PGA Tour Champions Learning Center

VO>> Welcome to PGA TOUR Champions learning center I’m Vince Cellini

with something entirely new. This week is the inaugural Constellation Furyk and Friends and it is set to be one of the strongest fields of the year. Check out this line including Steve Stricker fresh off his winning captaincy in the Ryder Cup. European Ryder Cup captain Padraig Harrington making his PGA TOUR Champions debut. Phil Mickelson a two time PGA TOUR Champions winner and the reigning PGA champion will hit bombs in his fourth career start. Davis Love the third currently not qualified for the Charles Schwab Cup playoffs will tee it up for the eighth time this

year and if that's not enough ever popularly Fred Couples like Phil Jim and Davis an assistant to Steve Stricker will also join those men in the field. Recently the host himself Jim Furyk expressed with great anticipation what we can expect and the philosophy behind the first playing at Timuquana Country Club.

OC>> Honored humbled uh excited nervous kind of a little everything uh I try not to uh and the team knows I'm not in the office very often I try not to screw things up too much uh we got a great team working for us uh Tabitha is working hard uh and I get the updates every day uh you know it's kind of part of the morning call with Tabitha I hear about her work day and what's going on and you know recap at the end of the day how things are going so uh we're excited and uh got a great sponsor in Constellation a great presenting sponsor in Circle K. We took our old Furyk and Friends event that we had for about ten years and you know we used to always say it was about great food great music the golf maybe a cocktail or two uh not always in that order either you know golf was the vehicle but it was a way for us to get you know I would say the best thing about my job is the people that we get to meet along the way whether it's pro-ams or whatever it may be golf is the vehicle it brings everyone in and everyone loves golf it seems and we get to meet you know incredibly uh talented you know businessmen and women athletes actors you name it folks from all walks of life uh that are extremely talented and amazing folks and they all want to play golf and so we brought them into our event we got some great support from our community we raised a bunch of money for charity but this is kind of the next step and so you know we kind of kept that Furyk and Friends name in the Constellation Furyk and Friends presented by Circle K but uh we're trying to keep the same flavor of our old event and they're still gonna be music with Darius Rucker and Scotty McCreery on Tuesday night we're gonna have some pop in artists along the way great food we've had some amazing support from chefs in our community uh there's golf and of course uh there's gonna be a it's it's a it's a PGA TOUR Champions event there will be some cocktails and we have a we've got a little tail gate village it's not a I'm a huge football fan it's October they'll be a uh a tailgate village some big screen TV's college football on Saturday of course will showcase the Florida Florida state Georgia for our local fans uh Jaguars on Sunday but uh it'll be a good time and now we're we're really looking forward to it.

OC/VO>> Wow it sounds like you got everything covered and uh it's it's something when your name is on an event you're the host I mean there’s ownership of that and with this being sort of the first year moving into the Constellation Furyk and Friends it sounds like you know it's it's pretty much on schedule I mean are you are you nervous at all uh what are you kind of feeling about (INAUDIBLE WORDS)?

VO/OC>> You are always nervous. The toughest year of any event is the first year right you know there's always going to be uh I I think you have to be fluid you have to be on your toes a little bit there's always gonna be things that come up um we have some experience in our team folks that have worked for the PGA TOUR and run tournaments in the past um they're aware that things pop up um but yeah were you know I I think you're always you're always nervous you your name's on it you do have ownership of it but we're also very proud of what we accomplished Tabitha ran this event uh here for ten years and uh and now she's in the office each and every day our Tournament director Adam Renfroe is doing a great job and uh you know uh a PGA TOUR Champions event or Korn Ferry event it’s a small team it's a small group of individuals and uh they need to be uh versatile talented and uh I'm proud of the team the work they've done and uh you know there's a countdown everyone knows you know exactly how many days till October 4th is Monday of our event so uh we're excited about it and uh like I said I'm I'm out here playing most of the time and I try to uh I try to let them do their jobs.

VO>> Tabitha is your wild card she's got everything covered for you so I think you're you're really good shape. Jim you are playing so well and I'm wondering if this tour and you're play here and fitting in has been everything that you thought it might be?

