**2023 PGA TOUR CHAMPIONS LEARNING CENTER SHOW #6**

Vo > PGA Tour Champions Learning Center.

VO > It was a brand new event on the PGA Tour Champions Schedule and a brand new look for iconic Mission Hills Country Club in Rancho Mirage. For 51 years, home to an LPGA major, now the Coachella Valley welcomes the legends of the game for the first time since the late nineties, and they did not disappoint.

VO > It was David Toms keeping the hot hand tops with the wire to wire victory, his second in three starts. In doing so becomes the first two time winner on PGA Tour champions. Toms opened with 65 and never looked back. Calmly navigating Mission Hills on Sunday and made it bookend 65s and a 16 under par finish. 56-year-old Toms to fourth win on this tour is the inaugural Galleri Classic winner. Let's hear from the champ now in this week's winning moment.

OC VO > I'm just enjoying playing good golf right now. Off to a good start. I haven't really been part of the, you know, Charles Schwab Cup at the end, haven't even been close. So that's kind of my goal this year is try to get close and give myself a chance late in the season.

VO > With the victory, Toms also displaces Steve Stricker atop the Charles Schwab Cup standings just barely. He's already pushing $1,000,000 in earnings for 2023. Els, Langer, and Robert Karlsson climbing into the top five post Galleri Classic. Before the event began, the Stricker family played a round of golf with Mission Hills. But Steve's daughters, Bobbi and Izzy, learned that their mom, Nikki, still has some serious game.

OC > Strategies out the window. Okay, Bobbi, you just let it rip. We're overthinking this a lot.

OC > Where am I going? At the tent?

OC > To the right of the tent.

OC > Perfect.

OC > Mario just gave her a lesson before we went a played today and told her to hang on to it with all ten fingers. And actually, she's ripping it. Right at their balls.

VO > Past the kids now.

OC > She blew it way up there. She out drove you by a lot

OC > That's embarrassing. I need to go. I need to go.

OC > They should be embarrassed.

VO > Here's another family moment. The World Golf Hall of Fame family. Back on Thursday 2024 inductees Padraig Harrington and Sandra Palmer got acquainted. Palmer is a Mission Hills Country Club resident and 19 time winner of the LPGA Tour, including the 1975 Chevron championship, as well as two major championships. She serves as player development ambassador at Shadow Hills Golf Club. In short, she is still inspiring.

OC > Thank you for meeting me. I'm so happy.

OC > Nice to meet you. I’ll go for a hug. Congratulations.

OC > Same to you. So happy to meet you.

OC > Good. And I hear your playing today and everything.

OC > Well…sort of

VO > Well, because we never have this. This business again.

VO > I happened to never spend time. I was told how beautiful it is here. And I got here for two days.

VO > This is January weather.

VO OC > Yeah, well, it's nice. At what time do you play this afternoon? I'm going to have to sneak out. I know. I'm going to sneak out to watch you hit it.

OC > I am playing with Patty Sheehan.

OC > Okay. Oh, right nice.

OC > It’s just put together teams.

OC > Okay.

OC > And Sandy Lyle.

OC > Okay. I definitely have to have a little sneak out just just to see.

OC > Well, look,

OC > It's a pleasure.

OC > I look forward to seeing you.

OC> I'll see you then.

OC> Keep swinging.

VO > The 2024 Hall of Fame class is a solid one, along with Harrington and Palmer, 1928 U.S. Open winner Johnny Farrell added Long last, Tom Weiskopf is in the class after he left us in August of 2020 to Beverly Hanson and the remaining co-founders of the LPGA. Not yet honored all to be inducted in June of 2024.

VO > Hoop fans John Daly and Ken Duke.

OC > Tarmac, getting ready to head to Vegas. Watch the JHogs. Let's go.

VO > Hopped in Daly's private plane Thursday for a jont to Las Vegas and the NCAA West Region semifinal match up of UConn and Arkansas. Daly is an Arkansas grad. Duke was born in that state. And the ride, too, was much more pleasant for the return trip later that night as the Huskies of UConn eliminated the Hogs in an 88 65 blowout. In short, you might say it's big threwie.

