VO>>PGA TOUR champions learning center

VO>> Breathtaking Pebble Beach Golf Links, the site of the Pure Insurance Championship, where KJ Choi authored an historic win. After losing in a playoff the week before, Choi closed the deal thirteen under in a two-shot victory. Choi snaps a winless streak of nearly nine years, becomes the thirteenth first time winner, eleventh different rookie to win on PGA tour champions during the 2020- 2021 season. With more from the pure insurance championship, our team calling the action, Whit Watson and Lanny Wadkins.

VO/OC>> There have a lot of great players to win at pebble beach and K. J. Choi can put his name on that list: the winner of the pure insurance championship at pebble beach golf links. Lanny it's a guy that I know I know you had your eye on for a long time you thought that he would win on the PGA tour champions he came, close got to a playoff one week before this and finally got it done.

OC>> Yeah I think more than anything else I was so surprised by the struggles he had when he first came on this tour and then all of a sudden he kind of found his game a little bit and when we were in Flint and then last week and Sioux falls, played really well had the lead played the final last round even though he didn't win, there was a man sitting on a solid game I like what I saw with every aspect of his game, especially the short putting.

OC/VO>> Let's take a look at some of the highlights from Sunday. Scott Dunlap put on a show early on in the round this was for birdie at tenth.

VO>> Yeah coming off birdieing the first six holes today, incredible stuff, makes that he’s seven under for the day through ten holes.

VO>> But that would be his last birdie of the day. Bernhard Langer just never stops. This his third shot at eighteen.

VO>> Yeah, double bogey at the tenth derailed Bernhard, but he fought back hard all day, he would make birdie right there to tie for second.

VO>> And a tie for second retakes the lead in the Charles Schwab Cup. Alex Cejka was the man putting immediate pressure on K. J. Choi, they played together in that final group he birdies 18 to get to eleven under.

VO>> And that was the putt that actually tied Langer for second.

VO>> But K. J. had answers all day long. At seven for birdie.

VO>> Yep, beautiful shot in here to seven right behind the hole makes the uphill putt. I love the pace that his ball’s going in the hole nothing is forced. His second shot at the exciting eighth hole at Pebble Beach, he takes this hole location on, what a gorgeous shot, that swing in that shot right there to me says this man is not going to back off today here he is.

VO>> And then a big par save at the twelfth, the tee shot in the bunker and this may have been the biggest putt of the day.

VO>> No question. I mean it was a putt that he had to have to keep the lead Cejka was sitting right there for a tap-in.

VO>> K. J. Choi, a winner on the PGA tour champions for the first time. He would say later that he loves coming to this place, friendly people and beautiful scenery, and now he can add his name to the list of winners at the pure insurance championship. Thirteen under with a final round sixty-eight. Vince, will send it back to you.

VO>> Thank you gentlemen. The latest Charles Schwab Cup standings shake out this way. The legend Bernard Langer again making his way to the top, moving up two spots with a share of second place at pebble beach. Jim Furyk is bumped down to two, followed by Jerry Kelly. Just two regular season events remain before the playoffs, and this continues to be an amazing carry-over season.

VO>> Last week a pebble beach it was a reunion of sorts as three men from down under, each victorious on the PGA TOUR, were in the same field together for the first time in two and a half years. Robert Allenby, Stuart Appleby and John Senden, all Australian-born, discuss the defining moments of their PGA tour careers.

VO>> So the tournaments that you've won, you won nine tournaments on the PGA tour, which is your most memorable one?

VO/OC>> They all have different like things, a little bit like children you know your first one’s like oh, the first time, you know winning my Honda classic, I was like I drove out of the clubhouse going holy cow, I won, I can do this yes, I’m the last guy to leave the car park, driving back to Orlando from, from South Florida and then I had to run through Mercedes and Kapalua up there you know that was a, that was a dream and I was having kids, each time there was a different feeling like I think I will have, you know it's some maybe not as much but they all have a sort of story to them. I'm lucky enough that I can get to tell a story because of those wins but the first I think it's special because you go, I just did something I've been dreaming of it I didn't, I didn't truly know whether I could do it and it was a great shoot out with Payne Stewart, nearly thirty-six holes on Sunday to finish it and I got up and that was my, that was my start of it.

