VO>> PGA Tour Champions learning center

VO>> PGA Tour Champions is back in the states for the seventeenth playing of the Boeing Classic. The Club at Snoqualmie Ridge, nestled in the Seattle suburbs, was the site of this event and this is how things went on Sunday. The most interesting man in the Seattle area finished strong. Miguel Angel Jimenez entered the final round with a share of the lead but carded a final round five-under 67 to win the Boeing classic and joins Steven Alker and Jerry Kelly as the third three-time winner this season on the PGA Tour Champions. John Swanson and Lanny Wadkins call the action and have a recap.

VO>> All right thank you Vince and what a day it was here outside of Seattle. We’ll take you through the highlights from the champion, Miguel Angel Jimenez, here Lanny. We’ll pick it up at eighth. Third shot from just off the green.

VO>> Yeah, hit a good second one just over the edge, tough little chip shot down the hill. Miguel got it down there for a pretty secure birdie for.

VO>> Birdies at 4, 5, and 8 on the front side. This was the second into the 11th

VO>> Yeah one of the toughest holes on the golf course and this is a really hard hole location. Excellent shot here by Miguel, brings it back off the short fringe and the back to about 10 feet and would make that for birdie three.

VO>> At that point, he was fourteen under and then this for birdie on the very next hole.

VO>> Yeah, nice little shot it in here, and it’s got a little bit of movement, and this is a terrific read by Miguel.

VO>> Tumbling across those poana greens en route to birdie. This was the shot that really salvaged the momentum in the round.

VO>> It was. The one big mistake he made hitting it left of 13 down near the penalty area but played a quality little save, up there close, just wonderful shot. And then the tap in at 18 for a 2-putt par with a triple 7 in the background and his work is done.

VO>> 64-67 weekend for the mechanic. Without a bogey on the scorecard. And he wins by 2 to move to 3rd in the Schwab Cup Standings.

VO>> Yeah and it’s hard to catch Steven Alker right now he keeps finishing top five and either Miguel, you know, or anybody else that’s close is gonna have to put some more wins on the board to get near Alker. He is playing some quality golf and great third win of the year by Jimenez.

VO>> Mark, let’s here from the champion.

OC>> Congratulations Miguel, that was incredible stuff. Obviously, they call you mechanic, you didn’t need a whole lot of mechanic work on your golf game. Twelve-under par on the par fours this week, how did you do that?

OC>> Well uh, I hit them very well all the week, from the first round through today. Hit them solid from the tee to the greens and uh, I make uh- as you said I make only 2 birdies on the Par 5s. And 2 bogeys in the first round. And then that’s it, how about the last 45 holes with no bogeys.

OC>> You can beat these guys without playing the par fives so well. You're now moving up in the Schwab Cup Standings. You finished 3rd twice in your career. How important is it for you to do better than that this year?

OC>> Well, I will try to do my best of course, it is very important for me to win this and the Schwab Cup. No, but we know that Steve Alker is playing very solid, and uh also Jerry Kelly is playing very solid, Padraig Harrington, you know, all of them they are very solid. All the name you have there, you have to have respect for all of them. And uh- I will try to do my best and from here to the end of the year and see what happens.

OC>> Good luck and enjoy that bottle red tonight.

OC>> Thank you, thank you very much

VO>> A check of the Charles Schwab Cup standings and it's an impressive top five. Stephen Alker still leads after finishing fifth at the Boeing Classic. Then it’s Jerry Kelly, Jimenez who won his thirteenth event on this Tour, the always contending Paddy Harrington and Steve Stricker are your top five after the trip west.

VO>> Seattle is where it all began for Steven Alker who came full circle. The Schwab Cup leader made his Tour debut in the 2021 edition of the Boeing classic as a Monday qualifier. Without full playing privileges he proceeded to rattle off six consecutive top ten finishes, earn a spot into the playoffs, finish in the top five in each playoff, event one of those being a win. Well, now he's one of the favorites to take this year’s Schwab Cup. Alker took time to reflect on all that he has accomplished.

VO>> It's kind of hit home of what I actually did, what I’ve done the last year. I saw some stats as well a few weeks ago, like I had some good stats in there you know. So, [OC>>] it’s been so cool, just great to be amongst these guys, so much respect for them. But, at the same time, you gotta try to get out there and beat their asses, you know, that’s the plan. And it’s tough too, these guys are still competitive.

