***COLD OPEN***

**THE PGA TOUR’S GOLD STANDARD REACHES A MOMENTOUS MILESTONE.**

**FOR HALF A CENTURY, THIS CHAMPIONSHIP HAS NOT ONLY LIVED UP TO THE ESTEEM OF “THE PLAYERS” IN NAME, BUT IN ESSENCE.**

**THE STRIKING STADIUM COURSE AT TPC SAWGRASS IS PRIMED FOR THE MOST SIGNIFICANT CONTEST YET…**

**FOR THOSE COMPETING FOR THE GRAND STATUE COVETED BY ALL…**

**AND COMMEMORATE 50 YEARS OF THE PLAYERS CHAMPIONSHIP.**

***TEASE***

ADAM SCOTT: Coming to Sawgrass is always a good feeling for me and has been for nearly 20 years since winning here.

ANNC: Scott survives!

MIKE TIRICO: This place rises to the level of the competition and brings out the best in the best names in the sport.

ANNC: He's remarkable.

ANNC: Tournament Players Champion!

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Just the best field and golf, period.

VIKTOR HOVLAND: My favorite course architect is Pete Dye and I think he designed an absolute gem.

ANNC: Pete Dye will go for a swim today.

JORDAN SPIETH: Every time I come back, I'm like, wow, such a beautiful piece of land.

RORY MCILROY: The history of this event and what it means to PGA TOUR players. It is our championship, and it really feels special.

ANNC: Rory McIlroy is a PLAYERS Champion.

DAN HICKS: There are very few events in sports that you know when you go into it, you're guaranteed drama…

ANNC: Be the right club today. Yes!

HICKS: There’s no other place like it.

ANNC: And the cheers reverberate around TPC at Sawgrass!

ANNC: Better than most! Better than most!

RICKIE FOWLER: This is our championship; it doesn't favor anyone. That's why you have a great list of champions.

ANNC: Rickie Fowler owns the island green.

FOWLER: Just honored to be a part of it.

TONY FINAU: It's a golf tournament that if you win, your legacy of sealed. You'll be known as one of the best that's played in your era.

ANNC: Wire to wire champion, Jason Day.

SPIETH: The names on the trophy are some of the best to ever play the game.

TOM KIM: It's always been a dream of mine to hold that trophy at the end of the week.

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Walk up 18 in the celebration immediately after was something for a long time.

ANNC: When the heat was on. It was Scheffler who handled it the best.

SCHEFFLER: I can't say how thankful I am to be the PLAYERS Champion.

**CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF THE PLAYERS CHAMPIONSHIP…**

**THE GOLDEN ERA.**

***1974 THE PLAYERS CREATION***

**THROUGHOUT ITS HISTORY, TPC SAWGRASS HAS PROVEN A WORTHY TEST FOR THE EVENT.**

**BUT IT WAS ANOTHER REVERED LAYOUT, WITH A PGA TOUR HISTORY OF ITS OWN, THAT SET EVERYTHING IN MOTION.**

DARREN DEVORE: Atlanta Country Club has a long and storied history in the game of golf. Underscore with our partnership with PGA TOUR for really 30 years from 1966 through 1996 When we hosted the wildly popular Atlanta classic.

DAVE O’HAREN: In the early years of The Classic, I remember it was sort of a growing time that it felt more, more like a regional tournament.

LAURY LIVSEY: Commissioner Dye felt like the one thing that was missing with the Tour for the touring players was that there was not a significant tournament. So, he wanted to create a tournament that would be just for the players. And it was quote from Johnny Miller when the tour announced that they were going to play Atlanta Country Club for the new tournament. He really liked the idea because he really liked the golf course, and he was not in the minority. I think it was a very popular golf course for the guys who had been playing that tournament.

DEVORE: The Tournament Players Championship is the strongest field in golf. I think that's what Commissioner Beman had in mind when he set up The Players Championship.

