**PGA TOUR CHAMPIONS LEARNING CENTER SHOW #10**

VO > PGA Tour Champions Learning Center.

VO > PGA Tour champion stayed in the Deep South last week for the first major championship of the season. The Regions Tradition where it was sweet home Alabama four, one of the elite over 50 players competing in Birmingham.

OC > The Regions Tradition has been played here in Alabama since 1992, settling in to beautiful Greystone Golf and Country Club. Hello and welcome to Learning Center. I'm Vince Cellini. The Founders course provides a challenging yet fair test for players average winning score over the last five events 19 under par. So what about this year's edition with a recap the men who call the action Bob Papa and World Golf Hall of Famer Lanny Wadkins.

VO > Vince, the first major of the year for the PGA Tour champions, the Regions Tradition at Greystone Golf and Country Club in Hoover, Alabama. After burning the final four holes on Saturday to match Robert Carlson at 16 under Steve Stricker, Lanny Wadkins gets off to a blistering start with his approach in the one.

VO > Yeah, he announces his presence with a stuffed iron here at the very first hole and would go on to really just put pressure on his chasers. All day long.

VO > Stricker would birdie his first three, then after a part the fourth. This was his third into the fifth.

VO > Yeah. Tough par five legitimate three shorter and an excellent finish there at the fifth.

VO > Four birdies in his first five that would get him a 20 under par then his second into the par 4 11th.

VO > Yeah missed the fairway with three one of the first wayward shots we saw him hit but makes up for it with this quality iron shot. An 11 in there too, about two and a half feet.

VO < That would get stricker to 21 under par. Wasn't finished his second into the par 4 12th.

VO > Yeah huge tee shot here at 12 in this hollow location in the back left is gettable everything funnels right to the hole. Just watch this. What a play.

VO > That would get Stricker to 22 under par. Then after a bogey at 14 his birdie at 15

VO > Yeah. Coming off a rain delay walks back out first shot after the rain delay and just buries this 12 footer Really well done.

VO > Then is second at the bar for 16th. Plenty of room back around this hole location just take the bunkers out of play. He does that and leaves himself an uphill look through about six feet.

VO > And go on to make that to get to 23 under par and then taps in at 18 for par. He shoots a final round 65, wins his third region tradition. And for the third time, he's won this event by six shots and he picks up his fifth win on the PGA Tour Champions. Steve Stricker had 23 under six shots better than Robert Karlsson and Ernie Els. Jerry Kelly also had a really nice week, finishing at 16 under par. Padraig Harrington, Miguel Angel Jimenez, Paul Broadhurst and Marco Dawson share fifth place at 15 under. Steve Stricker, your winner at the region's tradition. Let's hear from the champion.

OC > I needed to shoot probably like four under yesterday on that back nine just to kind of stay within reaching distance of Robert and a couple of other guys that were up there. And then to to get to six under on the back nine birdie the last four and then to come out today and, you know, make a statement early and, you know, I think that was just as important birdied the first three today. So I felt comfortable my game was good, rolled in a few putts and hit it close at times. So it was a it was a great day.

VO > You've taken a commanding lead now in the Charles Schwab Cup race. This commitment, you have maybe change a little bit at the end of the year if you can maintain this lead.

VO OC > Yeah, you know, I plan on playing. I really do. You know, I'm part of the Ryder Cup team. There's a lot of a lot of stuff on my plate in the fall. But, you know, I like my position where I'm at and I'm going to continue to play here. I got a busy stretch coming up after this next week off and then we'll see where it goes.

VO > Thank you. These are the updated Charles Schwab Cup standings. And what a week for Steve Stricker, who continues his impressive play and has a stronghold at the top. Fellow multiple winner David Tom sits in second and reigning Schwab Cup champion Steven Alker is three. Ernie Els with a T-2 at the region's more steady play for him. Stephen Ames at five. What a race this is shaping up to be and it will only get better.

VO > Last Wednesday, at the region's tradition pro-am, some local celebrities and sports heroes took to the founders course to entertain area fans and raise money for Children's of Alabama, names like Auburn legends Bo Jackson and Charles Barkley, as well as singer and Birmingham's own Taylor Hicks. Also seen the current top dog in the Sec and in all of college football.

OC > Wll Kirby Smart is the head football coach at the University of Georgia, the architect of Back to Back National championships, which is quite an accomplishment. But I wonder, is it as challenging as golf can be at times?

OC > Absolutely not. Golf is a very humbling sport that we all love to come back to.

VO > You know, with your background player, a Georgia assistant in Alabama, I wonder if you're one of the few people who can really understand it. The coaching level, the difficulty of staying on top, your how much have you drawn on all of that?

VO OC > Yeah, it's tough. You can't really pay attention to all the outside noise. You can't pay attention to what people say. You got to focus on what you're doing and you got to be sold on your process is better than somebody else's and that you're developing players and that each year independent of the previous.

VO > Well you lose a lot of talent every year. That's the point of a big time program and Stetsons going on to the Rams. What can you tell us about Carson Beck?

