Production Transcript for 23INTCUTCH 01 - MITSUBISHI MASTER for VITAC.mp3

[00:00:39] >> And we welcome you to the Kona Coast of the Big Island of Hawaii. What a venue to kick off the 2023 PGA Tour Champions Season here at the Mitsubishi Electric Championship at Hualalai. 16, Michael Allen. One of the sponsors invites here this week, Lanny. He's 5 under par.

[00:00:59] >> Yeah, great play from right there. That was not an easy shot coming through those sprinkler heads and worked out pretty well for Michael.

[00:01:09] >> Very clever indeed. Players will have that option available to them to keep it on the ground from off the surfaces here. Back with you here at the 18th, Tom Lehman looking to cap off his opening round with a birdie. And does. That's a round of 69 for Lehman to kick off the week here.

[00:01:51] >> That ball hits on the downslope and goes over the -- oOh, he got a great bounce off the gallery stake. Look at this for Fred. Heck of a play, Fred. Only Fred can do stuff like that.

[00:02:06] >> Steven Alker is at minus 1. This is for birdie at 8.

[00:02:09] >> Up the slope, moving a little left to right. Oh, yes. Very nice. Boy, he made a boatload of those last year. Steven Alker is a beautiful long putter.

[00:02:26] >> Over to the 9th quickly, and Langer has this one to move to 4-under. Quality iron shot in here by Langer, and he does not miss many of those, and he goes in with perfect pace. He never jams those in. He rolls in so the hole is bigger and receptive to the putt.

[00:02:49] >> All right. To 17, Corey Pavin has a share of the lead at the moment. Minus 5.

[00:02:53] >> Been a long time since Corey's been at the top of the leaderboard, and oh my goodness, he's doing what Corey Pavin used to do. Looks like he's a little surprised by it. This is nice. Where has this been?

[00:03:10] >> Broke a lot of hearts with that club in his hands right there through his PGA Tour winning years.

[00:03:14] >> Yeah. But let me tell you something. He was an outstanding Ryder Cup partner, which I had with that club in your hand. I loved it when he had that club in his hand.

[00:03:23] >> To 16. Mike Weir back up the slope for birdie.

[00:03:29] >> That's a new putter in the bag for Mike Weir. Good start for the year for Mike Weir. I know he's been working very hard. He thinks he ought to be putting more wins on the board out here. He sure is capable.

[00:03:45] >> We'll go back to 11, and Miguel will work from off the green for his third.

[00:03:50] >> He's got great hands, and he plays this. He'll have his feet close together, knees kind of flexed, but this is all hands and forearms for Miguel. Something he's done a million times. A little chip and run. Right at it, just a little hard.

[00:04:17] >> Back at the 17th here with Kevin Sutherland. 18, beg your pardon, and a beautiful shot into the home hole there.

[00:04:28] >> Yeah, good tee shot and lovely second. He's got a terrific look there from underneath the hole.

[00:04:36] >> That for 65, which would be the low recorded round of the day. Back at 13, Langer had four birdies on the front side of the golf course today. Three pars since the turn.

[00:04:50] >> Really not much in this, maybe just outside of the right edge. There you go.

[00:04:59] >> Just enough pace to hold its line. Fifth birdie of the round, Bernhard Langer. Within two of the lead. Saw the approach shot into the 18th from Sutherland earlier.

[00:05:15] >> Inside the left edge, yes sir. Good putt, Kevin.

[00:05:19] >> So Sutherland caches that in. Seven birdies without a lost shot today. A round of 65, the best round of the day. Drop back to 13. Jimenez has this one for birdie.

[00:05:30] >> Should move just to the right at the end. Oh yeah, there it goes. Yes, beautiful putt.

[00:05:39] >> Fourth birdie of the round. Tuck that one away.

[00:05:44] >> Nobody grins and struts like the mechanic. He's a beauty.

[00:05:52] >> 16 here, Lanny. The second shot for Justin Leonard.

[00:05:55] >> Hole location out in the open on the right-hand side. Don't want any part of long though. Good tee shot by Justin. And that's an aggressive play. Beautiful shot there.

[00:06:15] >> Beautiful play.

[00:06:15] >> Yeah, Miguel's got a great set of hands and he plays those shots with so much imagination.

[00:06:23] >> So a birdie bid for Leonard here at 16 now.

[00:06:28] >> That was a better looking stroke than the one he made back earlier. Very nice. That's an excellent birdie there at 16.