JACK NICKLAUS: I thought it was great concept to have a Players Championship and the first trophy was the Joe Dey trophy. That was a good start to a tournament has become a very significant tournament in the game of golf.

O’HAREN: And then all of a sudden, the TPC showed up and the whole world was focused on the Atlanta Country Club.

ANNC:  From the Atlanta Country Club in Atlanta, Georgia. It’s the Tournament Players Golf Championship.

NATS JIM MCKAY: The Tournament Players Championship. It's not for the club pros, it's not for the amateurs, it’s only for the top 144 players this year so far on the PGA TOUR.

JOE INMAN: It felt different when you walked up on the practice tee and you saw Arnold Palmer, Johnny Miller, Tom Weiskopf, Jack Nicklaus, you know, you go down the list Al Geiberger, Lou Graham, all the ones that were great players, all of them were here.

NATS DEANE BEMAN: For years, the players have felt that there was a need to have a climax to the golf season. Strictly speaking, we wanted the significance of the tour to be brought to a conclusion. And we wanted it to be open to players who had contributed to the development of the tour through the year and had contributed to the success of that tour. And we're dedicated to bringing to the golfing public and to sports fans in general a championship of the tour.

DEVORE: It's very clear, when you read about the history of The Players Championship that Commissioner Beman had high aspirations for the Tournament Players Championship. The intent was for it to be the strongest field and golf. If you go back and you read the initial documents and press releases and things that the professionals were saying at the time, all the professionals acknowledged that the Tournament Players Championship, even the inaugural 1974 was the strongest field in golf.

LARRY NELSON: In the beginning, you wanted to pick the best golf course, or you wanted to pick the best golf course condition. And I think that's what they got. In the inaugural event here in Atlanta Country Club.

INMAN: It was difficult enough to be championship. It had such following from the people. So, you had big galleries, enthusiastic galleries, and you had what you felt like was a championship course. You weren't playing one of the ones that was wide open, then you can hit it anywhere and it was short, and they shot a million under you know, this one was more difficult.

NELSON: To actually qualify for the first Players Championship and 74, it was really nice because it was only 20 minutes from my home here in Atlanta. And so, it was a fun event for me you had all the best players. So, it was one of those things that you really wanted to play good, but I was so excited that didn't know how that was going to turn out.

ANNC: Okay, the winner of the first Tournament Players Championship is the great Jack Nicklaus.

NELSON: We were very fortunate. Nicklaus was the one who won the inaugural event.

NICKLAUS: This built into a significant tournament for all the players enjoyed playing in it, and proud to win it. As I was proud to win the first.

NELSON: It just kind of put a checkmark on what Beman wanting to do to get the right champion, the best player and that's really the way it should be.

NATS NICKLAUS: Obviously, I'm delighted of course, you know, we’re playing a lot of other major championships and that are not our own tournament. This is our own tournament the players tournament and of course we want to build it to be as big as we possibly can, of course, winning it for the first time is, makes me obviously feel very proud.

DEVORE: To have arguably the best player in the history game to have not only won the first Tournament Players Championship, but to have won the Players Championship when it was held here at Atlanta Country Club is something that is very unique.

ANNC: The man is really something else, Jack Nicklaus going to minus 17.

INMAN: As time has gone on, you realize what a major championship this is. And the influential great players like a Nicklaus, like Rory now or like Scheffler, their career just won't be finished until they win a Players Championship. We just were unaware of how important that first step was.

***SEGMENT B***

***TPC SAWGRASS SCENE SET***

JORDAN SPIETH: I drive in I’m like, ‘wow, it’s such a beautiful piece of land.’

VIKTOR HOVLAND: When you enter the property, you do feel at home. Everyone feels really comfortable here.

RORY McILROY: You arrive at this amazing clubhouse, and you have this amazing practice facility, and the golf course is in the most amazing shape. For a PGA TOUR member, it definitely feels like coming home.

