VO>> PGA Tour champions learning center

VO>> From the heart of Southeastern Conference football country comes a competition also high on passion and talent. The sixth playing of the region's tradition from Greystone golf and Country Club.

OC>> Hello and welcome to learning center I'm Vince Giulini. PGA tour Champions ushering in its first major of the season in Birmingham Alabama with a star studded field. Now it wasn't Auburn versus Alabama in the iron bowl but we did have big hits and a late winning score. Our George Savaricas and Lanny Wadkins called it an offer a recap.

VO>> Thank you Vince. what a final round it was the Steve Stricker show here are at the Region's Tradition at Greystone golf and Country Club. Stricker in full control of his game all week. George Savaricas, Lanny Wadkins final round highlights. Stricker's third to the par five fifth.

VO>> Yeah couldn’t get there in two, lays up to his strong suit, wedge. He hit some quality wedges all week almost holes out one and that's a tap in birdie for Strick.

VO>> So Stricker birdied the second, birdied the fifth to get to nineteen under was looking to save par on six.

VO>> Yeah good save here at six. Good pace with the putt. Got it in the edge. Then comes back at seven misses the green to the right, chips it past and beautiful place the pace gets this putt in the back edge, there it is.

VO>> Par saves on six and seven. Then we’ll go to the back nine after finding some trouble off the tee on the eleventh. this was his third with a wedge in hand.

VO>> You know George he was in control but not without stress and this is probably the most stress. He drove it in the penalty area, hit that wedge and that enabled him to save par at the eleventh.

VO>> Was in the penalty area but his ball was playable so that was another par save on eleven his second now to seventeen from the bunker.

VO>> And that took care of everything good night the party is over.

VO>> Stricker to twenty under but he wasn't done yet. On the par five eighteenth, hit the green in two, two putt birdie. It's a bogey free sixty eight to close out as we get twenty one under par and Lanny for the second time in his career a six shot victory here at the Region's Tradition.

VO>> Yeah he loves this golf course and is played exceptionally well here every time he's been here this is just an outstanding performance by Steve Stricker. Was not without stress buy boy did he handle it well and Padraig Harrington solo second by one shot over that group of players in a tie

for third at fourteen under

VO>> Thank you gentlemen. A look at the Charles Schwab Cup standings post Regions Tradition. Steven Alker continues to lead the top three with Stricker jumping to fourth Padraig Harrington continuing

his fine play and also marches up the standings. But right now more from our winner who's come back from a serious illness is complete with another major championship victory.

VO,OC>> I really don't know what to what to think I mean Nicky was saying to me all the time let's just take two weeks at a time and see where we’re at. that held true we saw a lot of improvement my golf game is kind of secondary you know it's just about trying to get healthier and stronger and I don't even know where I was going to play next I've made a lot of improvements last couple months it was just kind of a wait and see thing.

VO>> What an impressive bounce back to golf for the 55 year old stricker since returning to competition in April. He has never been outside the top 10 In three events and 10 rounds. His second win and the region's tradition makes an eighth overall on PGA TOUR Champions. But more than this, the US Ryder Cup captain is again healthy and making this tour better with his presence. When learning center returns we hear from a pair of elite college football coaches and Kirby smart and Nick Saban, Georgia and Alabama meet again and you'll hear how success on the field can translate into lower scores on the golf course.

VO>> The Regents tradition began last Thursday but for those in attendance Wednesday was can't miss four SEC fans from Georgia coach Kirby smart and Alabama's Nick Saban to Auburn's Charles Barkley and Bo Jackson playing with Arkansas John Daly. It was a star power day made even more special to two brothers.

OC>> I was sitting up there holding the quiet sign and John Daly asked me what club to hit saw I had a five iron he said I'll give you $500 To get this turnover, turnover turnover. I didn't hit the green but he still gave me $500

OC>> Good shot you gotta hate just keep

OC>> That was awesome. And then he gave me his golf ball. So that was really fun. I remember this for rest of my life.

OC>> I don't know what led to it Daly getting him to come but but Daly then took him down to the green to putt.

OC, VO>> He asked me if I wanted to putt it. So I said yes. And I putt it, it was about two feet from the hole and I two putted. And he gave me $500. Charles Barkley said if I two putted he was gonna give me 100 bucks. Pretty cool.

OC>> Yeah, it'll go to Coleman CARE for Kids. We are a food bank in Coleman, Alabama that feeds right around 500 families a month give out about about 40,000 pounds of food a month

OC>> For the kids. I almost cried.

OC>> Also, we work with children who are victims of child abuse that are in the court system, the HR this money will go and feed families and then also help to bring awareness to child abuse and help these kids.