VO>> Pretty cool to be able to go back and say that you were battling that with out with Payne Stewart.

VO/OC>> Yeah well in hindsight that becomes even more relevant now very intimidating at the same time I was, I was really good then I think not as good now but I was really good at like putting blinkers on.

OC/VO>> One of my best memories was winning the John Deere classic, which was like a dream come true at TPC Deere Run.

VO>> They get some good crowds there.

VO/OC>> They do some good work there yes and so having a tournament win under my belt was like all of a sudden a feeling like I belong, really, because you play the two years before that you’re a PGA TOUR member, you’re one of hundreds, but then when you win it's like all of a sudden you just turn up and got a different feeling again as you did at the Honda. And it's just like it's a great feeling but then you know as time progressed I was pretty much some of you know I took that confidence and I went home and I won the Australian open championship right? So 2006 was probably my best year and if it wasn't an experience that I had in the early days and in Q. school and fighting it out those first couple years on the PGA tour and then win, I was never gonna be where I am today.

OC/VO>> So mine was the 2000 Shell Houston open. I went to Q-school in ’98, got my card, so ’99 was my first year and I watched Apple's win the Shell Houston open at the Woodlands, and because of what I saw you do, that inspired me to go and play great there, and I was like okay I can do this Apples can do it, I can do as well, you know I'm gonna feed off him and and then you know next time I'm in a playoff with just Stadler and myself, and I end up winning that, but I think it was an awesome win, it was fantastic, was a great way to get out on the PGA tour and, I think the most famous part about that week was you climbing up the trees. You didn't want to be seen on the ground you thought that you'd be better like a monkey up in the tree.

OC>> I didn't want to, I was nervous for Rob while he was in a playoff, man he was a playoff killer. And I was the more nervous, I didn’t want to have him see me out there was really strange. I don’t think I’ve ever walked a playoff for anyone else. And it was huge I mean it's hard to believe that's that was what, 2000? Now Riviera.

OC/VO>> Thursday I hate driver, nine iron, into eighteen. The playoff I hit driver, three wood to five feet.

VO>> So what was the yardage then? 220?

VO>> Like 215 meters, 235 yards I’d say.

VO/OC>> I know how, you know how hard that hole is, if you got anything longer than a five iron or four iron in there, it’s tough.

OC>> Green’s like a little--

OC>> Well it’s hard now—back in those years it was always soft.

OC>> Well it was soft because it rained for two days.

OC/VO>> That shot seriously if that's not in the top ten best shots to win a playoff on the PGA TOUR, I can’t. and then make this sort of bumpy downhill poa six footer.

VO>> Commissioner Finchem said that year, this was after TPC at Sawgrass. Tiger made that putt from the back of seventeen right? Commissioner Finchem was staying in one of the boxes watching that day and he actually watched me putt from off the wood way back left where you walk on to the green, it was probably another ten feet, if you can believe, another ten feet longer than Tiger’s and I made it from there.

OC>> Yeah, but you’re not Tiger.

OC>> I know but I'm, not only did I make it and then Tiger made one a little closer, but then that same year I also had that three wood to Riviera to win, but Tiger’s putt became the best shot of the year.

OC>> Well that's right you know so I mean once like once in a lifetime. Riv was definitely my most famous, but Houston was very memorable. We've been very fortunate that with growing up in Australia but we have our lives and the kids over here now and you know to play on the PGA tour was always the ultimate goal in life.

VO>> In many ways Bruce Fleisher embodies the spirit and second chance opportunity PGA tour champions provides. Last week, the former U. S. amateur champion passed away from cancer. Fleischer won only once on the PGA TOUR, but after turning fifty, restarted his golfing career, winning his first two starts on this tour, the first player to do so, and five more that 1999 season, earning rookie and player of the year honors. He finished as an eighteen time winner on PGA tour champions in an impressive second act. Bruce Fleisher was seventy two years old.