**WHILE TPC SAWGRASS IS NOW SYNONYMOUS WITH THE PLAYERS CHAMPIONSHIP, A COURSE ROTATION WAS SET FOLLOWING THE INAGURAL EVENT… WHICH LED TO THREE DIFFERENT VENUES HOSTING JACK NICKLAUS' THREE TITLES.**

***JACK NICKLAUS WINS 3 PLAYERS CHAMPIONSHIPS***

ANNC: The winner of the first Tournament Players Championship is the great Jack Nicklaus.

SEAN MARTIN: Jack Nicklaus winning the first one – winning three of the first five – it shows that it's a big event because Jack Nicklaus wins all the big events.

ANNC: Jack Nicklaus – with a round of 65 – has broken the record for the Tournament Players Championship.

ANNC: It’s over. He’s remarkable! Nicklaus has won the Tournament Players title three out of five years.

JACK NICKLAUS: To have won three PLAYERS Championships is always a very special thing on my resume. Nobody else has done that, so that's even makes me even prouder.

***NOTABLE WINNERS: 1974-1981***

**IN THE PLAYERS CHAMPIONSHIP’S FIRST *FOUR* YEARS OF EXISTENCE, THE EVENT WAS HELD ON *FOUR* DIFFERENT GOLF COURSES …**

JACK NICKLAUS: THE PLAYERS Championship moving from course to course made it unusual and different.

ANNC: Al Geiberger has won the Tournament Players Championship!

ANNC: Mark Hayes has won the Tournament Players Championship.

**NOW SETTLED IN THE NORTHEAST CORNER OF FLORIDA, SAWGRASS COUNTRY CLUB’S FIRM FAIRWAYS AND BLISTERING SEABREEZE PROVIDED A CHAMPIONSHIP-LEVEL TEST…**

ANNC: Raymond Floyd is the 1981 TPC Champion!

ANNC: Long live Lee Trevino!

ANNC: What a champion! Lanny Wadkins! Boy, he wins the big ones!

LANNY WADKINS: This is the toughest conditions we see all year and to win here is just very, very satisfying.

TOM ALTER: When Jack won the 1978 PLAYERS Championship, the conditions were brutal and the scores were super high. Afterwards, he went to Commissioner Beman and was like, ‘that's the least fun I've ever had winning a tournament.’ And I think that was the impetus to find a permanent home.

***THE CREATION OF TPC SAWGRASS***

DEANE BEMAN: As it became my responsibility to build THE PLAYERS, I thought the best way to get the tournament at a higher level, was to hold it in the same place every year, so that people would be familiar with what they're seeing year after year.

VERNON KELLY: Well, Deane had attempted to purchase the Sawgrass golf course and facilities. And the board, at that time, was very conservative, and felt like the TOUR’s purpose was to host golf tournaments. It was kind of a radical idea. But Deane has always been a visionary.

TOM ALTER: When Deane and the PGA TOUR could not come to an agreement with Sawgrass Country Club, he explored other options, and he found this piece of property that was owned by the Fletchers.

DEANE BEMAN: My job was to convince the Fletchers that, if they sold me 415 acres for a dollar, that it was not just a good deal for me, but they were gonna benefit as much as we were.

VERNON KELLY: It increased the value of their land by building a golf course, so it really was a win-win.

DEANE BEMAN: We're building the Tournament Players Club, which is really a new dimension in tournament golf. It's what I call stadium golf. I'm convinced that this is a future of, of professional tournament and competitive golf.

TOM ALTER: Deane Beman had an affinity for Harbour Town – the collaboration that Pete Dye and Jack Nicklaus had and then the golf course that they produced – which was really revolutionary at the time; lots of severe dog legs, lots of railroad ties, and to be honest, it's not the longest golf course. And Deane never hit the ball far. So, I think he really, truly appreciated golf courses that were designed to reward the player who could hit it straight and think his way around the golf course. And so, I think he found a kindred spirit in Pete Dye.

