PGA TOUR CHAMPIONS LEARNING CENTER SHOW #5

VO > PGA Tour Champions Learning Center.

VO > PGA Tour champions traveled west last week to a beautiful enclave in Southern California, Newport Beach, for event number five on the schedule. The Hoag Classic at Newport Beach Country Club. Always, a fun stop.

VO > It certainly was for this man, Ernie Els, the 2020 Hoag Classic Winner Birdie, two of his final three holes on Sunday carded a bogey free 65 and went into complete rally mode, finishing at 13 under the clubhouse leader. But the pursuers were many, including Doug Barrett looking at birdie at 18 to force a playoff and just push it a bit right. So Els picks up a third victory on PGA Tour champions. Let's hear now from the Big Easy in this week's winning moment.

OC > I made some good putts for 18 holes. I was ten under there in the middle of the tournament and the weather got a little bit not so good. So I just kind of hung in there and then made some nice ones in the in the end, so it's nice. I'm getting to that stage. You know, for the long time in my forties, I didn't play very well. And I think, you know, to get that confidence back, it's taken a while. But, you know, rounds like this, tournaments like this, you know, it's coming back a little bit

VO > With the victory, Els moves up 18 spots in the Charles Schwab Cup standings. Steve Stricker shared second place in the Hope Classic and continues to show the way, followed by David Toms. Bernhard Langer, the second round leader at Newport Beach, denied a 46th career win on this tour and slips one spot to fourth, followed by Stephen Ames. Doug Baron's efforts push him into the top ten. Now some news affecting all of golf. Last week, the USGA and the R&A proposed a model local rule that gives competition organizers the option to require use of golf balls that are tested under modified launch conditions, thus addressing the impacts of how far the ball will travel. It's about distance control. The model local rule is intended for use only in elite competitions and if adopted, will have no impact on recreational golf. Let's hear from some of the over 50 players reacting to the proposed change.

OC VO > It could really hurt the game. You know, if they suddenly bring the ball 40 yards back, who's going to want to buy a golf ball that goes 40 the shorter. And so the manufacturers are going to suffer. So it's a fine line. I you know, all these things have been quite well regulated over the years. How far the ball can go off the driver and and off on a golf ball can go. And, you know, I wish they can just stay where they are now. I mean, the guys are hitting the ball further because they're becoming more athletes and the guys are stronger and they trying to hit the ball further. And so really, if they want to bring the ball back, then tell the guys to stop exercising really. I hope it's not going to damage the golf industry, that's all.

OC VO > My first thought was that, you know, maybe now this is the time that we the PGA Tour, um, we have our own rules that we go by that we don't have to go by rules made by amateur golfers. The PGA Tour is, is you think about the millions and millions of dollars that are generated and players are playing for that. We're bi we're abiding by rules set by the RNA and the USGA, which are a bunch of amateur golfers and such and such. So maybe this is a time where we go off on our own and we play by rules.

OC > Policy wise and rules wise. I've seen this movie before. As a former board member, spent a lot of time with the USGA and board meetings and you know, we've talked about it a lot. We the tour, we don't want two sets of rules. I think the cool thing about golf is that I can, as a kid at Atlanta Country Club, compare to Jack Nicholson, Arnold Palmer that were playing in my home course and I could try to hit the shots that they hit. And I think the amateurs and the pros both want that comparison to always be there and not play something different. Know, I would be confused. Like I play the elite ball and then I go home. Do I get to play the real ball? So it's it just really doesn't work. And I think hopefully over the next few years, cooler heads will prevail and they'll figure out some other solution for it. And the ball does go a long, long way, but the athletes are stronger and the drivers have a lot of jump in them. And there's there's other ways to accomplish the goal without bifurcating the rules.

