**2023 PGA TOUR CHAMPIONS LEARNING CENTER SHOW #3**

VO > PGA Tour Champions Learning Center.

VO > At 36 consecutive years of play. The Chubb Classic in Naples, Florida, is the longest running tournament in one market in PGA Tour champions history. It also marked the tour's season debut in the continental U.S. and first full field event of 2023.

VO > And there we witnessed history made on PGA Tour Champions. Bernhard Langer matched his age on Sunday with a bogey free seven under par 65 to not only win a record fifth Chubb Classic, to not only again become the oldest winner of this tour, but to pull even with Hale Irwin for the all time win mark of 45 victories. Langer's relentless pursuit of the record has been astonishing, to play at this level while fending off challenges of players 15 years younger. Our Bob Poppa and World Golf Hall of Fame member Lanny Watkins called the action and bring us a recap.

VO > Well, thank you, Vince. It's a record tying week here at the Chubb Classic with Bernhard Langer getting a career win number 45 and some of the highlights on the final round. It's not as if they didn't give Langer a run for his money. Dicky Pride, some fireworks at the par 3 10th. Dicky Pride played the front nine one under but then makes this ace. It was the second ace of the day. Chris DiMarco had one earlier at the fourth 13th in tournament history and that got Dickey proud to 12 under and right in the mix. Steve Stricker trying to win in his fourth consecutive start on the PGA Tour champions. And Strick had it going one out in 32 and throwing darts, setting up birdie opportunities for Stricker. Then Stricker had this putt for Eagle to post 15 under just not enough pace. Steve would shoot a bogey free 66 and post 14 under. Padraig Harrington made a run. In fact, he had the lead at the turn at 13 under par but made a big mistake at 14 rolls in this eagle at 18 to match stricker at 14 under. But Bernhard Langer just steady as he went. This birdie putt at the 12th got Langer just 13 under par kind of feeling the energy and an opportunity to win. Then Langer had a good look at Birdie at 13. It didn't fall but then rolls this in at 14 and that got Langer to 14 under. Then his third par 5 15th, using that little upslope, catching the ridge, the ball feeding down towards the hole. And Langer would set himself up for another birdie opportunity at 15. And that would get Langer to 15 under. And then the difficult 17th. There only been one birdie all day at 17 that by Alex Cejka until Langer showed up rolls that in. That got him to 16 under par. And then lager with his winning putt a birdie at 18 and a bogey free 65 to post 17 under, win the Chubb Classic for the fifth time. And Bernhard Langer has tied Hale Irwin for the most wins in PGA Tour champions history as he picks up career victory number 45. And for Langer, his 12th win since turning 60.

VO > And afterwards, Langer talked about the win and the record.

OC VO > Well, it's extremely especially with because we've been talking about it for so long, it seems now. And, you know, when I first came out here, I thought this is never going to happen. When I heard Hale Irwin had won 45 times, I'm going like, this is awesome and amazing and it still is and always will be. And Hale, if you're watching, congratulations. You're a great champion. I'm honored to have tied your record. We need a toast with a glass of champagne or something. But yeah, I'm thrilled to have, you know, gotten to the number 45. And so now that talk is all hopefully a little less every day I show up or every week and I can focus on other things.

VO > From the caddie yard in Germany and being a self-taught kid, you find being a record holder now is kind of an improbable storm.

OC VO > But the whole my whole life is an improbable story. You know, when you dive deep a little bit where I came from and what has happened in my lifetime, where I should have died as a kid with extremely high fever, the doctors gave up on me. And, well, first of all, they told my mother not to have another child because then when she got pregnant anyways, they told it to abort me, which she decided not to take the chance of killing herself and me. And we all survived. So yeah, there's a lot, a lot going on in my life so far. And then it it got even more so starting a career in golf. No, nobody did that in Germany. You know, they thought I was crazy to make it, you know, just to earn a living was an incredible story. But then to make it to number one in the world and to become one of the best players for many years. And you know what happened on the Champions Tour, we all know that. But a lot of stuff has happened in those earlier years that some people had no clue and that were pretty miraculous. So maybe someday we can make a movie about it. It would be pretty cool.