DEANE BEMAN: I was Pete Dye fan. And I thought he could produce a golf course that the players would enjoy, and love and that the gallery would enjoy because we were building a stadium golf course.

PETE DYE: Deane had a great idea of how to promote golf and having a golf course they would take care of the gallery. And he started out with me on a real shoestring.

VERNON KELLY: Pete came to town, and they were sitting at the table tossing back ideas and Deane told him, you know, I want similarity on the start of the front nine and the back nine, so no player is advantaged or disadvantaged.

DEANE BEMAN: I wanted the routing to be in a way that somebody could walk a couple of hundred yards and maybe see a couple tee shots, a couple second shots and a couple of greens, in a very small area.

VERNON KELLY: And then said, ‘I want three finishing holes that create a lot of drama,’ so it would make for a really good entertainment. Pete said, ‘you mean like this?’ And he picked up a napkin and starts making a sketch and shows it to Deane and Deane said, ‘exactly.’

BOBBY WEED: His sketches are famous. Pete would take a topo map and he would sketch out a routing plan. The next most important thing he would focus on was the balance of the golf holes; left to right or right to left. And that's about as much as we had to start with.

BOBBY WEED: Pete told me one time; you show me a golf course built by a set of plans; I'll show you a bad golf course. Instead of drawing with a pen, he would draw with a bulldozer.

SEAN MARTIN: Pete Dye was known for tantalizing golf holes that could be both prosperous or penalizing if you if you don't execute and 17 is that in a nutshell. Not only do we think TPC Sawgrass when we think of the island green, but we think of Pete Dye.

PETE DYE: When we were digging the area around where the 17th green is now, they kept digging and found sand. And they just kept digging it and digging it because I needed all the sand in the world for the fairways. And finally, I just had a big hole down there. And Alice came by, and I said, ‘what am I going to do?’

ALICE DYE: I don't have a place to put the 17th green. I said, ‘Pete, why don't you put it right back where you had it, bulkhead it, and fill up that big ole hole with water.’

PETE DYE: I said, ‘you're crazy. I’ll get shot.’

DEANE BEMAN: We have one of the great finishing holes in golf. An opportunity as we've seen the players making two to be able to win the tournament, and other players making fives and sixes to lose the tournament.

VERNON KELLY: In a very traditional game where things change very slowly, it became one of the most famous holes overnight.

NATS: The PGA TOUR’s new Tournament Players Club represents a new direction for golf…stadium golf, the greatest innovation for spectators since the TOUR began. Stadium golf. The concept of tomorrow; golf's future has arrived.

PETE DYE: It'll be playable for all players, but I think it has a little Scottish tone to it and it has some individualistic characteristics I think that you'll find a little different than a lot of conventional golf courses.

SEAN MARTIN: ‘82 is a perfect debut for TPC Sawgrass and especially that finish.

ANNC: Jerry Pate, 8-under par in this inaugural Tournament Players Championship at the Tournament Players Club.

DEANE BEMAN: When Jerry Pate was coming down the fairway after his second shot on the green and he was certain of winning, he started jabbering a little bit about throwing Pete in the lake.

JERRY PATE NATS: Pete Dye will go for a swim today.

DEANE BEMAN: I became aware that he also had his eyes on me. [LAUGH] So, I suspected that once Pete got in, I was going to be the next one.

SEAN MARTIN: It's a scene that we still see 40 years later, which I think is all we need to know. It gave the tournament identity. It made it an exciting must-watch event. And so, you could not have asked for a much better debut than, than 1982.

VERNON KELLY: Deane was visionary. I mean honestly, if we had failed, it would have been horrible. And so, failure wasn't an option.

DEANE BEMAN: I'm not sure anybody else could have done what Vernon did. Based on all the hurdles that had to be overcome, I think it turned out spectacular.