OC VO > I'm not a big fan of that rolling back the ball. I really believe that we should be playing the same equipment, the ball as everybody else plays, you know, the amateurs, you know, if they really want to they really want to make things a little bit more difficult. You know, you could you could adjust the driver a little bit, but that ball probably goes hand in hand with the driver. You know, they're making that driver to fit the ball or vice versa. Right. So you could always narrow the fairways, bring up the rough. But you know what? We're in the entertainment business. I was talking to this with Nicky and my kids. You know, it's the tour is the entertainment business. And they want to they want to see birdies. They want to they want to give the fans something to cheer for and and say, wow, look at how far that guy hit it. Now, all of a sudden, if if some guy goes out there and hits it shorter, then your local, local amateur at at your club, you know what's so different about that? All of a sudden, it's like, well, this guy over here, Joe, he can hit it further than the pros, you know? So I just don't I don't I don't like it. I don't agree with it. And there's other ways if they want to make it more difficult. But I don't feel like it's in a bad spot right now. You know, I mean, the game is strong. The PGA Tour is strong. People love coming out to watch. And what better than that?

OC VO > So I'm all for a rollback of technology. It doesn't suit me. Right now, I think I'm in the sweet spot of distance with the young guys. I have enough speed to be there. But I do think that it needs to be rolled back too far for the future of the game, for the golf courses, for the cost of maintain and the pace of play. There's there's there's so many reasons. But the reality is no one argument decides this. Like, everybody can't just come up and say, well, this is the reason why it should or shouldn't be. There's a number of nuances to it. I don't like to bifurcate fabrication, but, you know, I see it home to golf courses that become obsolete, where every all the courses where I live are obsolete. You just can't play them the dogleg there in the wrong places. So I really do see how. It needs to be if you want to actually make it tougher for the longer hitters and rolling back makes it easier for the longer hitters. But if you want to make it tougher for the longer hitters, actually shorten the golf course because then they don't have an advantage. I don't mean Shortened said it could drive par fours. I mean shorten it's sort of like I see out here I'm quite substantially longer than the field out here, but put me on the wrong golf course I have no advantage whatsoever none, you know if I have to layup and if every shot is you know, if I'm hitting from 50 yards in in the field or hitting from a hundred yards, there's no real advantage in that. If I can drive to green and they're hitting from 50 yards in, well, then there's a huge advantage. So it, you know, shorten the course. And like if we want to get to the absolute other extreme, the most horrible thing you could do in golf for our bounce 20 yards left and right and fairway I give it up. If you actually want me to retire that's the way to get me to retire. But but that's the extreme that you know, when people say tough on the golf course, are we you know, that's the extreme.

VO > The debate will certainly continue. But if the model local rule is approved, it would be set to take place in elite events starting in 2026. Yeah. Coming up on PGA Tour, Champions Learning Center, the highest of career honors for tour star Padraig Harrington. Soon he will take his place among the immortals. That and more in a moment.

VO > Padraig Harrington has been announced as one of the inductees into the 2024 World Golf Hall of Fame. The three-time major winner has had an illustrious career. He will join an elite group of golfing legends in the Hall of Fame, cementing his place in the annals of the sport. It's not just performance but representing the game the right way as a competitor, former Ryder Cup captain and exceptional instructor. Here is Patty on this highest of honors.

VO OC > It's a very satisfying feeling. You know what kind of brings everything together you've done in your career? You know, I've been lucky enough that my career has kind of gone very nicely in sequence where I kind of built up on one tournaments as I went along. And at each stage it seemed like it was the pinnacle. And oftentimes people kind of go, oh, what was the best? What was the best moment, best time. Now I'm in the World Hall of Fame that really does pull it all together. It says, you know, that lasted well.

VO > Here is a look at Harrington's career by the numbers. And it is impressive. 21 official worldwide wins. He's a three time major champion, two of them coming in 2008 when he was named PGA Tour Player of the Year, playing in six Ryder Cups for Europe and serving as captain in 2021. Here are the men who know him best. His fellow competitors on the soon to be World Golf Hall of Famer.