VO>> Well done JD and Sir Charles. It took 41 years but this January University of Georgia Head Football Coach Kirby smart led his team to their first national championship since 1980. Now with spring practice over and a fall camp a few months away. Coach had some time for something else he's passionate about golf.

OC>> Kirby smart is on the tee and on top of the college football mountain as the head coach of the national champion, Georgia Bulldogs. Congratulations once again, Kirby and I imagine life has been just wild. Since you all won it all.

OC>> It's been fast. You get work. You get to working on the next one really quick. So we've been focused on next year but I tell our kids all the time you a lot of Pat's on the back you just realized they can change really quick.

OC>> I would imagine that doesn't leave a lot of time to work on your golf game. I get the old Steve Spurrier model may be obsolete.

OC>> I get to play a little bit so may I don't get to go out recruiting our staff goes out recruiting so I've been to a couple events. Got to play a couple nice courses and we got a lot of really talented UGA golfers like to follow those guys.

OC>> Yeah, I was gonna say if Coach Saban could turn to Justin Thomas, you got Russell Hanley and Bubba Watson and Harris English and all of them could you talk to those guys wherever get some tips?

OC>> Yeah, do I get to visit those guys a lot Chris Hakk our golf coach is real close to those guys. Kisner share a lot of text messages. They were certainly proud. They finally got some bragging rights over JT.

VO>> So what do you work on in your game? If you're coming out here to play in a program? I mean, what's your basic

VO>> Well, I want to put and ship better that's the biggest thing that's where all the scoring goes and try not to embarrass myself on the tee but if I can get decent off the tee I can put in chip maybe get a couple of strokes and help Mark's team out.

OC>> Kirby if SEC football was a major championship and golf, which one of the major championships would would best apply the

OC>> Masters man Augusta. Are you kidding me? The kid asked me that question. Augusta National bar none.

VO>> Kirby Smarts Georgia Bulldogs defeated Nick Saban's Alabama Crimson Tide 33-18 in the college football playoff title game, Saban can still lay claim to seven national championships as a head coach, and it's a championship mindset that he brings to the golf course.

OC>> Well, he is widely recognized as college football's all time greatest coach, even by most Auburn fans, Nick Saban of the Alabama Crimson Tide is with us and coach. You're part of a team sport, but what is it that so appealing about this individual aspect of golf to you?

OC>> Well, but I think even in a team sport, you have sort of an individual aspect of how do you focus on the next play? How do you focus on the next shot? I don't care what you're playing. And I think also sort of Have a great lesson and that that, you know, the next shot is an opportunity to do something you've never done before. And if you can stay focused on that I think it helps players even in team sport to be able to play better.

OC>> Golf is so interesting in that the challenges that it gives you and expectations. I know for Alabama, the expectations every year, a national championship, how do you manage yours with in golf? We're trying to get better?

OC>> Yeah, well, I think that you obviously want to get better everybody wants to play well. But I think it's the same thing. I think when you think about outcomes, which is easy to do in golf, try to make a par, try to make upon the last few holes so I can break 80, that's when you're not focused on the next shot. And that's when you usually make mistakes, put pressure on yourself, create anxiety, which is exactly what you don't want to do when you're competing.

OC>> I know you have a great saying when your players get accolades or compliments, you talk about this a lot. And I wonder if you can elaborate on if you get a compliment in your game that you make sure you don't ingest what you think sometimes the players ingest? Or is it different?

OC>> I don't get many compliments in this game. So I don't have to worry too much about that. But I I do think it's important to understand that success is not a continuum. It's momentary. So to continue to focus on the things that helped you be successful, the habits that you created to be successful, and not get complacent, which, you know, basically, complacency creates a blatant disregard for doing what's right. So then you create bad habits, so then you're not having success anymore. So it's probably more challenging to deal with success than it is to people respond a lot better when they have failures, they're more willing to change, they're more willing to focus. It's an interesting concept to have to deal with.

OC>> Yeah, for the record, Coach always says that players, that's rat poison that they ingest when they get those compliments. So I'm just wondering, in an event like this, or really anytime you play, do you have a basic full swing thought that you go to something that you kind of just rely on to get yourself ready to pull the trigger?

OC, VO>> Well, I, for me, it's, you know, too, how do you take the club back? How do you set the club, I have a lot of issues with alignment. So I'm really kind of not a bad ball striker. But the direction is not always good. And most of it's because I don't line up properly.

OC>> Lastly, it's been kind of talked about here, there may be a side bet, or at least a friendly wager between you and Kirby smart for this particular event.

OC>> I hadn't heard about that. But you know, we welcome all challengers.