OC VO > Well, we've got a great competition going on with all those guys. Carson Beck is a kid that's come in and had a great spring and Brock Vandagriff the same way and Gunnar Stockton the same way. So we will let those guys compete it out. But Carson has a lot of experience. He's very talented young man.

VO > Now, can you get too good at golf or are people going to call you and say, hey, coach, you know, maybe you've been practicing too much and not enough football.

VO OC > Well, the people have seen me play recently. They know better than that. You know, the PGA Tour golfers all chipped in and brought me a Scotty Cameron putter. So they know how bad I am because they're trying to improve my game with equipment.

VO > Well, you have quite a presence here. I'm just wondering if you'd like to send a message to your friend, Nick Saban, who was in Italy vacationing. And anything you'd like to pass along?

VO > Enjoy yourself. He deserves it. I'm sure a Mrs Terry had something to do with that. Taking him over there to go and enjoy. And he deserves it. He's had a great career and he's worked really hard.

OC > Regions Tradition and the Pro-Am and we've got a power pairing here. Charles Barkley, the pride of Auburn, the one and only and then you knew UAB head football coach Trent Dilfer maker of quarterbacks. I’ll start with you, Charles, because a couple of years ago you unveiled your swing here and you showed up a lot of people. Did you?

OC VO > Man? I've been to hell and back, Vince. I mean, I you know, I was a good player and I lost my swing for probably 20 years. And I actually got the fortune. And I was playing in Tom Lehman's golf tournament. And I met Stan Utley and he said, Chuck, let me work with you. I said Stan I work with every single person in the world. It's no fun for me to play golf. I have given up and I only play in Tier two events, so give me a chance. And I've been working with Stan about three or four years now and it changed my whole life. So I'm back to having fun and it's great to be out here.

VO > You know, I think you're the most scrutinized swing of a non-tour player maybe in the history of golf and you know, it it had to hurt a little bit too and I know it was you took it very personally sometimes about the game and yourself.

VO OC > Well, it was frustrating not playing well. I mean, listen, it's not my job. I could imagine if you were a real golfer and lost a swing, that would suck. I mean, listen, as long as I can drink and smoke some cigars, I was having fun. It's very difficult to me. It wasn't fun to be embarrassed at anything, but I think I'm winning at life, so suck at golf is not like the worst thing ever happened to you.

OC > You're a big winner in life and I think you're going to steer some Auburn possible recruits to UAB now. Trent, it's great to have you here.

OC > Thank you.

OC > And I'm one of your quarterbacks, generally good players? Golfers?

OC > Yeah. Back in the eighties and I know I came in when Elway and Marino and those guys were the greatest that ever live and they were good golfers too. So I immediately got adopted in the fraternity of quarterbacks and play golf, and we took it very serious. We played a ton in the off season, was very competitive. I don't know if as many play now. I know Jake Haner just got dropped I think in the fourth round out of Fresno is a really good player. There's some others that take the game somewhat serious. But man, back in the nineties this was you played football in the fall and then you hit the golf tour in the spring and summer.

VO > So what's it like to have a seat at the table here in Alabama? Football, you know, for UAB.

VO OC > It matters more. You know, and that's I keep telling people, you know, in this state, in this region, football matters more than the kids are built differently. They love football more than what football brings them, which I think is it's a subtle thing, but it's a big thing. You know, this generation of football players a lot. I'm sure basketball players really love what it brings them. They love the Instagram followers. Twitter followers, the money, the this, the that the girls. The kids in, say, Alabama love football. They love the work. They like to get after it. They want to reach their potential. And and we're excited about coaching.

OC > Well, you know, all about Alabama athletics. And I passed by that Leeds Road sign. And and I wanted to ask you, do you ever think that a kid from Leeds would would ascend to all of this and be playing at Greystone and, you know, beat be Charles Barkley?

OC VO > I'm so lucky and blessed. And I'm not saying that to be humble. I mean, I'm proud of everything, but to see what I've accomplished in my life is flat out incredible. You know, every time I'm home, I see the proudest where I grew up from a single mom and who was a maid. And my grandmother worked in a meat factory and now I just turned 60. So it's starting to get real for me right now.

OC> Wow, you’re getting old.

OC > I know. And I just became a grandpa for the second time. Shout out to little Henry.

OC It’s the best.

OC > It's the best thing ever happened to me out. All this stuff has happened so much. Shout out to little Henry and the newest little girl. She's a week-old Little Charlie. Charlie,

OC > that's cute.

OC > My daughter. Surprised me and named a little lady after me and was one of the greatest accomplishment of my life having the grandkids.

OC > I'm a grandpa too. I'm a grandpa, too. Seven months Easton. Hey, how are you doing?

OC > Nine months stacker the greatest humans ever. I loved parenting. I really did. Parents. My three girls unfortunately lost their son. But grandparent is ten x better. I mean, it is the best thing ever.

OC > Well, welcome to Alabama Football UAB. Congratulations on being here and and what a power pairing it's great to see.

OC > I appreciate it. Thanks.

OC > All right Chuck great to see you brother as always.

OC > Always, brother. Good to see you.

VO > Special thanks to Chuck Trent and all of the celebrities who gave their time and efforts. Coming up on Learning Center, the PGA Tour champions just gets better with the arrival of major championship winner and ever sharp, Stewart Cink turns 50 this weekend and is prepping for his champions debut.