BOBBY WEED: There was probably nobody else that could have built a golf course on this piece of property, other than Pete Dye. And with great guys like Vernon Kelly and of course Deane. This was the genesis of stadium golf and there was a lot riding on this golf course which was going to host an event that ultimately evolved into THE PLAYERS Championship.

***SEGMENT C***

***FIRST-TIMERS***

**THE 50TH SHOWING OF THE PLAYERS CHAMPIONSHIP WELCOMES MORE THAN A DOZEN FRESH FACES IN THE FIELD.**

ANNC Another goal reached for the Swedish sensation!

ABERG: THE PLAYERS is obviously such a big tournament. I'm just very fortunate to be a part of it.

NORRMAN: From what I've seen on TV, I know it plays so firm. You actually have to experience some of these courses to be ableto see how tough it is. It’s such a cool event and I’m really excited to play.

**WINNING ON THIS STAGE IS NO SMALL FEAT ESPECIALLY FOR ONE MAKING THEIR TOURNAMENT DEBUT AT TPC SAWGRASS.**

ANNC: This is at 17. The leader now, Hal Sutton.

**A TRIUMPH ONLY ACHIEVED TWICE; THE FIRST BY HAL SUTTON IN 1983.**

ANNC: That’s a true test of nerve and skill right there. And youth!

**AND NEARLY 20 YEARS LATER BY CRAIG PERKS IN 2002.**

ANNC: Oh, that’s beautiful. Are you kidding me?! And that is going to put it away!

TOM ALTER: You need to know the firmness of the course will play because there's lots of quirky bounces around here, it's a lot to learn, it can be really challenging and difficult for a new timer to pick up on all that stuff right away.

SEAN MARTIN: Visual deception was a big part of Pete Dye’s golf courses. With experience you start to learn some of Pete’s tricks, and you realize that fairway’s a little wider than I thought it was, or the trouble’s not as close to the green than it looks like. There is a certain amount of comfort that can come over the years, maybe some of the intimidation starts to go away.

**BUT IT ONLY TOOK 24-YEAR-OLD FRED COUPLES THREE ATTEMPTS TO OVERCOME THE INTIMIDATION TPC SAWGRASS PRESENTED.**

***FRED COUPLES 1984 VICTORY***

ANNC: The 1984 edition of the Tournament Players Championship and a lot of things happening. Fred Couples still has the lead at minus 8.

SEAN MARTIN: The biggest thing for 84 when I think about it is it was Freddy before he was Freddy. He was well known as a hot shot and an up and comer and then definitely cemented that by beating that list of Hall of Famers.

LAURY LIVSEY: It was just a who's who of golf, at that tournament, which is what Deane wanted. The best players in the world, gathering every year at one place to play together. That was a big deal. That was a really big deal. He had played two previous PLAYERS and he’d missed the cut both times.

FRED COUPLES: I played 82 and 83 and shot some pretty high scores. And I went out in the second day shot 64.

ANNC: Makes it look very easy. Supremely confident young man.

FRED COUPLES:  I got off to a red-hot start and I just kept rolling. And the reason being is, you know, I felt like I was at a young age a good player. And it just kind of happened. And then, everyone said, well, let's see how he does in the weekend, and actually played pretty darn good golf.

LIVSEY: He had future star written on him but had only won once on TOUR and came in and stared down the best players in the world.

ANNC: A lot of great names close to the top of the leaderboard.

TOM ALTER: Right behind him were Seve Ballesteros and Lee Trevino, arguably two of the top 12 players in the history of golf. Nine other guys in that top 15 made it to the Hall of Fame. And that doesn’t include three other guys who were major championship winners.

LIVSEY: That leaderboard was just stacked all weekend long and he ended up denying Lee Trevino a second PLAYERS Championship title because he beat him, and here's the young guy beating the cagey veteran.

ANNC: It’s a win! Great play!

