**24CUTPLAY INTERNATIONAL MASTER SCRIPT**

**Cold Open**

SEAN: It's the 50th PLAYERS Championship. No one's ever repeated at THE PLAYERS Championship, but really, I mean you can't have a better candidate than Scottie Scheffler right now.

PAUL: Historically this has not been a tournament that you win your first time, but if there was a year to do it it might be someone from here.

CELIA: There's always an unexpected player that makes a splash. Last year it was Min Woo Lee, a year later he's a fan favorite.

SEAN: Stressful week, this is a very stressful golf course.

PAUL: Preparation is over, time to get this thing started.

SEAN: This PLAYERS Championship is underway and this one has history behind it.

CELIA: Welcome to the 50th PLAYERS Championship...

**The CUT Titles**

**Celia: ...and welcome to PGA TOUR: The CUT.**

**On-Site Week Intro**

CELIA: New building, almost done.

SEAN: Look in this camera area? Alright, we're good?

PAUL: Morning. PLAYERS week, let's go.

NATS: PLAYERS week, is this your first one?

PAUL: First PLAYERS, yeah. It's exciting to see all the buzz.

CELIA: Easy to see how this can be a launching pad for up-and-coming names in the sport in general.

SEAN: This is week really unlike any other. It's obviously one of the biggest weeks of the year, but at the same time we're in our backyard, we're in Ponte Vedra, we're sleeping in our own beds, and really all of our staff is here.

CELIA: When did you get here?

PAUL: I got here around 8:30. Grabbed some breakfast, walked out to the putting green, saw who was over there, and then stopped over here and doing some writing. Just getting ready for the day.

SEAN: It makes it somewhat easier than you'd think a week like this would be. It's a huge week, but everyone is here to help contribute to those efforts.

PAUL: We've got a couple pressers, Jay will talk. We've got Scottie, that's obviously storyline 1A, 1B, 1C, how he's going to respond both defending his title here, but also last time we saw him he was dominant at Bay Hill.

**On-Site with Scottie Scheffler**

SEAN: So it's Tuesday, about 11 a.m., and Scottie Scheffler has just started his PLAYERS preparations with a practice round on the back nine, probably just get in nine, have an easier day after obviously the big win on Sunday. You got to pace yourself heading into this week.

SEAN: He's the number one player in the world, number one player int he FedExCup, coming off a five-shot win that really was a completely dominant performance all around. We all know Scottie is a record-setting ball-striker, maybe the best ball-striker since Tiger. But the putting has been an issue over the last year. He said his goal was to stop trying to be so perfect on the greens, accepting misses if he feels like he was doing the right things. And he putted great, and when you combine that ball-striking with his great putting, then he's unstoppable, and so there's no reason to think he can't do it again this week and make some history at this event.

NATS: Scottie, no one's defended a title here so far ever. What do you think makes it so tough?

SCHEFFLER: I just think it's a golf course where you don't see a lot of repeat winners in general. That's why I think it's one of the best places we play on TOUR just because it really doesn't suit one type of player. I think it's a special place to come back year after year and get to play this golf course and compete with the best players in the world and the best players on our TOUR, and it's always a fun week to come here and compete.

SEAN: With this being a venue that guys come back to every year, they're not learning the golf course over again. They know how to play it, a lot of the guys like Scottie, Viktor and Rory, they've played it tons of times. They know the tricks that Pat Dye's laid out there, it's more getting a feel for how it's going to play this week.

PAUL: Yeah Scottie said the greens are really receptive, but once they're on the greens it's really firm. So they're trying to find that balance of how soft is it gonna be, how is it gonna progress over the day. But I think like you said, today's almost like a formation lap, if we're going to compare it to NASCAR. Everyone's just kind of figuring things out, trying to figure out where their game's at compared to the scores, what the conditions are like. Tomorrow they'll refine, and they'll really get into it once the play starts.

**On-Site First Timers**

PAUL: We're just getting kind of set with all the first timers. You've got to strategize a bit. First timer on the the first timers.