VO > Your thoughts as you were walking up to the 18th green.

VO OC > Yeah, it was a little overwhelming really to just you know, I never thought I would win 45 times out here, as I said, coming out. And and then, you know, the reaction I got from Jerry Kelly and Steve Alker and and Scott McCarron was waiting there and my good friend Bobby Clampett to and invited me to my first Bible study, which made me become a believer in Jesus Christ. He was here to shake my hand. So it's a lot of things that happened and I got to process it first.

VO > You're getting a little emotional.

OC > Yeah, absolutely.

Is it? Is is? Has any of it sunk?

OC > Not yet. You know, it will in the next few hours and days. But just right now, I just feel relieved and grateful and thankful for everybody that's been on my team and helping me through these years. You know, like we said, for a German kid from a village of 800 people, starting as a candidate to do what I've done, it takes a it takes a lot of people to do that, not just one.

VO > Bernhard Langer and Hale Irwin have separated themselves from other legendary names to have competed on PGA Tour champions. And the German superstar, now has his hands on a piece of the record many thought would never be broken. It has taken hard work adapting his game and the mind and heart of a champion to get here. Let's hear now from Langer again regarding a key strategy in this week's winners tip.

OC VO > I don't think it's all that hard. I practice it on a regular basis. My driver has nine degrees of loft. Unless the ball really sits down, you know, and a terrible lye I feel comfortable getting it airborne and into the wind, it will set me especially on firm fairways and fast like they are here. It will run further and get out further than a three wood would. So I've hit that shot several times. I've hit it here last year and it served me pretty well on it, on a couple of holes. For some reason, when you hit driver off the deck, the ball goes fairly straight. Sometimes it fades a little bit, so you can almost bank on it. You can almost guarantee that's what happens. I don't think I ever hit it really double cross or driver to the left or anything. It either goes fairly straight or or fading, and that's just what I needed here on 18.

VO > Langer tied for first in all time wins and now third in the Charles Schwab Cup standings, moving up 18 spots with his victory. Steve Stricker displaces Steve Aims at the top following his T2 enables and given the talent the standing should be an interesting follow up the entire season

VO > coming up, get comfortable because it's story time again with Fred Couples. This time his Hollywood turn at Riviera Country Club where he captured a win in 1992.

VO > On the PGA Tour, 47 year old Tiger Woods returned to competition for the first time in 2023 at Riviera Country Club, serving as tournament host for the Genesis Invitational. Unfortunately, Tiger couldn't keep the momentum of a Saturday 67, finishing with a 73 on Sunday and a one under total. His appearance, however, had players on PGA Tour champions buzzing, including two time Genesis Invitational champion Fred Couples, who made his first start at the RIV in 1982. That particular year helps kick off this edition of Couples Chronicles.

VO OC > Hey everybody, story time with Fred goes a long way back to 1982. L.A. Open. First time playing there, walked on the Riviera, was so nervous on the first tee. It's a downhill par five. It's not very hard. But that was my first real look at the place and I knew at that time it reminded me a lot of Seattle small greens kind of a shot makers course. But as a young kid on the tour, you know, it was intimidating. And then obviously way, way, way back when, when you're playing the 18th hole, thousands of people on that bank. And then you flash forward about eight years when I had a chance to play really, really well, and they went out in there battle with Gil Morgan. And I birdied the last hole in front of 40,000 people to win by a couple of shots and then lost to Corey Pavin. So now I knew not only that I could talk myself into liking Riviera, but I could really play it. And then in 92, I had one of the most epic matches, or Saturday and Sunday with Davis Love. We were battling birdies and we went to a playoff. We both birdied number ten and then I honestly thought we were going to 18. But then we went over to the par 313 and I made about a 12 footer for birdie there to beat Davis and that became really our friendship. So the L.A. Open is very important to me. I love Riviera. I love everything about it.