[00:06:36] >> Family recently sold their house in Aspen, Colorado, moved to South Florida, the Jupiter area where a lot of PGA Tour players, Champions Tour players have put down roots.

[00:06:56] >> So back-to-back birdie pickups for Jimenez, who has quickly moved it to 6-under. Back with Ernie here.

[00:07:05] >> Get to watch Ernie play a shot here, Mark.

[00:07:07] >> That's right. 141 yards. You'd think this might come in a little lower. You just got to be careful. That back bunker that's only 12 feet past this hole is a no-no.

[00:07:15] >> Well, he had it choked up a little bit. And here again, he cut the follow through off trying to do something with it.

[00:07:21] >> Gorgeous.

[00:07:29] >> First little tester that Leonard has faced today. This is to keep the scorecard clean.

[00:07:33] >> A lot going on out here at 17 too with Ocean North there behind. Keep your concentration. He did. That was dead center. That looked nice. Good nerves.

[00:07:45] >> Of course, he's just a youngster.

[00:07:47] >> A fresh-faced rookie at 50. And one back the lead as he hits the home hole in a moment.

[00:08:00] >> Just a short one for Ernie at 16. If your putter ails you, I guess you could just hit it closer. There it is.

[00:08:06] >> That's what he did. Finally found his range.

[00:08:16] >> We'll go to the home hole. This for birdie and a round of 65.

[00:08:30] >> Did he hit this hard enough? Pretty good effort and good start to his year, really. Not just his week, but his year. This is something to build on for Justin. Get a taste of shooting a little round, being in the mix. Saying, ooh, I remember those feelings. I like it.

[00:08:45] >> That'll be a round of 66, positioning Justin Leonard a shot off the lead. Sutherland and Clarke in with rounds of 65. Three players there. One back at the moment. Freddie's come backer here for par at 17. That is 32 putts through 17 holes. You're right, Lanny. There's a little hitch in the giddy up there. This is Alex Cejka tossing one into the 18th.

[00:09:19] >> Good tee shot. Just wedge left in here and he takes advantage of it. Nice shot by Alex. Has it near about six feet.

[00:09:36] >> Seen a lot of curious reactions from players after missing the putt from the range where Stricker just did, Mark. And some work yet to do here.

[00:09:42] >> Yeah, a little right to left. What a scene, though. I'm looking right back at Steve into the setting sun. It is just gorgeous. Steve will enjoy it more if this rolls in. Go ahead and call it a day, Mark. Just plop down. Lanny and I will bring it to the house.

[00:10:10] >> This is a clean birdie look for Alex Cejka at 18.

[00:10:12] >> Yeah, just outside the left edge. Gotta go a little left to right. Perfect.

[00:10:20] >> Seven birdies on the day. One drop shot at the 9th. And Cejka will sign for 66. And he's in the house one off the pace. And Kelly just cleaning this one up. So the last group exits the 17th.

[00:10:38] >> Jerry Kelly made a bad bogey at the 10th. That hole that everybody was birdieing.

[00:10:46] >> Els to cap off the day with a birdie here. Good look here for Ernie. Just outside the right edge. Did he hit it? Yes, he did. Great round by the big man. That's some score for a guy who's been under the weather for the last, seems like, month for him.

[00:11:03] >> Scoring was very good, Lanny, for the most part. We thought someone may even get to 8 by the end of the day. But Southerland and Clarke with the best efforts of this season.

[00:11:11] >> Yeah, I really never had any wind today, Swanee. But I think the hole locations were pretty difficult. We saw a good example at 17. Only one birdie there today.

[00:11:22] >> Last group is navigating the 18th as we speak. Jerry Kelly, Steve Stricker and Stephen Alker, who swept all the awards earlier this week at the Champions Dinner. Which was a great way to kick off the first week of the season on OGA Tour Champions. First of 25 regular season events. 42 players here at Hualalai, hosting this season opener for the 26th consecutive year. So it's Southerland and Clarke at the top. Ernie Els, who we saw extensively today, along with four others, is a shot off the lead at 6 under par. Aloha from the Big Island. Another sun splash day with very little wind and an immaculate golf course that is under duress right now. It is a day for low scoring here at Hualalai.

[00:12:22] >> Justin Leonard here at the 9th.

[00:12:33] >> Took this up there a little higher than I thought. Really well done.

[00:12:37] >> Yeah, that was really, really solid to carry that thing all the way to that flag.

[00:12:46] >> Check back in on Stricker here at the 12th. This one for Birdie to get to 12-under.

