HIDEKI MATSUYAMA: There are lot of international players on the PGA TOUR. I would be happy if we could help make more people realize that the Asian players are capable of winning big events.

ANNC: Masters Champion, Hideki Matsuyama.

KEITA NAKAJIMA: I was in the middle of a tournament in Japan, but I remember watching as much as I could and remember feeling very moved by his performance.

TAKUMI KANAYA: When I see the effort he puts in, I feel I need to work even harder.

ISAO AOKI: Matsuyama accomplished something that we were not able to do in the past and he’s opened a door to a whole new world for us now. But just because the door is open doesn’t mean there’s nothing left to do. It’s given this new generation more chances to compete at an even higher level and it’s up to them to continue to do things differently and to want to challenge themselves even more than they ever have before.

**THE JAPANESE CULTURE IS WELL KNOWN AND RESPECTED ACROSS THE WORLD. AND IT’S JUST THAT – RESPECT – WHICH IS AT ITS CORE.**

TAKUMI KANAYA: Respecting your senpai is a big part of the Japanese culture and I feel Japanese learn a lot by watching their seniors’ performance and behavior.

SHIGEKI MARUYAMA: I was inspired to make it to the PGA TOUR because I saw Isao Aoki win the Hawaiian Open when I was a kid. I wanted to be like him. Then, Naomichi Ozaki came along and that made me think I could do it as well. History gets better little by little. At first no one from Japan won on the PGA TOUR. Then we got our first win by a Japanese. Then I became the first to win in mainland U.S. Then Ryuji Imada won.

TAKUMI KANAYA: Recently Hideki Matsuyama has come up big in the U.S. He's now a Masters champion. But before him, we looked up to other Japanese players such as Shigeki Maruyama, Ryuji Imada, and many other Japanese who competed at the highest level in America. All of them motivate us to keep working harder.

**THE “SENPAI” LINEAGE WILL BE INHERENT AT THE 20-22 MASTERS – WITH THE REIGNING CHAMPION BEING JOINED BY TAKUMI KANAYA AND KEITA NAKAJIMA…**

**THE LATTER OF WHICH IS FOLLOWING IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF BOTH OF HIS “SENPAI”, BY WINNING THE ASIA-PACIFIC AMATEUR TO QUALIFY FOR THE MASTERS AS THE TOP RANKED AMATEUR IN THE WORLD.**

KEITA NAKAJIMA: They are my role models, so competing with them in the same tournament and being able to watch and learn from the way they play really motivates me. I also look forward to the day when the coin is flipped and I become the senpai like Hideki and Takumi are to me, and the underclassmen are looking to me as an example.

KEITA NAKAJIMA: It’s my first time following Hideki’s group as a spectator. It amazes me how many fans Hideki really has. I think it would feel so amazing to play in front of a gallery like this.

KEITA NAKAJIMA: Getting yourself in the zone isn’t something you can just do. It is really cool that he can put himself into that kind of mindset.

ANNC: Oh, he’s a hit a beauty here, this is on a good line. Whoa! The shot of the tournament and it comes in a playoff!

KEITA NAKAJIMA: I’m speechless right now. I can’t say anything. I have not words.

KEITA NAKAJIMA: He went into the back nine 5 strokes down, but he never gave up. He didn’t run away. This can only be done by an elite player. I hope one day I can play in a situation like this.

NATS: Thank you. Congratulations.

NATS: Congratulations. Thank you. Thank you, you helped push me.

KEITA NAKAJIMA: I think my seniors are leading the way for us, and within the national team, the generational connections continue to grow even stronger.

NATS: Good morning, Keita. Good morning.

KEITA NAKAJIMA: Through coach Gareth Jones’ leadership, a solid relationship between seniors and juniors is being formed.

NATS: Left shoulder is going down, and then the right shoulder can come around.

**JUST A CONTINENT AWAY – IN ADELAIDE, AUSTRALIA, IS ANOTHER BIG REASON FOR THE SURGE IN JAPANESE GOLF.**

GARETH JONES: There's a real connection between the present and the past in Japan and I embrace that as part of our team culture.

**AN AUSTRALIAN LEADING A JAPANESE TEAM MAY SEEM UNUSUAL – BUT IT’S BEEN PIVOTAL TO THE PROGRAM’S RENEWED SUCCESS.**

JUN NAGASHIMA: When I joined JGA in 2013, I felt the team was lacking in a coaching program.

ANDY YAMANAKA: In the past, it was customary that former players would eventually become the national team coach based on their experience as a player. However, our coaching methods have evolved to finding a coach who has actual coaching qualifications and has studied instructional methods on being a coach. I believe that bringing on these kinds of coaches is a large reason for the recent success of our National Team.