VO>> Last season PGA tour driving distance leader Bryson Dechambeau is competing in this week's professional long drive association World Championship in Mesquite Nevada. Last week at the pure insurance championship, a former masters division world long drive champion made his tour debut, and like Bryson is hoping distance off the tee translates into victories. Let's meet fast Eddie Fernandez.

OC/VO>> That was a bomb. I may not take that line of the tournament, but that was that was roasted. Being a world long drive champion and having a pretty good playing career when I played up until 2004, I can hit every shot in the book it's just a matter of managing the emotions of the week and managing you know, the mental side of things. I'm really, I haven’t played a lot since 2004, so obviously have been doing long drive, it took me a year to kinda get comfortable out there and then I really progress each year. All right let's get on one here. You don't even feel it come off the clubface, I mean it feels like I'm swinging in slow motion and then I look up and it's you know 204 ball speed and it's like wow I like, where did that come from? And it's just when you center punch one and you can just tell just absolutely ripped, there's nothing like it. You see that slip? I’ll still take that one. You know I'm looking at this week as enjoying every minute. I can control my attitude and my preparation and that's all I can control is kind of just let it go while I'm up there. I've never been to a place like this so it's an opportunity of a lifetime just I waited so long to have an opportunity and I'm just so grateful to be out here with these legends and hopefully hang with them a little bit this week.

VO>> And he did have his chance alongside the legends, but long drives didn't help a long day in round one. 82 doomed his chances. In the second round at spyglass hill he shot a respectable sixty eight unfortunately for Eddie there was a cut last week and he did not make it to the final round

VO>> Another man making his debut was nine time PGA tour winner Stuart Appleby in his first start he shot an opening sixty six but struggled in round two and finished one under par, T-34. It was his first start since the twenty nineteen Puerto Rico Open. Prior to teeing it up last Friday, Appleby asked for a little advice from his fellow countrymen.

OC>> OK boys, now I am 50, by about three, four months but it I am a true rookie. What do I need to reset from maybe PGA TOUR mindset or how do I how do I look at it?

OC>> From my experience I’ve played ten tournaments already on the Champions Tour and it's been great the guys on the tour are just fantastic guys, you know them they've got such a great experience from the PGA TOUR, they’ve got probably twenty players that are hall of fame players, the champions tour guys have just got nothing to prove. They’ve done it all. That's the reasons why they're on the Champions Tour there’s reasons why you're on the Champions Tour, because you won nine times on the PGA tour you should go out there and feel proud and enjoy what you've achieved and I think that if you just go out there and just do that, enjoy yourself, play the best that you can, you know it just it, it's fun.

OC>> The one thing that I found out here is you know and Sendo is a hundred percent, everyone is awesome they get they'll still play great. Yeah I mean look at the scores every week, you know you're really going to be close to twelve to fifteen under in three rounds and you know the one thing I noticed is the golf courses are really not a short as people do say. People say all the golf course is so much shorter, they’re 6,500 yards, let me just tell you they're more like 7,000 plus. Because you know it it's the guys still play. My saying over the last month or so is, these guys are still good.

OC>> Well we know Bernhard Langer is.

OC>> Well, he’s just awesome. Thirty years of high level world-class golf.

OC>> Almost forty odd some wins now on the champions two or whatever it is.

OC>> He must just laugh at our rookies, what do they think they’re gonna do? You know what I caught Langer saying a couple years ago I guess you know I don’t hit it as long as I used to, this is probably three years ago, and he said but I but I can tell by sincerity, he said, I feel like I can still get better. And I think if you can hold that all that then you really are motivated to get up every day and practice if you feel like there's some room for improvement, that's the tangible thing that keeps you going , guys like Vijay, same way, that’s what brings you to the tee with enthusiasm, you don’t want to be on the tee just going, I’m ordinary, I’m nowhere near as good as I used to be.

OC>> Credit because Bernhard’s always been I believe one of the toughest mental players out there, you know? Back in his day you know even when he was winning majors and stuff you know he went through the yips a few times with these with his putting in you know to be able to you know we know how we feel at times you know out there of our putting or whatever it might be in this like you know he does it so many times but he's pushed his way through it.