[00:12:52] >> Steve Stricker has made a career out of making these. Just like that.

[00:13:03] >> Go ahead and count it. It's a shockingly high putt total for Stricker yesterday of 31. But just 16 required through the opening dozen holes today. So back to the 9th. And this will be the third opportunity in the group for birdie.

[00:13:25] >> This one should just be right center, three and a half feet.

[00:13:29] >> He's got it set up about maybe right edge. That's where he hit it. That thing dove left. It's a good thing he had it at least out to the edge. That snapped left on him. It's in now.

[00:13:49] >> This is a longer birdie putt than Stricker had in mind here at 13.

[00:13:52] >> Yeah, probably 40 feet across the green. No problem though. Wow.

[00:13:59] >> Nine of them on the day. Stricker on the march at 13-under.

[00:14:03] >> Difference is irrelevant to Steve when he's got that putter going.

[00:14:06] >> Course record of 61 could be in jeopardy.

[00:14:10] >> Held by a man who may have been as good a putter as Steve Stricker, Lauren Roberts. He made most of the most, made everything.

[00:14:28] >> 17th playing 150 yards today. Jerry Kelly with a 7 under par round working, he's three shots off the lead.

[00:14:37] >> Great shot. Played a little undercut. Kelly can play some shots. Tough hole location. Right against that bunker. Most of the players staying a little left. Understandable. Not Jerry. He goes right. Beautiful play. That was really well done. Just play a little undercut. Great shot there for Jerry Kelly.

[00:15:01] >> So Kelly freezes one here at 17.

[00:15:05] >> Yeah, that was spectacular.

[00:15:08] >> To 12.

[00:15:11] >> Ernie trying to launch it way up in the air. Get it to stop close. He did. He might have made it. Oh, I thought Stricker's shot was as good as we'd see here today. What a great shot by Ernie Els.

[00:15:30] >> A spectacular delivery from Els.

[00:15:32] >> He has played some unbelievably great iron shots these last couple of days, John. He really has.

[00:15:40] >> Quickly to 17 after that fabulous tee shot of Jerry Kelly. Cashes that one in for birdie. Only one birdie made at 17 yesterday. Tightly tucked hole location over the bunker today. Kelly accessed it.

[00:16:04] >> Check in on the leader here. Steve Stricker with 10 birdies today. Has waged an all-out assault on Hualalai Golf Course. 24 of 25 fairways for Stricker.

[00:16:24] >> Yeah, he likes it a high draw. That may be good. Oh yeah, there it goes right down to the hole. Works that way.

[00:16:38] >> We'll go to 13. This is a pretty clean birdie look here for Darren Clarke to get to 13 under.

[00:16:43] >> He's usually a pretty bold putter. That's what you need to hold it on line here.

[00:16:55] >> Bang, just like that. Clarke connects. He's at 13-under. Reigning Senior Open Champion and the winner here in 2021.

[00:17:04] >> And the good thing is he's keeping Stricker in his sights. I mean, he's staying in touch.

[00:17:15] >> Ken Tanigawa had this for birdie at 16. Tanigawa in the conversation at 10 under par. A 6 under par day in the works for Tanigawa. And another brilliant iron shot from Stricker here at 15.

[00:17:34] >> Yeah, this is the one right here. This one goes in and, you know, all bets are off on what the final score could be. Just like that.

[00:17:45] >> Birdie number 11.

[00:17:47] >> This is fun to watch. Look at this. I've never seen so many circles on a card. Wow.

[00:17:53] >> Remember, 11-under 61 from Lauren Roberts. That's the course record. That could go down today. We also may see the second official round of 59 in PGA TOUR Champions history. And back at 14. Cejka on a little bit of a heater. This for four in a five-hole stretch to get him to 12-under. Likes to leave that flag stick in, even on the short ones. And rattles that one in. So Cejka on the move and in the hunt. Tanigawa from long range for Birdie at 17.

[00:18:31] >> Yeah, a good 45, 50 feet for Ken Tanigawa coming across the screen. Going to move left to right at the end. Oh, yes.

[00:18:39] >> Hello.

[00:18:39] >> Kenny's got it going in from everywhere.

[00:18:44] >> Four birdies in a five-hole stretch for Tanigawa, making a little bump up the board onto the first page here. As we go to 18 here, Mark.

[00:18:58] >> Strick's going to have 140 yards. It's very calm right now.

[00:19:02] >> Make it a little easier to turn over. A little more spin.

[00:19:07] >> That was a full swing.