NATS: Cufflinks commemorating your first PLAYERS Championship. Sweet, thank you so much. You know Tyler Dennis? Oh yeah, how's it going? Good to see you, congratulations.

PAUL: Got Kev out here, a veteran of it, showing me around. Kev's responsible for our First Timers column today highlighting some of the some of the guys.

KEVIN: Here's the man himself.

KIM: How are ya? Good to see you.

KEVIN Great to see you. Welcome to Jacksonville.

KIM: Thank you, appreciate it.

KEVIN: I live 10 minutes up the road.

KIM: Really? Oh that's perfect.

KEVIN: I know, get to sleep in my own bed, go to my own place. It's nice.

PAUL: This class of first timers is one of the more accomplished that we've had in recent years coming up into this. Ludvig's won, he's on a Ryder Cup. Then you've got Nick Dunlap, first Amateur to win in 30 years. You have Vincent Norrmann, who's won last year as a rookie. You got Austin Eckroat who just won last week. Jake Knapp who just won a couple of weeks ago.

KEVIN: What up sir?

KNAPP: How are you?

KEVIN: Doing well.

KNAPP: Great to see you.

KEVIN: Great to see you.

KEVIN: You've been a pro for a long time, but now you're getting all this recognition and requests and being kind of a hot commodity here at this first timer's press conference. But just in a general sense, what's your take on just how this is all happening?

KNAPP: I enjoy competing and playing and this is all been a bit of a whirlwind. I'm doing my best to manage it.

KEVIN: Jake Knapp is just becoming quickly a buzzy name in the golf world.

KNAPP: Since I haven't been to most of these courses, I'm walking around and I have no idea where I'm going half the time. So there's definitely some things where, you know, guys will walk by like, 'welcome to the TOUR rookie' and that kind of stuff. So I'm still just kind of figure out the lay of the land every week.

KNAPP: Can you do the math, how many years have I been pro?

PAUL: What's the year?

KNAPP: Turned pro at the beginning of 2016. Eight years already.

PAUL: Only twice in this tournament's history as a first timer won. Obviously you only know what you know so far, but does it feel like a spot where, like you need to know where to miss and like, that experience could help?

KNAPP: It's not that a first timer can't win. I mean, I obviously think that I'm not here to not try and win. But yeah, just going to have to do my best to get comfortable on some of those shots.

KEVIN: It's fun to see him progress to this level and his success is super well earned. And to get this stage this week is going to be awesome to see how he plays.

**First Round Recap**

ANNC: Golden Sunshine to begin the golden anniversary edition of the PGA TOUR's biggest event, THE 50th PLAYERS. It's their championship from their home course, TPC Sawgrass.

SEAN: THE PLAYERS Championship is underway. Weather is perfect. Temperatures perfect, no wind. So really, it's about easing your way into the tournament. You want to make sure to, you know, get off to a strong start here and just set the stage the rest of this week but, you know, we're going to see low scores today. Scoring conditions, obviously, some guys are already going low. You know, we're watching Rory here birdie his first three holes other guys are off to strong starts and that's what you really expect in conditions like this on Thursday morning.

MCILROY: I didn't have many expectations going out there today because I was like, okay, feels good on the range and feels good in practice, but let's see how it is when you've got a card in your hand. There's something to be said for that, just sort of lessening the expectations a little bit and going out there and seeing what happens. But yeah, it was obviously a great start.

CELIA: Another guy off to a great start on Thursday is Xander Schauffele. Sitting in solo second right now. If there's anyone on the PGA TOUR that's in really great form, it's him. He's played in six events in 2024, four top-tens already, and he's played well at TPC Sawgrass as well. Nineteenth last season, and he finished runner up in his debut.

CELIA: There you go, tied the top!

SCHAUFFELE: Just playing good golf. Yeah, pretty confident with where my game's at, and it's nice to see -- I've been struggling with the putter a little bit, but it was nice to see some putts go in from distance today.

NATS: To help celebrate the 50th anniversary of THE PLAYERS Championship, please welcome, the one, the only, Mr. Jack Nicklaus.

CELIA: You're out here on your off day. That's some dedication to the craft. What'd you do, what'd you see?