VO/OC>> I wanted to kind of dip my toe originally last year you know play a few events and then uh I enjoyed I saw some success here at Ally at Pure and then once the PGA TOUR season was over I want to kind of play the rest of the events out you know I was at SAS I I played uh Dominion uh Timber tech Charles Schwab kind of played the whole playoff season and after about six events as you know I'm kind of really enjoying this it uh you know the I guess I'm not hitting four iron all the time anymore five iron the golf courses are seven thousand yards but you know I since I've been playing the TOUR at seventy four hundred and that seems great I’ve got some short irons in my hand I've got an opportunity to attack make some birdies um I'm out here with a bunch of my old friends I haven't seen uh in a number of years so uh I'm enjoying myself and I really this this this TOUR the PGA TOUR Champions is my home right now I might dabble and play a few events uh on the PGA TOUR during the year but uh this is my home I’m going to play you know ninety five percent of my golf here.

VO>> How excited are you to come down the stretch now and really make a run for this?

VO/CO>> Yeah one of the things I was really proud of in my career on TOUR was my year in 2010 you know uh winning a Fedex uh cup um actually is very humbling having your peers name you as player of the year and so I think that's what we're all trying to do on this TOUR right there's a Charles Schwab Cup there's a season ending points list and you know everyone wants their name on that trophy and kind of validates a great season and you know and you kinda you try to sprinkle your name in amongst the I don't know sixty two times that Bernard Langer has been able to put his name on that trophy it seems like but I think he's won it five or six times which is which is incredible you know five times to be the season long champion um he's uh he's amazing but I that's what we're all trying to do and so you know the season as of as about playing solid and put yourself in position but it's going to be uh it's going to shoot out like every Champions TOUR event is uh on Sunday out here it's a it's a track meet it’s a shootout and that's what the Charles Schwab Cup is going to be this year as well there's a lot of folks in position.

VO>> Jim Furyk’s extended rookie season has seen him win three times two of those came in his first two starts in 2020 he added a major championship this year in the U. S. Senior Open a player for all courses Furyk is a consistent contender as he is fully embraced the PGA TOUR Champions.

VO>> the current Charles Schwab Cup standings shake out this way

the legend and five-time Schwab Cup winner Bernard Langer replacing this week's host Jim Furyk at the top as it continues to be a tight race with two regular season events remaining before the playoffs more now from our leader in the chase for the Cup in this week's what's your edge?

OC>> Hi everyone I'm going to talk about how to hit a full pitching wedge. I would recommend to put the ball in the middle of my stance right here because I want to hit that ball on the down swing we all know the this the pass off the club is like a circle and you want to don't want to hit the ball on the upswing that's more for the driver you want to hit it on the down swing so I hit the little ball before it the big ball so again ball more or less in the middle of my stance uh soft grip pressure now make a full turn back and a full turn through trying to swing within myself and stay balanced all the way back and all the way through without hurrying anything or forcing anything and try and make good contact by keeping uh a nice balance. If you want to flight the ball let say there is a strong twenty mile an hour wind or something I would move the ball uh even further back so instead of in the middle of my feet I would put it near the right inside step of my right heel keep the hands forward and just punch should more so with the wedge looks more like an eight iron goes a little bit lower one thing I struggled with for a long time in my career was hitting a half shots three quarter shot I saw Tiger Woods to a clinic one day and uh what he did is he made a full backswing but he sawed off the follow through just about here which takes about five to seven yards off the distance I tried it and it worked fantastic for me so that's again I'm gonna hit one like this everything like a full shot ball in the middle of full backswing but you you stop the follow through about three o'clock just like that and what that does is slows the club speed down a little bit and you lose anywhere from five to seven yards in distance which is about half a club which is perfect if you're between a pitching wedge and sand wedge good luck.

VO>> Coming up a terrific conversation with Padraig Harrington about joining in on PGA TOUR Champions and his personal expectations starting this week Patty unplugged next.

VO>> Padraig Harrington's run as a European Ryder Cup captain ended in disappointing fashion for himself and the squad. Now he will be able to focus his attention and energy on the PGA TOUR Champions. Harrington makes his tour debut this week and like so many other great champions is hoping for a career revival.