[00:19:13] >> Pretty well done underneath the hole. He's got an uphill look from maybe 12 feet.

[00:19:19] >> That for a tournament scoring record of 60, if he can hole it. And Clarke had a chance back at 14, let the par-5 slip by. And another look here for birdie at 15.

[00:19:34] >> He did. He actually hit it over the green in the bunker at 14. But this is a pretty simple look here for Clarke. He's just straight up the gut. Got to be firm with this.

[00:19:46] >> With a lot less fanfare and attention right now than Stricker had, Darren Clarke just quietly going about his business. He's 7-under for the round.

[00:19:56] >> Got to go a little bit to the right, doesn't it, Lanny?

[00:19:58] >> Maybe just a skosh. Haven't seen a lot of putts from here. But, you know, I'm not sure it has much movement. I think he can keep it in the hole if he hits it firm. So we'll see. I think he really wants to give this a good run up the slope.

[00:20:18] >> For a tournament scoring record of 60.

[00:20:31] >> Oh, just absolutely poured it right in the middle. That was gorgeous.

[00:20:36] >> What a finish. What a day for Steve Stricker. Stricker in at 16-under. And Cejka has this one for birdie.

[00:20:52] >> Really nice shot in here by Cejka.

[00:21:01] >> And Cejka to 13-under. He's picked up, as you see, five birdies since the turn. Seven on the round.

[00:21:09] >> To 17. Kevin Sutherland.

[00:21:12] >> Wind freshening here, John. 150 yards.

[00:21:15] >> This one right at it.

[00:21:18] >> Go in. Go in.

[00:21:21] >> Oh, it had a little peek.

[00:21:23] >> That was good begging because that was a great shot. He just took it straight at that hole. Really nice play.

[00:21:29] >> Cejka firing one into the 18th.

[00:21:34] >> Oh, great shot by Cejka. He's going to get within two now.

[00:21:40] >> That's looking like it's going to be a 64 for Alex.

[00:21:42] >> Yeah, and he's going to be playing. Gets to stare the guy down he's chasing tomorrow, which I'd love to be in that position. I'm never surprised when Kevin Sutherland's near the top of the leaderboard. He can really play. Got that too wide. It would be a disappointing par.

[00:22:07] >> Stricker threatened to break 60 today, but Kevin Sutherland remains the only man to do it out here in an official capacity. Mike Weir will have the next look at a birdie here. So in Weir and Leonard, you've got a couple of brand names, guys who have won major championships, guys who will have some attention out here, some expectations out here to make an impact early in their Champions Tour career.

[00:22:35] >> Good putt there by Mike Weir. Just because Bernhard Langer makes it look easy does not mean it is.

[00:22:46] >> And what a day for Alex Cejka. That's going to be an 8 under par round of 64 with 17-year-old Kevin Yamashita on the bag for him. His home course is right here at Hualalai. Steve Stricker, who's 60, has him atop the leaderboard and has him as the owner of the lowest ever round recorded here at the Hualalai Golf Course.

[00:23:22] >> The PGA Tour champions debut event of the season. Before the curtain drops, we'll crown our first champion of the year here at Hualalai.

[00:23:34] >> 80 degrees with little wind and lots of sun, but it pales in comparison to other cooler climes around the United States. Great to be in the 50th state here this week, where Steve Stricker delivered a round of 60 yesterday to surge up the leaderboard and position himself in the final group of the day. Mike Weir, former Masters champion, and the rest of the chasers trying to run Stricker down as he plays the 7th hole currently. Miguel Angel Jimenez is the defending champion and three-time winner here. Saw the name Fred Couples at minus-10. He began the week with a 74 and has brought it back to get inside the top 10 here. 42 players comprising the field here in the opening event of the season. Stricker in the final group of the day here, Lanny, and this was the tee shot of Stricker that went awry at the 7th a little while ago.

[00:24:29] >> Yeah. This is just a toe hook 20, and it ends up bounding over into the lava. I don't think he thought it was going to get that far when he hit it, but it did, and it resulted in an unplayable lie.

[00:24:41] >> And mind you, it came off a short birdie miss back at the 6th as well, and no way that was playable, so he had to play his third at the par-5.

[00:24:51] >> Took a drop and kind of conservative play here. Did not take a run at the green, just put it in position up the front. Got to rely on that excellent wedge game that he possesses. Just a nice shot, good play here by Strick.

[00:25:06] >> And he pitched that patented little 10-arm shot in there pretty effectively here.