OC > What I want to experience. I never been to an NCAA basketball tournament game. Sweet 16 Razorbacks against the UConn short flight. One of John's Daily's sponsors flew us up there, 32 minute flight here from Palm Springs to Vegas. Watch the game. We came back, we got smoked, but what a wonderful experience. I saw a bunch of people from Arkansas that I knew and it was exciting. Very exciting.

VO > Coming up, the ascension on PGA Tour Champions of Australia's Mark Hensby. His a journey back.

VO > Mark Hensby is one of the feel good stories on PGA Tour champions. He's been the underdog his entire life. As a kid growing up in Australia with an abusive father to longshot golf professional early in his career, Hensby has beaten the odds and found his stride on this tour, including a runner up finish in Morocco. He's done this with quiet dignity and a spirit for golf, family and life that never wavered.

VO > I think that I'm a perfect example that you don't have to come from a rich family or a rich country club. It just depends on how how much you I guess you want it. This is my second career, so to speak, playing the Champions Tour now. But this year I've kind of got a different perspective.

VO OC > You know, my wife, we have a boy on the spectrum.

VO > He's a great kid, is the love of my life. I mean, he's he's intelligent. He's he's he's come a long way from where he was five years ago with all the help.

OC VO > Growing up the way I did, I never wanted to be like my dad. He was mentally abusive, physically abusive to to to an extreme that people wouldn't understand. You know, when you go home every afternoon thinking, you know, something's probably going to happen, that's a hard way to live as a kid. So I took it upon myself to make sure that I wasn't there very often. It was almost I did it 360 straight away like.

VO > I grew up in a small town just north of Sydney, about 5 hours called Tamworth. I was very fortunate because the school was really close to the golf course. So yeah, I just practiced. I just, I was obsessed with golf. I saved up my money, you know, with various jobs that I was doing at the time. And, you know, I was an amateur still. And I came over and kind of gave it a shot. At times. There was no way to stay. I used to sneak in the clubhouse and sleep at one bed that the the chefs lived upstairs in Cog Hll, sleep in if there was a free bed, not stay there. But at some nights, obviously, I had to sleep in my car in the parking lot. So.

OC VO > But when it got to winter time, it got a bit cool. So I'd have to drive around, warm the car up for a little bit.

VO > First time and was PGA Tour career. Mark Hornsby is a winner. He has won the 2004 John Deere Classic, knocking off John Morgan here. Second hole, a very sudden death playoff. Terrific story ten years ago lived in a car. Fantastic stuff gets the title.

VO OC > I never played golf to prove anyone wrong. All right. You know my hard work, whether you liked it or not, and people who said I was wasting my time, it was probably nice to know that, you know, I kind of closed their mouth.

VO > 11th start of the PGA Tour championship. Is this putt for par and solo second.

VO OC > This is my father has turned out to be fully exempt on and to be honest hall of famers and guys that that's what this tour was for and we all understand that. But the pressure's a different playing. You know, we have to perform every week and even sometimes then you still don't get in next week.

VO > That was a great try. Really slow up that hill. Good tournament for Mark.

OC > Everything was reevaluated over Christmas. I think I put on social media. I was I was going to call it quits last year. But, you know, some things change over Christmas and you know, so I'm going to keep playing as much as I can this year. I'd love to get off to a good start and see where it goes from there.

OC VO > It was time to to really be a different person, I guess. You know, I've played golf my whole life. So to walk away is hard, though, because it's all, you know, you know, my wife, she has to deal with a lot more than most parents. He's only 11. So that was part of the reason why I was going to call it quits because I just couldn't give them enough time. But now, over Christmas, we talked. When I'm home, I try and spend more time and not as much practice on golf and and try and be them not only physically, but mentally. She sees what I'm about and why I'm I want to still pursue this. I want to make his life easier and her life easier and just educating yourself on on my boy. You know, I've had to learn a lot with autism. And, you know, thank goodness there's a lot of people who are around that can help you. But it's it's it's it's been good. So this year, yeah, I, you know, I've kind of got a different perspective and, and yeah, going to play as much as I can this year.

VO > Mark Hensley is gaining fans and momentum in 2023. A comfort level on PGA Tour champions has him in the top ten of the Charles Schwab Cup standings. We do know this when it comes to competing, never, ever count him out.