VO>> Steve Stricker made a rare visit to the Seattle area. The last time he recalled playing competitively in that region was when he finished second in the 1998 PGA championship at Sahalee Country Club. A week prior to competing in the Boeing classic, Davis Love III named Stricker as an assistant captain for the U. S. Presidents Cup team. The 2021 U. S. Ryder Cup captain looks forward to pitching in.

VO/OC>> To be a part of the team, again I've said it, since I haven't been able to play on a team, but you'd rather be a player on the team and then the next best thing is to be a captain or assistant captain. So, to be back out there with Davis and the other guys, will be a lot of fun. I look forward to those events and help in any which way I can and coming off a good win last year at Whistling Straits. So, to keep the ball rolling I think is important thing at Presidents Cup and builds that momentum you know going into the next Ryder Cup as well so I think it'll be fun it's important week as well.

VO>> Stricker will join Fred Couples, Webb Simpson, and 2023 U. S. Ryder Cup captain, Zach Johnson, who are all assistants under captain Davis Love III. The top six of the U. S. team will be decided after the BMW Championship and six captain's picks will be announced on August 29th.

VO/OC>> I've been looking at the list and watching the guys playing out there in and the top twelve, fourteen, fifteen guys, you can't really go wrong right? I mean they're all great and we all know Quail’s Hollow, it's a big hitter’s course and so length plays a key role there and I'm sure we'll look for that as, as an attribute of some these guys too.

VO>> Last week, 2019 International Presidents Cup captain, Ernie Els received a $150,000 donation to the Els For Autism Foundation courtesy of Blake Walker, who is the founder and CEO of Arcis golf. The program, which is in place it nearly seventy properties, just called round up for Els for Autism and this simple idea has quickly made an impact. Els discuss just how it's put into action.

VO/OC>> They came up with this initiative that they feel would help. They have a client that comes into the club, he rounds off the check. You know if it's for $47 dollars they go up to $50 dollars or whatever and throughout the year all of this stuff accumulates and there it is.

OC>> Ernie on behalf of Arcis Golf, I’d like to present you this check for a $150,000.

OC>> Unbelievable

VO>> $150,000, I mean that is just an amazing way to raise money. To have a support system like that in our foundation is just so important and it really feels great because as I say Blake’s got a kid with autism, so he knows exactly what we need and what the kids need and that's what our school provides. OC>> So, all in all, a great team effort.

VO>> Darren Clark made his first PGA Tour champions starts since winning the Senior Open at Gleneagles. Prior to that win, the northern Irishman said one of his career goals was to win majors, specifically the Senior Open. Now the Clark has both the Senior Open and the Open on his resume, what's next for Darren?

OC>> I don't know what my goals are right now. I gotta sort of reassess, I know want to win more. Um-but all I ever wanted to do was win those two and um- I’ve been able to do it so, I don’t know, just gonna try to win some more tournaments and win some more senior majors.

VO>>Joe LaCava began caddying for Seattle product Fred Couples in 1990 and was beside him during Couples 1992 Masters victory. Joe currently loops for Tiger Woods.

OC>> What's the bunker up the right? Because I can’t reach it

OC>> 267 for the back left

VO>> Occasionally Fred Couples calls upon Joe's son, Joseph LaCava, to be on his bag. As was the case last week in the Boeing Classic. And stories of pops we're at the ready.

OC>> Okay here's the story, 1992, playing the seventy second hole at Westchester Classic. Playing okay. Pound a drive down the left side, it’s the par five, and it was with the wind I got around the corner but I’m in the rough. 205. I like six, Joe like seven. I like six, Joe like seven. I go with seven. Pound it. Not enough. I know he knows this, but I do this with the seven iron, right by the bag. I go play the hole, make par. We fly all the way across the Pebble Beach, I get on the range Tuesday for a practice round going through my clubs no seven iron. “John what what what where’s my seven iron?” It’s back in the eighteenth fairway where you left it, he tells me. I lost it. I don't know if I laughed at first or if I was livid, but I lost it on him and then I had to laugh because you know I threw it down that's that story. Six, seven- I went with the I went with the professional caddie and I probably to- probably toed it didn't hit it solid from two hundred yards, but I threw it kinda at his feet actually and right yeah and and then you know two days later where's my seven iron? Right where you left it. It's a good story there's a lot of them.