PAUL: Heard a little few things about Jack Nicklaus possibly being out here for Scottie's first tee shot. My dad's a big Jack Nicklaus fan so had to come out and see it.

ANNC: Scheffler has to be careful with this one coming back for par.

SEAN: Scottie probably shocked the golf world by bogeying the first hole at TPC Sawgrass, but immediately did what you would expect, rolled off three straight birdies, makes the turn at two under par, a very solid start to the afternoon when conditions are usually tougher. Wind picks up a little bit. You've got some foot traffic on the greens. He's five behind Rory McIlroy and Xander Schauffle, but I have to think that Scottie, as he makes the turn, feels like he's right where he needs to be.

SCHEFFLER: It felt fairly stress free. I had the really good par there on 18. Outside of the start I played a lot of really good golf. It's nice to only have one bogey around this place and hopefully continue to do more of that the next few days.

CELIA: Kinda the perfect storm for some low scores out there. Low wind, pretty soft greens.

SEAN: Yeah on paper definitely makes it sound easy but rough was still thick, the greens here are small and it's hard to get up and down when you miss them and of course there's just so much water, so much trouble. So, I think it's no surprise that this leaderboard is stacked full of big names, you know, Rory McIlroy, Xander Schauffele, Wyndham Clark, Scottie Scheffler's two back. Because even though the scores are low, it was still a good test.

**Second Round Recap**

ANNC: Just getting started for our second round. Scottie Scheffler gets the quick turnaround to continue his title defense this morning.

ANNC: And he's actually getting his left shoulder and kind of the neck area getting worked on behind the tee.

PAUL: Yeah so we're, I don't know, four holes into Scottie's round, and he's showed some discomfort, first on the 12th hole, asked the rules official, was looking at his back kind of neck area, just asking if he could get some treatment. His game is fine but he's clearly showing some discomfort now. Right before his tee shot on the 15th he kind of hid behind some trees, got even more treatment. So, the number one player in the world, defending champ is struggling here on day two.

PAUL: According to comms, a player can receive a total of roughly 15 minutes of treatment, either then he's got to play through it or he's got to withdraw. He's still playing pretty well. Seems to want to play through it. He's been told the group's on the clock, so they've kind of got to speed it up. They've got to stay within pace of play. And so now this just becomes how much pain can Scottie tolerate as we play the rest of this round?

PAUL: How do you wanna handle this?

SEAN: I think someone needs to stay with him.

PAUL: I can do that.

SEAN: And then someone else can be in here, monitor Fitzpatrick, Wyndham. I mean, there's so many other big names, so many stories, that it's good to have someone on Scottie, see what happens, see how he finishes, and then someone else follows everything else.

CELIA: Just getting my day started Friday, round two. The greens were pretty soft on Thursday, now baking out a little bit. But a guy who is having no problem judging the speed of the greens is J.T. Poston.

CELIA: Wow. 34 feet for birdie. I did not expect that to go in, but that was awesome. He's, J.T. Poston's now nine under par, tied for second. Just one off the lead.

CELIA: How crucial was it to see those putts drop early on in the day?

POSTON: Putter is a strength of mine and so it's nice to see some go in early. You can make birdies if you're hitting in the fairway. It's scorable, the greens are great and they're soft but if you get out of position is still, still tricky enough.

ANNC: And Clark moves to 14 under par.

CLARK: I've really looked at how Scottie has been playing this year and last year, and I use him as someone to try to keep up with and he he plays good every week. And so my thing is just try to to be consistent.

CELIA: There's a bunch of guys that are still kind of in contention, but Wyndham's just got a pretty large lead.

SEAN: I mean it's incredible. This is not a golf course on paper that you would think would suit him. We talk about Scottie so much and the consistency is crazy. But, you know, since last year's players last week at Bay Hill was his only other win, Wyndham has really been the winningest top ten player in the world in this span. Obviously, the U.S. Open win, the Wells Fargo win, the Pebble Beach win. He's really finished a deal and big events in the past 12 months.