VO > Coming up, the Masters is one week away and we hear from two past winners who will be competing at Augusta next week. Bernhard Langer on his future at Augusta National and Fred Couples on closing out his 1992 Masters victory.

VO > PGA Tour Champions said farewell to both John Cook and Sandy Lyle on Sunday. The two said the Gallery Classic would be their final official PGA Tour Champions event. Cook was a three-time all-American at Ohio State University, where he helped the Buckeyes win a national championship and 11 time PGA Tour winner in the 1978 U.S. Amateur champion, a voice of Golf Channel coverage. Cookie grew up playing Mission Hills and now steps away at the very same course. As for Lyle, he competed in 189 events over 16 years on PGA Tour champions. But he will have one more goodbye next week at Augusta National, where he will return to the Masters again as a past winner. 35 years ago, the great Scott Sandy Lyle struck one of the most famous shots in Masters history a brilliant bunker play in the final hole and becoming the first UK player to win the green jacket. This year, Lyle bids farewell to Augusta National and shared his thoughts.

OC VO > Well, yes, it will probably be my last Masters. And of course and I was a little bit too long for me. And it's a bit of a struggle the way I have been playing recently as well, but nothing special. I've got quite a few of my family coming over. My younger son and daughter are coming over, so we'll look forward to that and sort of a family orientated a little bit. I'm sure I'll continue to come bakc.

VO > The green complexes at Augusta National. Are some of the most challenging in the game, the combination of undulating greens, slick surfaces and strategically placed hole locations make getting up and down from around the green a difficult task. On top of that, the course is playing over 7500 yards and is a true test for the game's elite players. Two-time Masters champion Bernhard Langer, the ageless one, says he's looking forward to seeing the course, as well as the length in par 5 13th hole.

OC VO > Well, I think on this particular hole it's it's a great change because some of the longest hitters took it over the corner and had eight iron of pitching wedge in there every once in a while. And that's not what you want on a par five and 13 is such a great hole. You want the risk reward stuff. And because if they move that tee box a little more to the left, you have all these trees in the way and you can't cut the corner anymore. So now you either hit a straight track or you have to draw it like in the old days, everybody talks about 13. I heard the lengths in the 11 that was 520 and now it's 535 or 540. That's even a harder change for me then than 13 would be.

VO > This year's edition of the Masters will mark the 30th anniversary of Langer winning his second green jacket. It will also be Langer's 40 Masters appearance. At age 63 in 2020, he became the oldest player to make the Masters cut, which leads to the question of just how much longer Bernard wants to compete in the Masters.

VO OC > Taking it year by year. Right now, it's really going to be very, very difficult for me as day lengths and all these holes. And the young guys are just hitting it so far. And, you know, I'm hitting anywhere from 7 to 8 clubs more into a par four, and I can't reach the par five on a regular basis like most the young guys do. So it's very difficult for me to be competitive at this point in my life, and I'd like to be competitive when I play golf. I don't want to just make up the numbers and make a fool of myself. So we'll see. I'm definitely going to play this year and hopefully one or two more, but we will we will take that year by year.

VO > Which brings us to the incomparable Fred Couples, another past Masters winner. In this week's edition of The Couples Chronicles, Fred and caddie Joe LaCava reflect back on Freddie's 1992 victory, in particular in those final paces on the 72nd hole, his mind set as he moved closer to slipping on the coveted green jacket.

OC > So back in 92, I was at a great age and never won a major, always wanted to win and always wanted to win in Augusta. So I always had this vision of when I went to Augusta, you know, it's going to be a great week for me. And Joe's got a little bit more to it, but I was on go.