VO > In Paul's. Stankowski’s two starts this season, he has finished tied for third in Morocco and most recently, 17th in the Chubb class. This is his third season competing on PGA Tour champions. But because he didn't finish in the top 36 in the Charles Schwab Cup standings last year, he did not attain full status this season. Stankowski finished 45th overall. Which gives him a limited amount of opportunities and he hopes to take advantage of his chances when presented with the chance to compete.

OC VO > Going into 22, I knew I was playing one tournament and I played 16. I made the second round of playoffs. I'm beyond…I had a couple of chances to win and one good one at Pebble. And this year going in, I know I'm going to play a lot.

VO OC > It was the start I was looking for finishing third, getting off to a great start. You know, I'm I'm that much closer to the top 36, you know, and that's ultimately my goals. Top 36. You know, I'd love to be where Alker was last year and win the Schwab Cup, and I think that would be unbelievable. I'd be lying if I didn't say that was a goal. But it's not p one for me, right? I'd love to be exempt and if I can earn my way to that top 36, that in itself would be an awesome accomplishment. You know, obviously everybody loves to win, you know, winning hard. And, you know, I don't know if I have what it takes to win. I haven't won since the 1900s. So but I know I can I know I'm going to be close. And I've already been close a few times. I quit. I quit for, you know, a solid almost five years and didn't know if I if I could come back. Right. I didn't know and had no idea how competitive I could be. So just to be sitting here now, I'm like, okay, I am competitive and I can play with these guys. And it's like, that is amazing. There's a there's a different element to the fun, though, right? There's those like you have two sides of the Champions Tour and one side is the exempt players and the other side are the nonexempt players, exempt players who are in that those categories that they know they're going to play as long as they want and they can exit the game on their terms. They seem to have a lot more fun than those of us who are, you know, we have to grind our way into the fields. And so it doesn't take much to lose it out here. And so I hate being gone from home. I miss home tremendously. So two weeks away from my wife, my son still at home. I like my couch, I like being home. And so that's the hardest part. And I've always said even back in the day, people would say, What's your favorite part of the tour? And I'm like, you know, besides the golf, it's the travel, right? And I that's all I've done. That's all we do as pros. We, we've traveled. And my least favorite part is to travel like it's a, it's the same thing, you know. So I'm like, I don't like being gone. So that's the only wrench in the, in the, in the, in the whole profession. But I'm playing golf. I'm 53 years old. I still get to hit a ball for a living. I'm I'm beyond thankful.

VO > Notah Begay is another PGA Tour champions newcomer ready to take a bigger bite out of the schedule. Begay, a four time winner on the PGA Tour, traded his microphone and NBC and Golf Channel analyst status to return to competitive golf last season with a pair of appearances as a 50 year old. It was a learning curve for Notah and he is back for more.

VO OC > I'm fully committed to the PGA Tour champions this year, and then wherever I have a chance to slip in some television, I will. When you talk about golf on the other side of the ropes, it looks easy because you rely on stats and you're able to sort of second guess everybody. But when you're in the driver's seat and you're having to make these decisions, execute shots with the pressure, with all the different things that can go wrong in a golf swing. And then you see Freddy go out at the final regular season term of the year and just make it look effortless. You're just like, Wow, I better get my button gear, otherwise I'm going to get run over. The biggest thing that I have to understand is the scores are low 54 holes. So you have to get off to a good start and you have to keep the gas down. There's no laying up. There's no days off. Caliber of talent out here is really high and the players work hard. So I'm really looking forward to had a great off season, trained very hard and just can't wait to get going.

VO > John Daly has not played competitively since his joint title Defense in the PNC Championship last December, but he plans to participate in the next three events, starting with next month's Cologuard classic in Tucson, Arizona. The popular Daly explained the reason for his absence.

VO OC > For knee replacement, the left knee. So it's it's a it's probably the toughest one I know I'm thinking about Calc as well he had both is replaced. So we've been kind of texting each other back and forth. But no we take the pain for the first six weeks, five weeks. It's the hardest part about sleeping. It's just hard to sleep. So but now it's getting better. The hard part is over. Now it's just keep doing the rehab. And, you know, I'm not quite getting to the left side to follow through yet, but hopefully around Tucson, get in the gears of it and just get those motions going again. I haven't played much either. Did not. Today is the second time I played since the surgery and I'm not even supposed to be playing right now, but I'm ready to get it going, you know, I mean, you get used to doing something for so long and but I'm used to it. I had the same I had the knee done the right knee down three years ago. So it's kind of the same thing. It takes about two months.