[00:25:09] >> Yeah, and it's great contact. You can hear the sound, really a nice strike there by Steve Stricker. Gets it in there about four feet right behind the hole.

[00:25:23] >> And now with a chance to escape with a par here.

[00:25:26] >> Yeah, this would be like stealing here if he can get this one. Oh, man, there you go. No harm, no foul. Wow.

[00:25:37] >> Three quick birdies in the opening quartet of holes, and he's just kind of held it together since then, so the lead remains two for the moment. Cejka's up first here, Mark.

[00:25:50] >> 164 yards, and that hole location is a sitting duck out there in the middle of the green.

[00:25:55] >> Yeah, some easier hole locations today, Mark.

[00:25:58] >> This one headed a little right of the hole. I think he'll take it, though.

[00:26:03] >> Yeah, that was an excellent play. He's got a simple look, not hardly any movement at all there for Alex on that 12-footer. Back at 10 here, and Weir with a little more left for birdie than he bargained for. Not a really good putt by Weir.

[00:26:25] >> I would think he'd want to give the eagle a run, you know, being two back.

[00:26:31] >> He's been plagued by short misses, as we've mentioned, and the ones that he has hold have not gone in with great authority, mind you.

[00:26:41] >> And that's just well done. Very nice.

[00:26:44] >> Step on the tee here at the 10. Four is the highest score you have in mind, so Weir gets the job done, picks one up to move to 17-under, back within two. Quickly out to the 8th, second shot here for Stricker.

[00:27:02] >> Not a lot of green to work with, tight lie. This is where he excels, though.

[00:27:06] >> Depends on the catch. It was excellent, and that's just a great play by Stricker. And back with Cejka here at 9 now.

[00:27:19] >> And Cejka's been a very fast finisher on this golf course yesterday, so look out for him, especially if he can roll this one in. But he got the teach from Darren.

[00:27:28] >> Good stroke right there, right in the center. Did not have any movement at all, just right downtown for Cejka.

[00:27:38] >> Gleaned a little information from the Clarke putt. Put it to work.

[00:27:42] >> Gets him within three. He's staying in touch.

[00:27:47] >> Darren Clarke had to lay it up at the 10th, and while we were away, this was his third shot.

[00:27:51] >> 86-yard swan, and this one going right at it.

[00:27:58] >> Nice shot there by Darren right underneath the flag.

[00:28:06] >> Justin Leonard needs the flat stick to warm up a little bit. This is at 12 for Birdie. There you go. Had a lot of really good chances that kind of slipped through his grasp, but catches one in from some range there. Leonard at 11-under. Just his fifth start out here. A couple of equal chances for Stricker, then Cejka here.

[00:28:31] >> 45 feet for Steve, kind of back up the hill and should break, I would say, only a couple feet right to left.

[00:28:39] >> It will, but when he gets around the cup, it's going to flatten out a little bit, I believe. He didn't hit it. We'll never know. Right on track. Good putt. Nice read.

[00:28:53] >> Had an easy tap in, netting Stricker his fourth Birdie of the round. This at 11. Tanigawa looking to get to 17-under. Pretty good look here for Kenny. Oh, and he buries it. Great putt. 6 under par round working for Tanigawa, trying to keep his name in the conversation here. He's three back of Stricker. Stricker will make birdie easily. Birdied the 4th, but not the par-5 7th, and grabs one here and pushes it to 20-under. And back at 12 with Weir here.

[00:29:49] >> Good three and a half feet there, and that's well done for Mike. That was a nice stroke. Pretty good looking pass right there. Yes, it was, and that's an excellent shot right underneath the flag there for Stricker.

[00:30:07] >> Stricker looks as though he's got things locked back in over the last couple of holes.

[00:30:16] >> And here's Bernhard Langer. Tee shot at the 12th here.

[00:30:20] >> 12th, 168 downhill downwind. Hole location on the right, and Langer goes right after it. Gorgeous shot by Bernhard. Really nice.

[00:30:30] >> That's to get to 12-under on a golf course that he has conquered three times along the road to 44 victories. Taylor Winn's mark is safe for at least another week. And an opportunity for Stricker to provide a little separation here, Mark.

[00:30:52] >> Yeah, a lot of guys have been saying it's been tough to kind of read these greens, a lot of subtleties.

[00:30:57] >> I think this is in the hole with the right speed. That turned all the way across the hole. He started that kind of right center. Well, there you go. All the way across the hole.

[00:31:18] >> Beautiful shot into the par-3 12th for Bernhard Langer. Looking to cash this one in here.