ANNC: Well for today, Fred Couples is the best. The 1984 champion of the Tournament Players Championship.

LIVSEY: If you look back at that now, it was important and one of the reasons he's in the Hall of Fame is because he won the PLAYERS Championship twice, and the voters would look at who he beat in 1984 at such a young age to do that.

FRED COUPLES: For a 24-year-old guy on the tour, winning The Players Championship, it was a very good day.

***NOTABLE WINNERS 85-92***

**FOLLOWING COUPLES’ MARQUEE WIN, THE ELEVATION OF THE EVENT CONTINUED TO UNFOLD…**

**AS EVIDENCED BY CALVIN PEETE BECOMING THE FIRST AFRICAN AMERICAN TO HOIST THE TROPHY THE FOLLOWING YEAR.**

ANNC: 14 under and a new record.

**1986 SAW JOHN MAHAFFEY ERASE A FOUR SHOT FINAL ROUND DEFICIT…**

ANNC: He never gave up.

**WHILE 1987 MARKED THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL PLAYER TO TAKE THE TITLE… SCOTLAND’S SANDY LYLE; IN THE FIRST SUDDEN DEATH PLAYOFF AT TPC SAWGRASS.**

ANNC: Sandy Lyle. Watch out for that.

**A TRIO OF AMERICANS CLAIMED THE NEXT THREE PLAYERS CHAMPIONSHIP TITLES.**

ANNC: Jodie Mudd is the 1990 Players Champion.

**UNTIL AUSTRALIA’S STEVE ELKINGTON CAME FROM FOUR SHOTS BEHIND ON SUNDAY IN 1991.**

ANNC: Look at this! He has it.

**AND IN THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY AT THE STADIUM COURSE – A NEW LOVE STORY STARTED TO UNRAVEL.**

ANNC: Unbelievable shot.

**DAVIS LOVE III’S FINAL ROUND SCORE OF 67 SEALED HIS FIRST PLAYERS TITLE… A WIN WHICH EXCEEDS OTHERS IN HIS CAREER THANKS TO HIS TIES TO THE EVENT.**

***DAVIS LOVE III***

DAVIS LOVE III:  My start in golf was Atlanta Country Club felt like this big giant golf course that I was growing up on.

DAVIS LOVE III: All of a sudden there's this new tournament and it was the PGA Tour's coming to have their biggest tournament.

DAVIS LOVE III: My dad was the pro and my mom worked in the merchandise tent and the pros came and they all knew my dad. And I just thought that was so cool as a kid, to be hanging around a PGA Tour event.

DAVIS LOVE III: My brother and I created a nice little strategy that since we lived on the second green, we would be the first concession stand that people got to, and so, we had a lemonade stand.

DAVIS LOVE III: And then as we moved down to the coast of Georgia and now, we're closer to where the Players Championship was at Sawgrass Country Club. And then I watched it move across the street to the TPC course. It's just amazing that I was a little kid and saw the first one and then followed it down to the coast to watch it grow.

DAVIS LOVE III: And then in 86, my first year on tour, I played well enough I get to go play in the Players Championship. And then I got paired with Ben Crenshaw on Saturday*.*

ANNC: 6 iron, 200 yards.  That is really some power in there.  That’s amazing.

DAVIS LOVE III: It was fun to be a part of something in the beginning. I'm just incredibly blessed to play in a bunch of them and to actually win the golf tournament and be a part of the history of such an incredible growth of an idea back then of Deane Beman.

**LOVE’S PLAYERS LEGECY WOULD ALSO SOON BE CEMENTED EVEN FURTHER, AS A RARE TREND IN TOURNAMENT HISTORY WAS ON THE HORIZON…**

***SEGMENT D***

***REJOIN***

*(NO COPY)*

***TOP PLAYER PURSUITS***

SAM BURNS: I can remember being a kid and hitting putts on the putting green thinking about winning THE PLAYERS Championship.