VO>> Fred has certainly seen it all in a marvelous career. Rob Labritz, a rookie, is just getting started and he's loving every minute. We'll have that.

VO>> This week the PGA Tour Champions moves across the country to Endicott, New York for the Dick's Sporting Goods Open at En-Joie Golf Club on the banks of the Susquehanna River. Speaking of New York state, that's where one competitor punched his PGA Tour Champions ticket.

VO>> Earning a weekly spot in a PGA Tour Champions field is no easy task the likelihood of that happening is even more difficult if you've never been a PGA Tour member. Rob Labritz defied those odds last year. The former PGA professional out of the metropolitan section of New York, earned one of five Tour cards for this season as the medalist but now has his sights set on bigger things.

OC>> The ultimate goal was to get here and then now it’s to win senior majors.

VO>> In Labritz five major starts he has two top fifteen finishes, including a tie for fourth in the U. S. Senior Open. But top ten’s are not enough to satisfy the fifty-one year old.

OC>> I have to continue to get better. I've got to continue to work on my short game, continue working my bunker play, continue work my putting, my wedges around the greens, my ball striking. And I don't personally feel like I'm doing great, I'm doing okay, personally my goals are pretty high. I've always had that, it’s kinda been my driving force. Other people tell me I’m doing fine, tour players are telling me I’m doing fine and that means a lot but internally I still feel like I can improve more. You haven’t seen anything yet.

VO>> With majors complete for this year perhaps things will come together for Labritz as the season draws to a close and he has his first taste of the Charles Schwab Cup Playoffs. Always beaming and ever grateful, he is ready to soak it in.

VO>> It means a lot to me I mean, again I'm a guy who's never experienced it, so I don't know what to look forward to I'm just playing golf, I’m traveling, seeing these different golf courses and trying to hone my get my skills and my game so I can hit the ball in the least amount of strokes possible in the hole. It sounds crazy but that's what I'm doing I'm learn from all these legends. There's- it's amazing the wealth of knowledge that's just walking up and down the range and talking to guys that you get. It’s um- it’s pretty special. So uh- I can continue to do this, I keep getting little nuggets and continue to improve

VO>> Labritz says he was initially intimidated playing with former major champions and hall of fame members but due to his good results this season he now feels he is certainly part of the group and we agree.

VO>> Still to come on Learning Center, a tribute to a man who had a huge impact at this week's Dick's Sporting Goods Open

OC>> He is the first guy that always welcomed everybody.

OC>> He greeted all of us.

OC>> He was gregarious.

VO>> Tim Meyers made an impact. Meyers worked at Dick's Sporting Goods for 49 years. In fact, Dick’s founder, Dick Stack hired him when he was just sixteen years old and he never work for another company. Many years later Tim founded the Dick's Sporting Goods Open which debuted in 2007. Sadly, Tim passed away last year but his memory and his legacy lives on in the many lives he touched.

OC>> Every time you saw him in a big cheerful smile on his face. You talk to him about anything.

OC>> Tim was a wonderful man. We played last year in the ProAm.

OC>> He greeted all of us.

OC>> He was gregarious.

OC>> Always kind and caring.

OC>> Just thinking about him makes me smile. You know Tim was a great guy, kind of a gentle giant in a way. Very soft spoken but like I’d do anything for him.

OC>> He loved Endicott, Binghamton, he wanted to support the community.

OC>> Tim was one of those kind of guys to see you across the way, come up and give you a big hug, ask how you were doing, how your family is. He was the first guy that always welcomed everybody. Such a generous, sweet person.

OC>> Tim was a class act. He was a special kind of person. Very caring, very friendly. Ill never forget, he always said hello, always took his time.

OC>> Just someone you wanted to walk up to and talk to you know, always. And I know his friends felt that way I know he was just you know loved dearly by every single one of them and there's a lot of broken hearts floating around.

OC>> Everybody got treated the same, everybody got treated warmly. Everyone was treated as they were important to him. And that was kind of was his legacy.

VO>> What a wonderful tribute and a life, while cut short, that certainly made a difference.

VO>> And that will do it for this week's PGA Tour Champions Learning Center. I’m Vince Cellini as always, we thank you for watching.