OC>> Look I want to play wherever I'm competitive and you know it's been tough out on the PGA TOUR toward the last couple of years you know it it's it's very deep on the PGA TOUR and it you know if you're not comfortable you know I miss a putt on Thursday afternoon on the eighth hole and I'm starting to think of the cut line you know it's it's a tough one so I want to be somewhere where I can win and if I I I want to get a be competitive and I to be honest (INAUDIBLE WORDS) the problem I have is twenty under par is a lot to shoot for three rounds and it's it's not like I've been a I certainly haven't be putting well the last number of years but I am encouraged by the fact that I’ve seen a few pros who turned fifty gone into Champions TOUR and miraculously their putting seems to come back so I’m hoping that happens to me that's all of a sudden it's I do think some of it you know the putting and things like that there's a higher stress level when you’re in the pack at a regular PGA TOUR events you're you're you know it's a tight margins so.

OC>> But for the most part um you're still hitting the ball very well I mean putting aside you're still striking the ball well?

OC>> Yeah look I I I I'm faster than I've ever been on the golf course and hit it straighter and I have started to putt better the last couple of months so the way I kind of look at this is a I don't anything to worry about my game so basically I got to get my routines and my mental game right and if they don't turn my game into being competitive well you know that it's not for me uh and and I'll the problem is a the Champions Tour my strengths you know if I'm not doing it on the PGA TOUR I worry about will I be able to do it on the Champions Tour now as I said I've seen a few pros who who have gone in seamlessly and it's be nice uh I also realize that you know if you go and play Champions Tour as soon as possible you’re obviously the youngest guy you have an advantage so easy going to if you are going to have a great Champions Tour career you want to get there early you know what to be leaving this late so the last thing I want to do is struggle on the PGA TOUR for three or four years and then when I’m fifty five say oh well I should have been out here earlier.

OC>> Sure have you actually spoken to some of your fellow players about the transition?

OC/VO>> Oh yeah no I've talked to the guys all the time about it and I'm most of which is interesting most of them are very encouraging they all are very encouraging come on out you know we have a great time at their end you know what I did what I needed to do in the game of golf I'm not trying to prove anything so I wouldn't mind going out there for three rounds of golf and no (INAUDUIBLE WORD) and and enjoying myself but to be honest golf I'd say for the last number of years has become a lot better for me because I I instead of trying to be competitive which is getting tough I've tried to enjoy it more.

VO/OC>> Well it was hard to believe that you can become more popular after being a major champion and obviously uh a past Ryder Cup star and a Ryder Cup captain now but you have due to social media and becoming this YouTube star during the pandemic with Patty's golf tips? Yeah I mean uh it's taken off.

OC>> Yeah I really enjoyed doing it you know I I love every week I play a pro-am we have you know three four amateurs and everybody gets a couple of tips at least and I think everybody should be able to play single figures. I'm not my tip

OC>> I’m all for that. How does that happen?

OC/VO>> Well I I I I think if you if you follow my tips that should be reasonably you know I'm not promising that you can get to a scratch golfer you need a coach if you want to do you know if you want to get that last bit out a golf swing you know you do need to coach you need to be looking at it in detail but you know generally to move the golf ball forward the you know the make a decent enough swing that you’re hitting out there you know 240 220 in the air that sort of thing you know that that that that's exactly what you would have done as a kid every person most people I know if you went to a five year old kid and you gave them a stick and you told them to go over and hit the tree trunk over there they make a perfect athletic move and so we all have it inside of us to swing a stick. The problem is when you swing a stick at a ball for the first time no matter how good your athleticism is the likelihood is you're going to hit it straight and of course even though you've made the most athletic swing you haven’t squared the face up so the ball has gone astray and then you start changing things and those changes take away from your athleticism where anybody come into this game of golf you'd be much better off for three months just keeping your athletic swing swing away swing away swing away swing away start hitting the golf ball after a awhile keep swinging away and then at the end of that period it will start going straighter where is people want to hit it in the air and straight straight away and that usually to do that they put so many harmful things into their swing that they're never going to get rid of. Golf should be should be easier and more natural uh and if we left it that way but unfortunately everybody wants results straight away and and and and if you don't have a good coach off straight away and he starts you know talking to you about locking up your hips or keeping your head still or swinging on plane like who cares whether you lay the club down if you're fourteen handicapper what does that mean lay the club down in the down swing come on. Just give it a good rip at it and we'll figure out how to get it in the middle of the club face.

VO>> Harrington’s career to this point is hall of fame worthy three majors six PGA TOUR wins overall and a dominant player internationally. Also one of the finest gentlemen this game has known. Now it's time to turn the page to a new phase his next chapter begins this week in Jacksonville.