[00:31:24] >> Doesn't usually have any issues with these. Still doesn't seem to have any. Pretty automatic there for Langer.

[00:31:34] >> Back to 1-under for the round. And Cejka stepping in here at the par-3, Mark.

[00:31:40] >> 168 yards, plays about four yards downhill on that northwest breeze. Very gentle, but left to right.

[00:31:50] >> The hole location is out in the open, but there's a lot of trouble all around it. Cejka took it almost straight at the flag, and that's an excellent play.

[00:32:03] >> Fred Couples looking to cap off the week with a birdie here at 18.

[00:32:06] >> Maybe just outside the left edge for Fred. He's got to eek a little right.

[00:32:10] >> Yeah, do it.

[00:32:11] >> Oh, he had it. He just didn't hit it.

[00:32:14] >> We haven't seen Fred in competition since the 60 on the final day to lock down the SAAS Championship a year ago, offering one of the best stories of the season. To 13. Tee shot of Tanigawa.

[00:32:36] >> Kenny can take those bunkers down the right-hand side out of play, but I would think he would still stay a little bit left. Oh, no, he doesn't. He goes right over those bunkers, and that is deep. He might even be too close to the green right there. Going to have to be a little bit on the down slope coming over the bunker. It's a wedge shot, but not an easy one.

[00:32:57] >> Well, this is not going to help pace of play, is it?

[00:33:00] >> Picture of Langer.

[00:33:14] >> Good look for Clarke here, Mark.

[00:33:15] >> Yeah, this reminds me a little more like TPC San Antonio, but a good look, about eight feet. And Darren Clarke dabbles a little bit with golf course design as well. He's been part of four different courses. I wonder if he's got a bunker in the middle of the green. He's got a two at 12, though.

[00:33:28] >> Yes, he does. And he's got his first birdie since the 7th, and a reaction of exasperation for Darren. Could use a few more, but quickly running out of holes.

[00:33:45] >> Yeah, this is a tough little wedge shot for Tanigawa. He pulls it off. That is excellent. Really, really nice play by Kenny there off a little bit of a down slope, getting it to stop in there tight. About three and a half feet here for Stricker, Mark.

[00:34:02] >> Yeah, it should be left center, I'd say, and obviously that kind of customary way that he sets that blade. A little bit of the heel off the ground really keeps that face from rotating a lot, makes these short ones a little easier.

[00:34:17] >> No problem. Rock steady. The lead remains three for the moment, pending the outcome of the Tanigawa birdie putt coming up at 13. Eagles at the 4th and 7th for Ken Tanigawa. Birdies at 10 and 11. Looking for more here to get to 18-under.

[00:34:41] >> Yeah, this look right here, just about four feet. Kenny needs to get this one down, then take advantage of the par-5 coming up. He does. Look out. You know he's got the firepower to get to 14 easily.

[00:34:58] >> Steadily plotting his way up the leaderboard. Tanigawa within two.

[00:35:03] >> He looks pretty chill out there.

[00:35:09] >> Cejka at 13.

[00:35:10] >> From 103 yards, target practice for Alex.

[00:35:14] >> Oh, that's what you're supposed to be doing.

[00:35:24] >> Meanwhile, up ahead, we're looking to get it to 17-under. Bounces back from the drop shot at 13. And within three at the moment. Back with our leader now.

[00:35:43] >> Really easy one to get to the hole. Swanee, it's got just a little right to left, I believe, in that 12-foot range. And he knows Alex is in there. Alex is about 12 inches, so that's good.

[00:36:01] >> It's got a turn. Yes, it does.

[00:36:06] >> Alex Cejka must be thinking, what do I have to do to put the heat on this guy?

[00:36:10] >> Stricker's playing very nice. He stayed aggressive today. He's hit a lot of quality shots when he's needed to.

[00:36:19] >> For now, we'll go to 17. Stephen Alker for his fifth birdie of the back nine. Most inviting hole location of the week today at 17. Darren Clarke will work from the bunker here at 14.

[00:36:41] >> Really nice flat lie. Plenty of green to work with. Darren's already lipped out one bunker shot today. Planned this to be pretty good.

[00:36:55] >> Another good bunker shot by Clarke. He makes it look pretty easy.

[00:37:15] >> I don't think he hit it. He's not exactly pleased with that. I think it worked better than he thought. That was a lot going on there for that.