TONY FINAU: It’s a golf tournament that everyone would like to win and very few actually do.

MAX HOMA: I have always looked at this place and this event as one of the ultimate tests of golf.

JORDAN SPIETH: Any resume, if it has THE PLAYERS on it, it means something; and if it doesn’t have it, you’re missing something.

**THOSE HOPEFUL TO ADD THE PLAYERS TO THEIR PORTFOLIO UNDERSTAND IT’S MORE THAN WINNING A TOURNAMENT …**

COLLIN MORIKAWA: It’s about making history. You want to beat the best when they’re playing their best.

**TO JOIN THE WHO’S WHO IN THE GAME OF GOLF.**

***NOTABLE 1990s & MULTIPLE-TIME WINNERS***

NATS: Get down that slope … come on!

ANNC: Oh, what a wonderful golf shot. Oh, that’s brilliant.

TOM ALTER: You had to be the very best if you were outside of the United States to make it onto the PGA TOUR and then succeed.

ANNC: Nick Price has dominated the field.

**FOLLOWING THREE INTERNATIONAL WINNERS IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE DECADE, AMERICANS CLAIMED FOUR OF THE FINAL FIVE PLAYERS CHAMPIONSHIPS IN THE 90s …**

ANNC: Lee Janzen has won this 1995 PLAYERS Championship.

ANNC: Justin Leonard – at 25 – is the champion of the 25th PLAYERS Championship.

JUSTIN LEONARD: It’s such a demanding test and it just comes down to playing well at the right moment. It makes it very difficult to do it twice.

LAURY LIVSEY: The fact is it's hard to win on PGA TOUR period. It's really hard to win when you have a field like you have here. But guys know the course. They know where to hit it, they know where to miss.

ANNC: Fred Couples, eagle! What a time to hole a putt.

LAURY LIVSEY: Couples breaking through was a big thing.

TIM FINCHEM NATS: There’s only one man who’s ever won THE PLAYERS Championship more than once on this golf course and his name is Freddie Couples.

**COUPLES’ HISTORIC VICTORY IN 1996 IGNITED AN EIGHT-YEAR STRETCH THAT SAW FOUR CHAMPIONS WIN A SECOND PLAYERS TITLE …**

ANNC: Look at this … look at this! Oh my! Magical! That is better than the best!

TOM ALTER: They know how to seize the moment and they have that confidence that they had already won here.

ANNC: Hal Sutton is driving the wagon right now.

SEAN MARTIN: That was a great old versus young battle. The former phenom in Sutton against the you know, up-and-comer and new name on the block in Tiger.

NATS: Be the right club … be the right club today … yes!

TOM ALTER: I don't think you luck into winning THE PLAYERS Championship twice. It takes guts to win here. And those guys all have guts.

ANNC: Davis Love … going for it in two …

DAVIS LOVE III: Playing with Fred Couples on a bad weather Sunday; we thought we were going to have to grind it out. And then, all of a sudden, I started making a whole bunch of birdies.

FRED COUPLES: I thought someone would shoot a good round and win; I certainly never thought someone could shoot 64 in those conditions. But that is by far the best round I’ve ever seen.

DAVIS LOVE III: To hear him say that and continue to say that for years made me, not only proud to win the golf tournament, but what an incredible day.

SEAN MARTIN: Not only is it the very small number of guys who've won there twice, but they don't do it close together. Freddy is ‘84 and ‘96. Davis is 11 years apart. Tiger is 12 years apart.

***TIGER WOODS FEATURE***

ANNC: That is all that is left for Tiger Woods’ last great championship – he’s the 2001 PLAYERS Champion!

TOM ALTER: When Tiger Woods entered the 2001 PLAYERS Championship, he was coming off one of the greatest seasons in the history of golf in 2000, where he finished by winning the last three majors of the year. And he started 2001 kind of in a slump.