VO>> When we return a story of determination and overcoming a series of setbacks Mark Calcavecchia with the revealing conversation on health and resetting himself at this point in his career.

VO>> Welcome back to learning center. Some tournament news to pass along the Rapiscan Systems Classic will return to the schedule in 2022 and we'll have a new venue. The event will move from Fallen Oak in Mississippi to Grand Bear Golf Club and be held the first weekend in April. All around it's positive news for everyone involved particularly the folks in this region and to all of us to enjoy the culinary delights that abound. Certainly it's a win win.

OC/VO>> The Gulf coast is nice um we know that we need to just you know maybe coming to some smaller markets and help communities out and I think the PGA TOUR champions is been able to do that and all the players love the golf course and uh you know the Biloxi area it’s a lot of fun to be so we are glad to be here.

OC/VO>> The fact they were still trying to have a tournament here in Coastal Mississippi uh it has a great impact on the community charitable dollars are raised every year and it's one of our best events at the great golf course you guys love coming here the whole aspect of the food the casinos you know it encompasses everything and um we just want to try to help.

OC>> We're excited to be able to bring back and continue our partnership in Biloxi uh the Rapiscan Systems Classic back on our schedule for 2022 um we hope for much longer but at least we're gonna bring it back and uh and support the community of Biloxi next year.

VO>> Mark Calcavecchia made his first start of the year just four weeks ago in the Ascension Charity Classic. He's had a rough last twelve months in that span he was hospitalized due to COVID-19 and after that had back spasms which led to back surgery. Cal thinks he can get back to the form he once had as a four time winner on the PGA TOUR Champions.

OC>> I've been at such back pain the last five or six years that I I knew that was my only hope to get back to you know somewhat being a really good player out here uh it's still in there uh but I I need to get stronger and uh physically better so I had to back surgery and I'm not there yet this year um you know I always say I'm gonna work out really hard this winter and come up and come back out lighter and stronger and hitting it out there where I should be uh so it remains to be seen if that's going to happen.

VO>> Calcavecchia's road to recovery started on January 4th when he had L four L five spinal fusion surgery. A long ten months later his game is coming back around despite dealing with his body's limitations.

VO/OC>> My lower body's a little lazy a little slow uh one of the lessons that Peter Costas and Butch Harmon always taught me was to you know snap the left leg straight clear the hips uh and I think I'm just kind of sliding my lower body through it because my belly and my back aren’t allowing me to clear fast enough uh Rocco said he thought my swing look look pretty good just just kind of slow uh so I need to get some speed back for sure but I think that'll come and it's a little bit hard for me to stay behind the ball like I should uh and I know once I got loosened up of today the last five holes of the pro-am I was able to do that and that's what I need to do in tournaments.

VO>> Mark's most recent win came in 2018 in Boca Raton but ever the competitor he doesn't plan for that to be his last victory Calc believes there is more to do particularly after battling through all of the setbacks.

OC>> I'm only sixty one you know Bernhard has proven to a lot of people Jay Haas lost by a shot last week 67 years old so it's it's doable but uh those guys work really hard at it and uh that's that's what I want to do for the next four five years and then uh ride into the sunset at that point.

VO>> Hey one more thing ever the practice guide Vijay Singh is always working on mastering his craft. Two weeks ago at the Pebble Beach practice facility he received a lesson from a robot more specifically the robo golf pro it's a device that allows golfers to feel their ideal swing. Viji meet robo.

OC>> Just go to the top let me see.

OC>> Yeah right there.

OC>> Well I'm I'm trying to get a big extension so my arm remains the same, If I extend as far out as here then the arc stays the same I don't wanted to go over here. If the arc goes shallower you see what happens to my left arm I don't want it. I want my arm to be straight straight straight straight as much as I can to the top and then the relax this way. I feel like if I do that then I have more chance of not hitting it straighter this way. There you go more lag yeah now go just go to impact and I think if you do that you get a little bit more strat and you can pop the ball a little bit harder. This is a work out kind of like twenty minutes right now somebody is going to start (INAUDIBLE WORDS).

VO>> If Vijay Singh a thirty four time winner on the PGA TOUR is still going to great lengths to improve his game. Is there hope for the rest of us? That will do it for this week's edition of learning center until next time I'm Vince Cellini and we thank you for watching.