[00:37:27] >> Yeah, that one stretched to just about hole high or so. Well, it's been a heck of a week for Alex Cejka. What an experience for his caddie as well. He's a 17-year-old, Kevin Yamashita. There's Kevin, who's the reigning Hawaii State Junior Golf Champion in the 17- to 18-year-old division. His home course is here at Hualalai. He's also the valedictorian of his high school class in the area with a 4.4 GPA. Now Stricker's opportunity here, Mark.

[00:37:58] >> You got to watch Alex's kind of bend so much to the left there. Certainly see this miss probably on the high side, if anything. Just creeping back towards the hole at the end.

[00:38:09] >> I think he's looking to get the pace correct here. And very little stress for the second putt. How about this?

[00:38:14] >> Hole it.

[00:38:14] >> That takes care of business.

[00:38:19] >> Well, that may have been the hammer when it's all said and done. An eagle at 14 for Stricker, sending him to 23-under.

[00:38:27] >> And it went in absolutely perfect pace. Last roll goes in. Was never going to be an issue for him. This is some performance with the lead.

[00:38:39] >> And Cejka looking to pick one up here and does. That in for birdie to move to 19-under.

[00:38:45] >> Yeah, makes a birdie and loses ground. And then with Tanigawa in the bunker and not a good place at 15. This could -- it's starting to look easier and easier coming down the stretch for Steve Stricker. Now this for birdie at 14 for Darren Clarke.

[00:39:12] >> Clarke and Cejka both make birdie and both fall a shot further adrift of the pace. Miguel Angel Jimenez finishing up his title defense here.

[00:39:30] >> Pretty good look here at 18 back up the slope. Nice putt.

[00:39:36] >> 66 for Miguel and will tuck that score away for the week. Was bidding to win here for the fourth time, as was Langer to begin the week. Cejka, a lot of work remaining here at 15 for par.

[00:39:58] >> He took a huge risk and then didn't make a good swing, but this is a great save.

[00:40:02] >> That's an unbelievable save there by Cejka.

[00:40:09] >> At this point in time, Mark, it's kind of like he's got his own tournament he wants to win, and that's the one for second place.

[00:40:15] >> Steven Alker looking to finish with a flourish. This for his sixth birdie of the back nine here. That is 30 coming in for 63. A man who swept the Nicklaus, Palmer, and Nelson awards.

[00:40:40] >> I think this is actually going to be one of the few putts that's going to have some serious movement. Maybe at least a cup out on the left for him. Oh, it stayed there. Boy, what a good putt. Halfway there, I thought he had buried it.

[00:41:05] >> Well, he broke Lauren Roberts' 18-hole scoring record yesterday with that 60. Up ahead, just off the 18th green, Mike Weir for a closing birdie. Certainly one of the notable names out here, is a former Masters champion, an eight-time winner on the PGA Tour that fans and fellow players would expect is going to make an impact. And a 66 on the final day for the Canadian. 17 under par, good for a share of third place right now with Stricker in command by five.

[00:42:00] >> Pretty good look here for Darren, just right up the slope, not much in it. Oh, yeah, bang.

[00:42:11] >> Clarke grabs one here at 17. So he's at 17-under. Tanigawa at 18-under, remember, is in the bunker at 18. So four players currently at 17 tied for third. We'll see how this all shakes out in a little while.

[00:42:34] >> Yeah, Strick just about a foot or so and move on and get to gets to play 18 with a big old grin on his face.

[00:42:46] >> Bogeyed the 5th hole of the opening round back on Thursday and said, well, that's enough of that. Has not dropped a shot since then. Tanigawa trying to save his par up ahead after a less than stellar bunker shot.

[00:43:00] >> And he comes up short.

[00:43:02] >> Bogeys at 15 and 18 for Tanigawa, who was sizzling at one point, was 8-under through 14 holes, but staggers to the tape.

[00:43:57] >> Hey, Mark, Steve and Mario are grinding on this like they're protecting a one-shot lead. That is a testament to how this man goes about his business out here.

[00:44:03] >> It's the same routine that they employed back in the first round on the 1st hole. I love this stuff. And I think right now, though, in his mind. Yeah, it's sitting down just this old divot that's grown back.

[00:44:23] >> Yeah, everything's good here. There's no stress. Just staying in his routine. He wants to finish in style. You know, make a good swing. Nothing sloppy to finish on the green.

[00:44:32] >> Yeah.

[00:44:32] >> After this shot, then you can really enjoy it.

[00:44:34] >> Yeah, there's something about the uncertainty and kind of maybe late in the front nine. But now there's definite certainty who's going to be hoisting this trophy. Another smart shot off the left side of the green.