VO > Sam Workman, the caddie for Stephen Alker, passed away two weeks ago after a battle with cancer. Workman was on Alker’s bag for five PGA Tour champions wins, including his Charles Schwab Cup and Player of the Year honors this past year. Caddies wore Houston Astros hats in honor of Workman, a huge Astros fan. Steven Alker paid tribute by wearing one of Sam's favorite hats in last week's opening round. Alker shared with us his precious last few days with his caddie and friend, Sam Workman.

OC VO > We have a call, literally, I want to say, three days after getting back from Hawaii. So what are we talking about, the 25th of January, maybe 26th. And then we had a couple of days went down and saw him were there for like two and a half, three days with his family. And and then it was it was that quick space of like literally ten days from getting home from Hawaii. That time was very precious, shall we say. Just really precious to to spend time with his family and just find out even more about saying that I didn't know. And the stories of the friends that was there was pretty neat reminiscing. But yeah, just just so sad to to see him pass and be be in the state he was at the end because he's such a outgoing, fun, just energetic guy. And yeah, it was just a it was just a sad, sad day. But having that first hole and saying, here we go, let's let's get it going right here, that was the first hole every tournament for four years. That's that's what we're going to miss it on the first hole. And I expecting Troy to say at this point, my fill in caddie, but that was Sam's thing. Let's get a gun right here. And that was that was the key to that was the trigger to let's let's stop playing golf and know I'm going to I'm going to miss that. And just his company inside the ropes and his his loyalty and his his calmness on the golf course enormously.

VO > Alker’s bond with Sam run. It went far beyond golf, bounded by their journey in the game, but always shaped by the personal time they shared. After plans to return to his birthplace, New Zealand, this week, it will be the first time he's visited his home country since 2019. And then it will be back on PGA Tour Champions for the Gallery Classic in late March.

VO > Padraig Harrington, very successful jump to PGA Tour champions has opened eyes, particularly a beneficial change in his game. Coming up how Paddy Gaines swing speed and how you can to.

VO > Padraig Harrington made his 2023 season debut in the Chubb Classic. The reigning Rookie of the Year spent some of his off season at his home in Dublin, Ireland, with his wife Caroline, two boys and his Bernese Mountain dog, Wilson. While there, he worked on increasing his clubhead speed. But as we learned in this week's What's Your Edge? It is a work in progress.

OC > What have I been working on during the winter? As always, there's going to be a few things I'm testing, trying. I find them during the season. I wait to do the winter break to try them. For me, the biggest thing has been the dreaded hip thrust, the scariest thing in golf to the early hope. So obviously everybody in golf is very concerned about this right hip coming up high at the start of the downswing because it gives you no room and you're going to flip it and hook it. And so I've spent quite a bit of time and I'm stoked quite my hips over my left hip, which is good, but my right heel stays down. So does for speed because I've been happy with it, I'm trying to get that right heel off the ground and a bit more pressure. So I'm trying to get more hip trust. Obviously, I get it at the right time. So you clearly want to be down and trusting probably kind of that direction slightly not direct at the target, but certainly not this way. So I'm trying to get more of that. So you'll see it in my practice swing. You won't necessarily see it as much in my. So it's hopefully we get off that right heel. But I'm going to hit it hard, s o maybe not. So we're hoping for another couple of miles an hour of speed this year. Hopefully from that, when it gets bedded in, then it's certainly not there yet. It actually I actually lose speed when I go for it at the moment because I just don't have the timing of the ground forces basically as much as I can do to ground forces. You've got to do so early and it's just not quite there yet.

VO > And so Paddy Power's us home. And that is all for this edition of PGA Tour Champions Learning Center. The tour heads west next month for the Cologuard classic in Tucson, Arizona. Until then, I'm Vince Cellini. And as always, we thank you for watching.