VO OC > Well, it's great to see Patrick getting into the Hall of Fame is it's been a been a great ambassador for the game years. Won three majors, many tournaments around the world, Ryder Cup. You know, he's definitely well deserved candidate for the Hall of Fame and congratulates to him.

VO OC > Padraig, definitely a legend in the game and obviously a friend to all of us out here on tour. So we're excited for him and he's well deserved to be in the Hall of Fame.

OC VO > I think that was a long time coming. Comes a time when you get to a certain point. Three majors. Heck of a player. He's now out here with us on the Champions Tour. So it's so fun to have him out. But he still plays all over the world and plays well. So next year will be a huge honor and well-deserved. And Paddy Harrington is a Hall of Famer.

VO OC > Wonderful news. Politics have always been a fantastic, upstanding golfer, loves the game. You know, he loves innovation of the game. He's he's brought his game all the way to the to the modern era now again. But, you know, the Hall of Fame is for what you've achieved in the game as a player. And obviously him winning his three majors and a lot of events around the world and just being a stand up ambassador for the game of golf. He's just a great, perfect choice. So congratulations, my friend Padraig and welcome to the club.

VO > The 2024 class is a solid one. Along with Harrington, there's Johnny Farrell and at long last, Tom Weiskopf is in. Alas, after he has left us, Sandra Palmer, Beverly Hanson and the remaining co-founders of the LPGA not yet honored. Harrington's longevity is impressive, and his training work off the course is a big factor in his sustained success.

OC VO > My only party trick I do. I do a nice shoulder press. The biggest problem as you get older is you lose muscle mass. So majority of my training is just trying to keep the muscle. So I'm not a specific about golf anymore and more about lifting the heaviest weight I can. So more whole body digging. So I do bench press. I do pullups. Spend an hour on the cross trainer, the bike is my idea of hell, when I could be hitting shots, I will do polls. You know, I'm happy enough to do rows which is that's a very specific goal of exercising when you think about this. And, you know, the most important thing in the golf swing. As is your ability when you accelerate the cope, the ability to hold onto it, which transfers the energy out to the head so forearms rest in strength that the ability to grip and pause. So probably I'd be doing the exercise anyway. But maybe the most golf specific exercise is just that bent over rows just pulling. So it's a very quick general program. 40 minutes to try and get it on. Try and keep it short and sharp. Bigger exercises. So I do a little warmup with my, you know, with a lighter dumbbells. And then I go in to do a a routine of pulls and pushes, basically try and get myself as much muscle as I can because I am getting old. I need a platform if if I'm going to lift. I don't like cardio, but I know I need to do cardio. I go on the bike every day. I do three intervals takes 4 minutes to do this. 5 minutes, tops. I'm still getting my heart rate to do that three times a day at least. So the ability to push it up and the ability to let it come down as I do. And that's. That's all I can handle. Training to me is anti-aging and training for health. I know I need to keep my muscle mass up. I know I need to keep the vitality up. And that's why I train.

VO > While we are on the subject of career longevity. How about Jerry Kelly, who set a new record in this year's Players Championship at TPC Sawgrass and 56 years young. He became the oldest player to make the cut in tournament history. Kelly finished the tournament at one under, tied for 54th. Fellow PGA Tour champions member Notah Begay the third walked the course for NBC's Sports all four rounds and offered up his assessment on Kelly's incredible accomplishment. In this week's What's Your Edge?

OC VO > You know what Jerry Kelly did at the players championship last week and putting up such a strong competitive performance is incredible. Any time you're hitting, you know, three, four and five clubs, more than most of the competitors out there into some of those greens is is it's just it's tough to score and it kind of just is a testament to his will, his determination, but most importantly, his talent level to be able to go out there and just make such a strong representation of all of us 50 plus crowd. It was great to see. I mean, he played well when he had to on Saturday, survive the tough days. I mean, the scoring averages were real reflective of just how strong the winds were. And so being out there and being able to see it firsthand and just how the difficulty of the course changed from one day to the next, kind of just tells me that, you know, Jerry really had a great game plan. He had a good understanding of how he needed to score. He wasn't trying to play somebody else's game. He knew that he could get it done with his. And he did a wonderful job.