GARETH JONES: I was coaching the men's Australian team at that time. Japan had, for them, a pretty poor championship.

AIJIRO UCHIDA: In 2014 the Australian team won (the World Championship). During that time we surveyed many different country’s teams to research what kind of programs they use and which ones would be a best fit for our team in Japan. Australia and Japan have a long history together and they are one of our closest allies.

GARETH JONES: I wanna find out what the athletes thinking and feeling and really getting them to grow their voice so we can accelerate the learning process. We've had two world number ones in the amateur rankings. That's been a huge focus of ours to try and increase our world amateur rankings in both the men's and the women's.

**IT’S NOT THAT THE SYSTEM DIDN’T PRODUCE GREAT PLAYERS IN THE PAST – AS EVIDENCE OF MATSUYAMA AND AI MIYAZATO…**

**BUT NOW – THE GOAL IS MORE VOLUME…TO ENSURE THE SURGE IN JAPANESE TALENT WILL CONTINUE TO RISE.**

GARETH JONES: Japan's had a lot of great players in the past and in the recent past two we've had Hideki Matsuyama, Satoshi Kodaira. They've been wonderful players and I know that our players are trying to chase them.

SATOSHI KODAIRA: The kids playing on the national team these days are extremely blessed to be in such a great environment. Having the system they have in place now, with an international coach, getting the chance to learn English, it’s completely different from when I was on the team and makes me a little jealous.

NATS: This is a tough one. We have to go low little draw. Right Bunker? Right bunker, yeah.

GARETH JONES: English is really important we think for the Japan team. Particularly if they wanna have an international career. We really felt that having a foreign coach that couldn't speak the language was realy important. It was gonna push the players to have to learn to speak, to communicate.

NATS: 149 to pin, front edge is 134.

GARETH JONES: For players like Keita or Takumi, they're both in the team for seven years or plus, so they've learned to communicate.

JUN NAGASHIMA: Gareth has successfully combined his own essence of coaching golf with Japanese sports science, while also taking Australia’s Western culture and open-minded atmosphere and integrating that into Japan’s Eastern senpai culture and humility, and then individualizing those philosophies down to each individual player. Today’s program transcends nationalities and is borderless between Japan and other countries.

GARETH JONES: As a rule, as a generalization, they have huge work ethics. So they'll hit golf balls all day if you allow that. What I tried to do was bring in a better way of practicing and focusing on areas that are actually gonna give us real performance improvement.

AIJIRO UCHIDA: We evaluate each player. Their physicality, their swing, their mentality, and then we create a program based on the evaluation that best suits the player.

KEITA NAKAJIMA: In the past I would typically rely on my own feels, but it’s much easier for me now to understand what exactly it is that I’m feeling by looking at those numbers and connecting that back to the data.

TAKUMI KANAYA: Playing in America you really feel the importance of being able to hit the ball far. I especially felt that again this past year. If I was able to hit the ball a little further, I would be able to sculpt my game even more to compete at an even higher level in the world.

GARETH JONES: Our Japanese boys that have just joined the team, they've got big footsteps to fill, but I know that they're going to try their hardest to follow their senpai. It's a strong team that continues to come through and golf in Japan is going to be continued to be in a strong place

KEITA NAKAJIMA: Back then there were many senpai that I really looked up to. I was playing among them, but now I am the oldest on the team, and I hope to set a good example for the younger players that follow in my footsteps after I leave.

**WHAT BETTER PLACE TO SET THAT IN MOTION THAN AUGUSTA NATIONAL…WHERE THE EYES OF AN ENTIRE COUNTRY WILL NO LONGER BE ON JUST ONE, BUT A TRIO OF ITS HEROES.**

**AND, POTENTIALLY, EVEN BEYOND TO AN EXPANDED PRESENCE AT THE PRESIDENTS CUP – PERHAPS AS SOON AS SEPTEMBER 2022.**

KEITA NAKAJIMA: I love watching it, and if there is an opportunity for me to play, I'd be extremely grateful. If given the chance to play, I'd give everything I have for the team.

GARETH JONES: Hideki has been a massive influence over all of these players. They feel a great responsibility to try and follow in Hideki footsteps. It's not about telling people what to do, it's about performing and showing this is the way.

TAKUMI KANAYA: Now, following that tradition, it’s important for me to be an example to the young players like Keita that are coming up and watching him play.

ISAO AOKI: When the history books are written about Japanese athletes in the Masters, a new era has begun with Hideki’s win, and I'm sure there will be many more behind him who'd like to follow in Matsuyama's steps. I want each younger generation to establish their own era. I’d love to see multiple great players working together to grow the game.