[00:44:48] >> Well done, Hawaii. Uphill putt. Exactly what you're looking for. This has been a marvelous performance by Steve Stricker. Came out here with a good lead and a bogey-free day to this point. 7-under for the round. They just had a big grin and handshake right there. They know it's all said and done.

[00:45:10] >> Now Clarke converted the 18th, as he did yesterday, for a runner-up finish.

[00:45:13] >> 103 yards. Hole's out there like a sitting duck once again.

[00:45:19] >> Darren Clarke looking to win his tournament, which would be second place. Great shot. That's an expensive putt he's got coming up. Second by yourself or a four-way tie.

[00:45:40] >> Cejka just skirted the bunkers there, so just a little flip with the scoring club on the way.

[00:45:45] >> You know, the heartbeat's up a little bit after what's happened in the last 30 minutes or so, and it would mean a lot to get one closing birdie. That's from 93 yards for Alex. If he makes birdie here and Clarke misses, he can still get a share of second, which would end up being, what, a four- or five-way tie for second.

[00:46:11] >> So Steve Stricker just about to put the finishing touches on the win out here. We would love to see more of him, of course. Golf fans would. All of us would. He's such a force competitively when he plays. He's such a great ambassador for the game and this tour. But we can't say he doesn't capitalize on his opportunities when he plays. This will be the 12th win in 48 starts for Stricker. That's a winning percentage of 25%, the best in the history of the Champions Tour of any player with 10 or more wins.

[00:46:41] >> Yeah, there's no question when he comes out here, he is really ready to play, and that's a hallmark of a champion, and Steve Stricker is definitely that. It's fun to watch him play, fun to see the way he goes about his business, and I really enjoy watching him stay in control of what he's doing. Playing the shots, he knows he can play. He drives it. He's sneaky long, and, boy, is he fun to watch putting.

[00:47:06] >> When he shot that 60 yesterday, he spoke with Mark after the round, and he had an ear-to-ear grin. He was more than satisfied with the effort, but then quickly he shifted his focus to the very next day and knew there was business at hand to tend to today, and there was no letup. The foot was on the gas throughout the round. It was a little stretch late in the opening nine where things got squirrely, but he got through the day unscathed and has made just one bogey on the week, none during the final round. And we'll patrol this one from all angles and go through the process once more.

[00:48:15] >> Great look down at 18, just nice little finishing hole, kind of a fun hole to play. A lot of things can happen here. A lot of things have happened here over the years, birdies to win, bogeys to lose, all kinds of things. Steve Stricker has played it very nicely with a big lead, smart tee shot, smart second. Now just an uphill look from about 30, 35 feet and not much in this putt.

[00:48:44] >> Birdied the 18th yesterday for his career low round out here of 60. Can he do it once more to cap off a spectacular week? That will more than get the job done. Steve will spot that one and let Cejka and Clarke do their thing before tapping in for the title. Cejka has a chance to salvage a little something perhaps after slip-ups at 16 and 17, dropping three shots there.

[00:49:30] >> Birdie would be big here for Alex, getting back to 17 and at worst in a tie for third, maybe as much as a tie for second if he can make birdie here and Clarke does not make his putt. Felt this putt hard to read at times. It's right up on kind of a little knoll on the right-hand side of the green. Think he goes a hair right at the end. Just not very aggressive.

[00:50:16] >> That's a disappointing finish for Alex Cejka. Fine week. Entire body of work was pretty productive, but 70 is going to leave him having wanted a little bit more out of it.

[00:50:36] >> Well, that sets the stage for Darren Clarke looking to get in at 18-under. Birdie the home hole for the second straight day. The victory coronation and celebration is on deck. This for second place by himself for Darren Clarke. All of a sudden, the birdie at 17 has put him right in the middle of this and pretty simple look here. I want to say it's like right center. Little uphill.

[00:51:08] >> If not, it would be a five-way tie for second.

[00:51:12] >> Oh, it turned left on him. Thought it might go a little bit. Could have used a little bit more speed. One of five players at 17-under par, final round 68 for Darren Clarke. And it was a record-breaking Friday, followed by a sensational Saturday for Steve Stricker, who takes the season opener and wins the Mitsubishi Electric Championship at Hualalai. Victory hug from his brother-in-law, Mario Tiziani. It is always a family affair with the Strickers. His wife Nikki caddies for him frequently out here. It was an emphatic round of 65 to close it out and lock it down for Steve Stricker, who wins by six.