VO > Some sad news to report. John Bland died last week at his home in South Africa after a battle with cancer. He won more than 30 times around the world, including twice on the DP World tour and five times on PGA Tour champions, including four wins in 1996. Let's hear from some of the men who competed alongside him over those years as they reflect on his life and career.

OC VO > Yeah, very sad about John. You know, I saw him in November, December when I went down for my dad. And, you know, he was so trying to get my dad comfortable. You know, my dad was doing a little, you know, not doing really well. And then now, five months later, you know, John is not with us anymore. So very sad. You know, John at that time didn't even know he had cancer. So very sad and he was so, so quickly. But a great guy all around. Everybody with Teddy. Greatest sense of humor ever known and a very good player. So really sad loss for the game.

OC VO > I was fortunate to play a lot of golf with Blandy all over the world. A lot done in South Africa henever in my formative years starting our tour, I went to Sunshine, to a battle of the Ring and got to know Blandy really well. You know, he was he was a funny man. He had always had a funny story to tell you. And, you know, I loved collecting those dollar bill backs of people, and you'd be missed. He was a good man.

OC VO > Yeah, we will really miss John. He was a wonderful human being, always joking around, always in a good mood, it seemed. And love to have fun and living ife was just normal for him. Just. Just being a good guy. And I met I remember meeting him when I was very young on the European tour and he was already established player, played many years over there with him and Dale Hayes, another South African. And then I think John came over here to play the PGA Tour Champions as well and, you know, had some really good times with him and some some great memories and was sad to lose another friend.

OC VO > He was a great competitor, won a lot of tournaments. When I started out, went over to Europe and played with him… And but I always kind of watched Price and Watson in the States, so I thought, Blandy, I'm going to go over to the States. What do you think? And he said, Do it. And so in a way always give him credit for the end of the US tour.

VO > John Bland will be remembered for his personality and for his play. The Johannesburg native is gone at the age of 77.

VO > PGA Tour champions returns next week with another major championship, the 83rd playing of the KitchenAid Senior PGA Championship, set to go at PGA Fresco. Steven Alker, reigning Schwab Cup champ, defends. Planning to add to the festivities and the talent is major champion Stuart Cink, who will make his PGA Tour champions debut there. And he's certainly not acting his age.

VO OC > Yeah, I'll be 50. I'm hitting the big five in about a couple of weeks here and end of May in 2023. So the great thing about it for me is that I have some options to play in other tournaments that I haven't seen. And believe me, it's great to play on the PGA Tour, but I'm looking forward to seeing some faces that I know. I don't have a whole lot in common anymore with many players on the PGA Tour, except for I'd Hit a white ball. And it's going to be nice to reconnect with some of my friends from a long time ago and get out there and fight it out into different courses and play against a different set. And I'm still undecided a little bit about what exactly I'm going to do as far as my load on the PGA Tour champions. But I know I'm looking forward to getting out there and seeing some faces and playing a different type of golf and embarking on sort of like chapter two of my career.

VO > Stuart Since last PGA Tour win came just over two years ago in the 2021 RBC Heritage. It was his second win that season, both coming at 47, an age when most players with his tenure are looking ahead to PGA Tour champions.

VO OC > Being almost 50 is still, you know, competitive. I haven't played that great this year. But being competitive on the PGA Tour and fully exempt for a few more years. It just speaks to a couple of things. Mainly the the gift that golf gives us that you can keep going if you do the right things that other sports just don't offer. And then the other thing is that while golf does give you that opportunity, it doesn't come for free. And it has you know, there's an opportunity there, but you have to go and get it. And I've been fortunate that my love and my my zest for this game has never wavered at all. I've always been intrigued by it and motivated by it. I've never had a problem with being burned out whatsoever. I love playing, I love competing and just trying to be the best version of myself I can be out there and sometimes I've been pretty good over my career. Sometimes it hasn't been very good. So I just love waking up with the possibility of maybe that day is going to be one of those good days. And in this game, you know, if you just keep yourself in shape and and keep the keep the fire going, it's it's a game that can reward you for a long time. And I'm living proof of that.

VO > Cink’s first full season on the PGA Tour began in 1997 and over the 662 events played, he has eight career PGA Tour wins, which includes the 2009 Open Championship. But on May 21st, he will turn 50 and he's ready to become a rookie all over again.

VO OC > We have some big plans for the 50th birthday. We already just had my wife's 50th last week and we took a couple of our friends out to Las Vegas and Zion National Park for a week to do a little bit of kind of both ends of the spectrum, a little glitz and glamor and some gambling, and then some outdoorsmanship and some hiking and just had a fabulous time. So for my 50 year going to the Bahamas, we've got a few couples going with us, some of the golfers and some wives that we have been close to it for a long time. And we're just going to kick back for about five or six days in the sun, in the sand and chill. And when I come back, it'll be five oh, right staring me at the face and we'll go from there.

VO > And that is our time for this edition of Learning Center. Another major moment will soon arrive on our tour. Until then, I'm Vince Cellini, and as always, we thank you for watching.