**The CUT Rejoin**

**Third Round Recap**

ANNC: It's a spectacular Saturday in Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida at the home of the PGA TOUR.

CELIA: We are headed out to pick up with Sam Burns. He is seven under on his round so far and played the front nine in 30. So we're going to see how he finishes.

ANNC: Don't give up on it yet Burtsy. Wow. Don't give up on it yet. No way, how about that?

BURNS: I knew if I could come out here this morning and post a really good number and kind of get myself back in the mix a little bit, I don't think I'll be close at the end of the day, but a lot closer than where I started.

PAUL: So for Sam Burns, who's still six back, that's not going to be enough. Those bogeys on 15 and 18 are going to hurt. He did a lot, but I'm not sure he did enough.

SEAN: Two of last year's major champions in contention.

PAUL: Yeah, Clark and Harman. We'll see how far Harman gets. He's already been through 11 and 12, which are two to the easier holes on this backside. So we'll see how many more he gets.

ANNC: Nine birdies, one bogey, eight under round of 64. The best of the week for Brian Harman on his third round Saturday. He's within one.

SEAN: What's been the biggest difference for you over these last two rounds compared to the first round?

HARMAN: You know, the first round was really frustrating because my preparation was so good this week. And then Thursday, just a dud. The last few days have felt more like what my preparation was like.

SEAN: What are you doing this afternoon?

PAUL: Probably Clark, Schauffele just depending on where things end. If it's Clark out to the races, I think that's a pretty clear storyline. Otherwise, battling back with with Xander.

SEAN: You've got birdie holes coming up. You can hit it in the water on 17, 18. Let's not commit anything too early. I'm sure we'll have plenty to write about.

ANNC: Oh. Wow. Very Short. Very short.

CLARK: Honestly, I just I made a bad swing and chunked it.

ANNC: That tee shot was 102 yards It is 118 to the front edge. That's a giant miss.

CLARK: It's unfortunate on a hole that's so iconic and has a bunch of trouble to have kind of your worst swing of the day but yeah, I followed it with a great swing and a great putt.

SEAN: Right now the story would be Wyndham had this four-shot lead, second largest in PLAYERS history, and now it's a bunched leaderboard.

ANNC: Xander Schauffele has just gone out there and played 17 holes and made no bogeys, 7 birdies to catch Clark.

CELIA: Well after Wyndham put it in the water on 17, Schauffele steps up to 18th tee with a one shot lead.

CLARK: It's going to be fun tomorrow. And you know, he has the upper leg right now and I'm hoping tomorrow I bring it and we can have some fireworks and play some great golf.

SCHAUFFELE: I'm gonna go to the range right now and try to clean up some of those missed fairways on the back nine.

CELIA: Xander holds a one shot lead over Wyndham after quite a battle today,

SEAN: The shot on 17 is what we're going to remember. But again, that's TPC Sawgrass. A couple swings can have an outsized penalty and you can lose a four-shot lead pretty easily.

**SERVPRO - Rapid Recovery**

**VO: THE CUT PRESENTS RAPID RECOVERY.**

**VO: AT THE 2023 PLAYERS CHAMPIONSHIP, SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER ENTERED THE FINAL ROUND WITH A TWO-SHOT LEAD BUT FOUND TROUBLE ON THE EIGHTH HOLE.**

ANNC: Scheffler seven Iron. That took a bad second bounce and now is going to have an awkward little stance but a better angle to chip down there, like Zing said, it's really severe.

SCHEFFLER: If you miss it pin high on that hole to either of those pins, it's you're more than likely going to make a bogey.

ANNC: Feet in the bunker, ball well above his feet, choked way down to the metal.

SCHEFFLER: All we were doing there was just trying to aim for the front edge and I hit a really good shot and the wind hit it and just pushed it a little left.

ANNC: Played the break. Look at this. Look at this. Scottie Scheffler. Multiple fist pumps, first birdie of the day chip in here on the par three.

SCHEFFLER: Fortunately, you know, that chip went in and that was just a good example of me playing smart there.

ANNC: Never going anywhere but in the hole.