OC>> I think for the next couple of events you play, or however many you’re gonna play this year or next year, almost like get into the rhythm of just that that was great this week, that was even better next week, better, better, better and all of a sudden, you get on a bit of a flow and then you can as you know with playing your whole life is like, if you get on some confidence you just sort of like, you work it out sometimes you hit instead of hidden forty balls to try and get better, you hit twenty balls better quality, all of a sudden you do the work better and you can feel good on the on the tournaments.

OC>> So I play good do I have to thank you two for the advice?

OC>> Absolutely, too right now we want ten percent as well. Everything comes with a cost, mate. Think about any job in the world, we've just played for thirty years right, and now we get to do it all over again at fifty years of age. there's no real job in the world that especially in sports I mean there's no sport outside of golf that actually gives you that opportunity. Yeah but that's different, we got a whole tour.

OC>> But they play, like you see, they’re serious, it’s a lot more fun, but I love, to see guys, we have a lot of injuries, obviously, a lot of us, but I think there’s a lot to be learned out here with the top guys.

OC>> Everyone is very content in their life out here and did their career was on the PGA tour. this is not the new career but it's revitalized you know it's everyone's going out here and having a great time and the camaraderie is so nice out here, really is.

OC>> Instead of warming down with thirty golf balls I warm down with a red wine.

OC>> I know you’ll be warming down with thirty golf balls, don’t tell me you’ll be grabbing a red wine. I saw you last night grab a soda.

OC>> I was the one with the red wine.

OC>> Thanks boys I appreciate the advice, and whenever it clicks, I will thank you.

OC>> You know what, just remember one thing, you are still really good.

OC>> I am really good. Do I have to say that in my room every night?

OC>> You can say it if you want just not around me.

VO>> The iconic eighteen hole at pebble beach golf links, a blend of beauty and intimidating challenge under pressure. It remains one of the most recognizable par fives in the world and to be the difference between northern California glory or dream swallowed up under the waves crashing on shore. What is the strategy on eighteen at Pebble? Ken Duke with his advice on mastering this gem in this week's what's your edge?

OC>> Hello everyone. I'm here at the iconic eighteenth hole at pebble beach just want to give you a little tip on how I would play this hole and maybe help you. First thing on a pressure shot like this is obviously you don't want to go left. Obviously there's water, seals, sharks, whatever, we don't do that, want to keep the ball to the right, so what I would do is tee the ball down a little lower than normal. We want the ball to keep down the lower flight instead of get the ball up in the air. Choke down on your club about an inch or so and take a three quarter swing the follow through that keeps the ball lower on a better flight than give it up in the air with the wind and that's definitely, you don't want to do that here at pebble beach, so let me just try one and see what you think. Choke down on the club a little bit, tee the ball down a little bit lower than normal to keep that lower flight and just follow through. That's right down the middle. I hope this tip helps you it definitely helps me out here on the tour.

OC>> What are you doing?

OC>> I told you, meet at the beach, we’re at Pebble Beach.

OC>> It's not easy being me I just spent thirty two seconds on this treadmill I'm wore out.

OC>> What's that thing in your hand?

OC>> They tell me it burns fat. Is that a beer? Thank you

OC>> While you’re here, you wanna get a workout in?

OC>> yeah show me what you're doing. What's a bench press?

OC>> Right here I'll hold you barley for you.

OC>> Stomach’s not feeling too good

OC>> Do five of those two three four, that's pretty good because we don't want you to be sore.

OC>> Can you set it, oh, it’s on the lowest weight.

OC>> Yeah, it’s on three pounds.

OC>> There you go there you go along, looking good, looking good

OC>> You got your flip flops on. What’s going on?

OC>> I like to work out light, what you want to go to the beach? Let's go let's go to the beach. This is for the birds.

VO>> PGA tour champions learning center always finding the hard hitting and hard body stories. I'm Vince Cellini, and that'll do it for this week. Next week we will preview the consolation Furyk and friends and hear from European Ryder Cup captain Padraig Harrington, who is making his tour debut.