OC VO > So when we're leading up to that golf from I think to myself, you know, a couple of things might happen here. You know, you know, Fred might run out of gas because back in the day when you're playing well, you know, he's doing press every day. It takes a lot out of you. And I'll never forget the first day we were paired with Davis Love. Back then I think it was twosomes on the first day. And I remember Davis, you know, Fred Beat Davis Revere, you know, two months earlier or whatever it might have been. And Davis never missed a shot. Fred play awfully well, too, but Davis probably played on that same thing myself. Wow. How are we going to beat this guy over four days? Because he never missed a shot. And as it turns out, obviously, I don't know where Davis finished. I'm sure he played well, but everyone knows the story. Fast forward to, you know, I don't want to go through everything all at once, but I mean, obviously a little bit of a break on 12. And then I remember us getting to 15 and before the back tee and Fred had a drive down the left side. And, you know, Fred's got a great feel for the game and, you know, makes a lot of his own calls. But I was really almost begging him to lay up here because he was behind the trees, also knowing only two years into it that, you know, Fred can hit a hook or a cut with the best of them. When I say hook or cut, I mean, I'm not talking ten or 15 yards, I'm talking 60 yards. And he's got the talent to do that. And he kind of looked at me as if to say, I want nothing to do with laying this ball up. I don't like that third shot. I'm going to hook this seven iron around the trees. And I didn't I honestly didn't like the shots. I think, you know, when you hook the shot on that much control over it and when I see it hook in it, I think he started at the right bunker and as it turns out, in the left of the green, more or less pin high, you know, 35, 40 feet from the from the pin, you know, a pretty relatively easy chip. And if you said yourself you're going to Miss Green, where would you want the ball? That basically where it would have been. But I had no I wanted nothing to do with the shot. And you had a great shot. I don't think you made Birdie, but it didn't matter.

OC > I didn't make birdie.

OC VO > Right. And that's kind of all you needed. And then fast forward to 18. Well, you made a great part putt on 17. Yeah, I mean that was not an easy park birdie putt by obviously more than you wanted to.

OC VO > So I mean, I make a nice little par putt for a two shot lead. We go to the 18th hole and if you remember back then, guys like Woosnam, you just bomb it. And the cut butter cut for me was a pretty easy shot. I love the 18th hole and I don't cut it very much. All I had to do was swing as hard as I could and I could carry the bunker. I just thought, I'm not going to do that now. It's down the lip of the bunker and we go up and I'm standing there and Joe comes, gives me the yardage and we start talking about it. And I just looked and I said, I got this.

OC > Right.

OC > I can handle this.

VO > That's exactly what it was.

VO > Yeah. So I got another seven iron. I hit it up on the top tier.

VO OC > A lot of things can happen in that bunker, but you had a hell of a shot to 20 feet, right of the hole dead nuts pin high. You had a six inch, but you made it. So I'm so jacked up, you know, I'm young, whatever I think, whatever. And then I said to myself, you know, I think I gonna do something a little different here. I'm going to grab both the stick and the flag, because as a caddie, tradition goes, you kind of grab the flag off the top of the stick and you keep that and it's kind of like your trophy. And so I said, I'm gonna change it up and grab the stick and the flag. So you're off the scoring tent, and I take like two steps this way to go to kind of finish off the day or whatever. And they have Pinkerton there. And the guy says to me he was had…the whole nine yards because he's, you know, that's private property. It's, you know, this property of the club, you know, you can't have that basically more or less. And, you know, I don't know if I see this or not, but I basically said, you know, again, I'm young and I think I'm tough and I'm not tough. And I say to the guy, listen, if you can get it from me, you can have it. And then basically he looked at me as if to say, you know what, I'm not going to go there. And I said, perfect. And I was on my way. So I kept that. And then fast forward to 2019, I did the same thing. You know, when Tiger won, I kept them both because I figured, you know what, maybe I'll put that in my house someday and be a great keepsake. And that's kind of how it went. He's great.

OC> He's got criss cross flags in his house.

OC> Right

OC > With with with the Masters logo dangling. I mean, I find like, that's the greatest story of all time, all the time. And I'm not I don't own any other caddies, but I can promise you you've got the oldest flag and stick.

OC > Yeah that’s true.

OC> And you may have set a precedent, but there's no one has an older one now, the better one is Tiger Woods. We all know that, but it's still pretty cool. You got to.

OC > Now they're both pretty special. So it's all good.

VO > Good luck to those PGA Tour champions players competing in next week's Masters. Wonderful to see them in competition as we welcome in golf's first major. Well, that is our time. I’m Vince Cellini as always, thank you for watching. PGA Tour Champions Learning Center.