**Final Round Recap**

ANNC: Another beautiful day in northeast Florida. This St. Patrick's Day 2024. The brilliant shades of green popping all across the stadium course.

CELIA: Final round plans. What, what are y'all thinking?

SEAN: I think just monitor the leaderboard. I mean, there's going to be stories probably from beyond that, but today is about one thing and it's who wins.

CELIA: Well despite dealing with neck discomfort this week, Scottie Scheffler, the defending champion, is very much still in. He has a clean card so far as he gets close to making the turn, including an eagle and two birdies and now he's just one off the lead.

ANNC: He got this new putter. He got a little taller. Putter's longer, the mallet.

CELIA: We've got a new co-leader.

SEAN: 50th players and he'd be the first one to go back-to-back. I think that speaks to TPC Sawgrass, how you have to do everything well here. It doesn't favor one style of play and how hard it is just to win one PLAYERS, let alone go back-to-back and then you've got a guy who's been hurt for the better part of two days, might win his second week in a row. I think it's just crazy. I mean, Scottie Scheffler, if he can't be beat when he's injured, when are you going to beat him when he's healthy?

CELIA: Well, we knew this was going to be a heavyweight battle. It's just a matter of who between. Scottie Scheffler, seven under on his day so far through 15 but Xander Schauffele still has the one shot advantage right now.

ANNC: This would be an incredible save. And the first back-to-back holes bogey or worse the entire week for Schauffele comes at the worst time.

SEAN: It's hard, you know, playing with the lead always. There's more pressure obviously. You're later in the day, there's a little bit of wind.

ANNC: This is over cutting as well. Gonna miss the fairway right.

SEAN: They've just been in neutral. I don't think either one would say they played horribly, but there's fine lines here and if you're a little off in this golf course, you get penalized and it's hard to make birdies and I think that's what we've seen from them.

ANNC: Now for a 64, Scottie Scheffler will see if 20-under is good enough. Saves his best for last.

ANNC: Clark is 17 feet away. Make, he's in a playoff, miss and Scheffler makes history. Unbelievable! How did that not drop?! But Scottie Scheffler is the 50th PLAYERS Champion and the first to go back-to-back.

CELIA: Wow, history at TPC Sawgrass.

SEAN: Kind of a crazy finish. I mean, I think we thought maybe best case Scottie's in a playoff but wins it outright. Plenty of chances around him but he did enough to get it done.

SCHEFFLER: It's good to be sitting back here again. You know, today was another battle. It was a hard-fought week. Um, you know, a lot of guys played some really good golf this week. You know, a few of them finished at 19; I finished at 20. That's some really good golf around this course.

SCHEFFLER: I needed some help, obviously, going into today if I wanted to win the tournament and I felt like if I could go out and shoot a good round on the front nine, I could put myself in it as long as you know, one of them didn't shoot you know, 4 or 5-under on the front, as well. Going into days like today it's nice coming out on top for sure.

CELIA: Are we witnessing something historic with what he's been able to do?

SEAN: He is the unquestioned number one player in the world and he's been that for most of the last two years.

**VO: SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER'S TITLE DEFENSE AT THE PLAYERS CHAMPIONSHIP MEANS HE REMAINS ATOP THE COMCAST BUSINESS TOUR TOP 10.**

**FEC Standings**

**VO: MEANWHILE SCHEFFLER'S LEAD IN THE FEDEXCUP STANDINGS GROWS EVEN LARGER WITH THE WIN, AND WYNDHAM CLARK SITS COMFORTABLY IN THE SECOND SPOT AFTER BACK-TO-BACK RUNNER UP FINISHES.**

**Rollout**

NATS: Thankful for the volunteers and the fans.

NATS: I'm just very thankful to have such a great support system, not onyl at home but have a great team around me as well.

NATS: You know the drill here, you get to look at it, but you can't sign it.

NATS: That's quick work, I like that.

CELIA: Much like the battle to the finish, there were so many exciting moments this week. Scottie Scheffler maintains his strong hold atop the FedExCup and the Comcast Business TOUR Top 10. Thanks for watching PGA TOUR: The CUT. We'll see you next time.

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