VO>> The Region's Tradition pro-am was a special treat for Auburn fans in attendance. As Tigers legend and former Heisman Trophy winner boat Jackson was on hand. His accomplishments make him part man, part myth. He's the only player in history to make an NFL Pro Bowl and Major League Baseball All Star game. Bo was competing again on this 50 and over stage.

OC>> Spending a moment with Vincent Edward Bo Jackson. How long have you known golf? How long is Bo known golf?

OC>> About a dozen years? Yeah, about a dozen years. I'm still working.

OC>> Are you a lesson guy? Or was it like baseball see ball hit ball,

OC>> See ball hit ball run like hell. Now I just get in a car and drive to do it and find it. So it's more of a this this is more of a relaxed thing for me. It's frustrating, but it's relaxing.

OC>> You long better a team sport guy but you're also an individual guy with the bow hunting and now golf Do you Do you like the alone type stuff

OC>> I worked since high school around crowds. Now when I want to have fun, I go by myself.

VO>> What's been the most fun of all the sports that you participate in?

OC>> The ones that I had to learn myself, which has never taken a lesson when I just go out. And I play with guys who play better than me. And I just watch them. And then whenever I watch golf on TV, I don't watch the match. I watch the technique of different players. If I see somebody do something, I'll take that club and go out to the range and try to do it. And that's how I learned

OC>> That competitive edge never goes away.

VO>> No, no the competitive edge never goes away. But this game humbles you to the point to where you can't be anything but patient with it.

VO>> Do yourself a favor, find some Bo Jackson YouTube videos. And then you'll know when learning center returns. We look ahead to the PGA Championship at Southern hills in Tulsa, Oklahoma, where Alex Cjeka will compete after winning on the very same course in last year's KitchenAid Senior PGA Championship.

VO>> The 104th PGA Championship will be played this week at Southern Hills Country Club. The Golf Course has hosted three US opens and with this week's tournament included five PGA championships. Last year it was the venue for the KitchenAid Senior PGA championship won by Alex Cjeka.

VO>> The win was Cjeka's second career victory on PGA TOUR Champions and his second major championship win as well. With the victory, Alex earned a spot in the field this week, and he admits that he's nervous but excited and shares his goal for the week.

OC>> Obviously, to make the cut would be a big, big success already. Although I like the course if I play solid, I have a good strategy for the course of making cut finishing top 40 will be like a great accomplishment for me.

VO>> 31 years ago John Daly won the PGA Championship at crooked stick. The wind grants daily and exemption into the PGA Championship for as long as he wants to compete. Daily is looking forward to teeing it up at Southern hills.

OC>> Being a past champion, it always brings back good memories and to see some of the you know the guys that haven't seen in a while so it's you know, I didn't play all that bad last year. The golf course wasn't quite ready. I didn't think the fairways were a little high for us. We caught a lot of flyers, but it's going to play about six 700 yards longer than what we played it last year, but I like it. And I just want to go back and you know, being a past champion. I kind of earned that right so you never know what could happen in this game.

VO>> Retief Goosen is one of the few who have won a major championship at Southern hills. He won the 2001 US Open there and finished tied for third last year in the KitchenAid Senior PGA Championship. The South African thinks the player who can handle the course is difficult putting surfaces will have the advantage.

OC>> The thing about Southern Hills also is the greens, greens are extreme. There's a number of Greens that you feel like you can pull it off the green very easy. You know the big change I think is 17. That short par four now it was shot before but now with the creek in front of it. It's going to be interesting although it could be a deciding hole that in the championship and 18 is just as tough as always, I don't know they said they flatten that green out a bit in the front but it still doesn't look like it's been flattened any of it but that green when we played the old one was you could put it off green very easy.

VO>> The next event on the PGA TOUR Champions schedule is the KitchenAid Senior PGA Championship and a return trip to Harbor Shores. In 2018 Paul Braudhurst shot a final round 63 part of a huge rally to win his second career champions major. The Englishman is ready for another major championship test.

OC>> Obviously, Benton Harbor just around the corner and probably the one my biggest wins was was there in 2018 and certainly was the best weekend I've ever put it in my life. You know old everything. So that's key. Benton Harbor shot 20 under the last three rounds, and I don't think I've ever done that before and I've certainly haven't done it since so I've never hold some many 40 footers that I did that week. I mean they were rolling in from from everywhere. It was just just one of those weeks, but I always look forward to the majors. I think I see my game a lot more.

VO>> Learning Center will be back in two weeks to wrap up the KitchenAid Senior PGA Championship, and good luck to those competing this week at Southern hills. We leave you now with a portion of PGA Championship contestant John Daly and Birmingham's Taylor Hicks version of knocking on heaven's door. I'm Vince Cellini. Take it easy boys.