'm talking about the red wine. And so we tasted and then I had John's wine, which is heavy Bordeaux stuff. And that's how I kind of found myself liking Bordeaux blends and that's where the first our first vintage was in 2000. And this was only a hobby and it's still a hobby, you know, as a passion now to is more of a passion you know, but coming from Joburg infiltrating the Stellenbosch guys like yourselves, you know the locals are like What the hell's this northern they're doing in our territory? But where's john and ?? you know, you know, it was a much nicer deal. We bought land. Stellenbosch pretty hell, hell the beautiful, great, I mean 70 Hector's there up there. Put a lot of money into the into the winery. But thank goodness all of our product is good. You know we want to we got our names on our product. But you can people forget about the name after a while it's more about the wine.

OC>> I mean South Africa is not very well known in America in the wine business because most of our wines get marketed and sold in Europe. Yeah, but we have a very as you all know we are very long even growing season. And we do very well with reds because of the long summer days we have and we do very well with the whites because we’re right on the coast we the Indian Ocean, the Atlantic Ocean is right there so we we have so much so much of our Grapeseed complimented from this from the weather conditions exactly

OC/VO>> I mean where I grew up in Petersburg is about as far away from wine as I can get the opposite and from the boys up there drink you know, beer and Bronwyn and coke. but for me it was really for a friend of mine that at a project in in George and 2003 and we started talking about a project the other day and we were sitting on a beach I mean a glass of wine and after a couple of bottles we start talking about lets buy a winery and and yeah, I ended up buying a small winery day in George just on the other side of the mountain and very small and it's more of a wine farm. We keep it very simple grapes and cattle and that's about it we’re the only winery ended up along here and the outeniqua mountain is beautiful and going through a severe drought at the moment but we've crawling along over there but so for me it was also just you know, I grew up not really drinking avi alcohol. I didn't start drinking until I came out of the army as you know, driving a bus. But then then I met my wife and she liked white wine shot and I and I started drinking and I like a bitt and I and so I got into the wine and then playing in Europe, you I mean you go to Italy and you go to France and you go to Spain, you're drinking red wine. So whatever all those years develop sort of a taste for different types of varietals.

OCVO>> Yeah, I don't drink much either. I came I remember being in Phoenix, Arizona in 1986. And I ordered a glass of Rutherford Hill Molo, I'll never forget it. Okay, and that was the first time I you know, I was 20 my second year on tour 26 at the time. 27. You know, your palate evolves as you as you get older, you know, we drink beer when we were younger. Well, I think as you get older, your palate evolves and man that this is the really struck me ?? and I got hooked on wine after that.

OC/VO>> Brilliant and it's so true. I mean, you know, we've been living in the US now with the pandemic, for more than a year. I haven't moved. I mean, normally we move every couple of months or a couple of weeks. And as I said earlier, my palette if you talk about a palette was straight into heavy European Bordeaux. And it's amazing when you move around the world. And that's a great thing about wine. You know, you go to a different region in the world, and you get taste. And it's like, Man, you can absolutely just start feeling how these people live in this region, you know, through wine. It just comes right out of that Earth.

OC>> Yeah. I like to drink by region, Sauvignon Blanc from there. ?? from there. I wouldn't drink a cab from there, for instance, but I drink it from a well known cab region.

OC>> What's your palate? You know, certain regions through the world. It's like, okay, when I go to Napa, I like this type of cab or, you know, whatever

OC>> Listen boys that was really nice but I think its time to put a bit of steak on the fire

OC>> I'm tired of the white wine.

OC>> I'm enjoying some wine.

OC>> I'm gonna drink some goose you you're gonna have some frosty?

OC>> I’m gonna have some of frosty I’m gonna have some of Ernies I’m gonna have some of mine

OC>> ?? starts at 8:40

OC>> Yeah, so we'll get you out of here in the next three hours. So don't worry,

OV>> Got my wife. Yeah, she's gonna drive home tonight.

OC>> Yeah. Thank you. Thank you. Great to see you.