VO > There was plenty of rain early in the week at the Hoag Classic is another big splash in the works. In our next event will ponder Poppy’s Pond.

VO > The tradition of LPGA players jumping into Poppy's pond began in 1988 when Amy Alcott, winner of the recently named Chevron Championship, celebrated her victory by jumping into the pond near the 18th green of the Dinah Shore tournament course at Mission Hills. Her impromptu jump became a tradition that has created some of the most memorable moments in women's golf.

VO > Beginning next month, the Chevron championship will be played in Houston and new traditions for the Lpga's major championship will have to be made. But with PGA Tour champions competing in the Coachella Valley this week at the Gallery Classic, we asked some of the players. If you win this week in Mission Hills, are you taking the leap into Poppy's pond?

OC> Absolutely. It is tradition, what they have done and honor the women that have gone there before us. I am going in Poppy’s Pond and I'm probably taking my caddie, Rich Mayo and my wife, Jenny. And we're all going in. It would be an honor.

OC > I don't think that's going to happen. I just got to be honest. I'll probably push Scott McCarron in is what I'll do. Yeah. Since he's right over here razzing me. But I don't know. I remember someone get hurt. Maybe it wasn't. Maybe it was one of the players. Maybe their mother. Someone broke a leg, an ankle. You know, I'm getting older now and, you know, Champions Tour, so my memory's not quite as good, but I'll probably really try to avoid. You know, at my age maybe we ease our way into the lake. We don't jump in or something like that.

OC VO > That's what I've got to do. And that helps winning. I'm all in. I'll jump in the pond, bring Larry in there with me. My wife, she's in there. We’ll jump in the pond for a win. There's no doubt about it.

OC > I think cannonballs, swan dives. I think Annika did like a cannonball or something. Yeah. No diving. No. Is there no diving sign there? Oh, yeah, for sure.

OC > I don't know. That seems like an LPGA tradition. I don't know that we want to hone in on their parade. I mean, I would think that if that were something they were talking about, I would get their permission. I think that's something that tournament organizers, the LPGA, would need to. I don't know that we want to necessarily take traditions that belong to other people personally. So I would I would I would think we'd need to go down that path and get their blessing.

VO > It's here, that path to one shining moment. The NCAA men's basketball tournament rarely disappoints in terms of drama and upsets. And now we are down to the Sweet 16, the number one overall seed The Houston Cougars are still alive. And in this week's Couples Chronicles, Fred Couples discusses his time at Houston with his longtime friend Jim Nantz, who's winding down as the voice of the championship.

OC VO > It's March Madness, so we're going to go to Houston way back when when I got to school, the first three guys I met Jim Nantz, John Horn, Blaine McAllister, what a time I had there. And some of the things that we did in school besides play golf. We listened to Jimmy Nantz a lot and he'd come home at night and he'd have interviews with I remember Muhammad Ali, who was in town, J.R. Richard, Nolan Ryan, Warren Moon, you name it. He had it, and he just start talking about the greatest things that ever happened. We knew where he was going to be someday, which right now is March Madness. Our school, Houston, is a number one seed, so Jimmy's got a lot on his mind. I'm sure. I'm hope he gets to call a few of these games and maybe the final semifinals and final maybe Houston will be there. But Jim Nantz is all time. Sadly, it's his last year doing March Madness and he's going to stay with golf and football. So we still get a lot of Jim Nantz, but what a run his had in the March Madness.

VO > No question. Jim Nantz is a voice of a generation of sports fans and it will be an emotional Monday night. On that last call. Well, that's our time in a sport with a much smaller target area. I'm Vince Cellini. Thank you so much for watching.