SEAN MARTIN: The pressure on Tiger at that time to finish the Tiger slam and you can tell at the time he's really starting to get frustrated with it.

TOM ALTER: The previous week he won at Bay Hill. So, he came in, finally snapping out of that slump and he put it all together, especially on Saturday.

TIGER WOODS: One of my most iconic moments I've ever had my career was the putt at 17. Coming down the hill…

ANNC: Johnny, that’s better than most…

TIGER WOODS: …going right-to-left over the hill…

ANNC: How ‘bout in? That is better than most…

TIGER WOODS: …back left-to-right at the end … putter up…

ANNC: Better than most!

TIGER WOODS: …huge fist pump. I threw it hard.

TOM ALTER: He played to the crowd with his fist pumps. And he pumps here...

TOM ALTER: And he pumps there.

TOM ALTER: And he pumps over here.

TOM ALTER: And the crowd's out of their minds.

ADAM SCOTT: Still the loudest roar I've ever heard on a golf course. It was insane.

MAX HOMA: I've probably watched it 1000 times since then.

GARY WOODLAND: You've seen it a million times, but it never gets old watching it go in.

LAURY LIVSEY: It was so epic, and it was just Tiger being Tiger.

TOM ALTER: The 2013 PLAYERS Championship was a very different experience for Tiger Woods’ second victory.

TIGER WOODS: Joey had this idea that this was our year. He was in my ear that we're gonna win THE PLAYERS Championship. It was just one of those things where he just, he loved the golf course. And then when I got there, for some reason I just felt comfortable. I had my game, and I got it going.

TOM ALTER: He is so smart at golf. And that's what you need to succeed here at TPC Sawgrass. You need to be smart and to know when to take on the risk and then pull off the shot.

SEAN MARTIN: 2013, very different swings, very different body, very different everything. And he's able to win on that golf course.

ANNC: And Tiger Woods is a PLAYERS Champion again – a dozen years removed from his first!

NATS: Mission accomplished. Told ya. Told ya. How ‘bout that, huh!? Awesome buddy; good work. I told you you’d get this track. Yes!

TIGER WOODS: I owe that win to JoJo, because he convinced me that I could do it and I'm pulling it off with him, just made it that much more special.

SEAN MARTIN: Tiger's the only player to win THE PLAYERS in March and in May. He would find different ways to get it done. And that's really part of his genius, that a variety of conditions, variety of courses, variety of factors, he could always overcome them and win.

LAURY LIVSEY: It was like two different Tiger Woods. Young, hot shot golfer, best in the world, best we've maybe ever seen – that stretch of golf he played there in the early 2000s.

SEAN MARTIN: Just a testament that really Tiger Woods can probably win anywhere, anyhow.

***SEGMENT E***

***INTERNATIONAL PRESENCE AND INTERNATIONAL STARS***

RORY McILROY: I remember always getting excited in March to sit down with my dad and watch THE PLAYERS Championship. Remember watching Tiger win in 2001. Adam Scott breaking through in 2004.

ADAM SCOTT: It means a lot to be a PLAYERS Champion. It was an event that was known in Australia from a young age for me.

**THE 2024 PLAYERS CHAMPIONSHIP IS FULL OF INTERNATIONAL STARS …**

VIKTOR HOVLAND: It’s just the most elite field in golf.

**BUT THE PLAYERS CHAMPIONSHIP FIELD DIDN’T ALWAYS REFLECT THE GAME’S GLOBAL TALENT…**

LAURY LIVSEY: Those first few years when the Tournament Players Championship started, you could look at any field and it was mostly Americans.

TOM ALTER: The first 17 years of THE PLAYERS Championship had one international winner, and that was Sandy Lyle in 1987.

ANNC: Watch out for that!

SANDY LYLE: The TPC was always on the radar for me to do well. This was a big tournament and there was big prize money. And also, the ten-year exemption for winning the tournament was huge.

LAURY LIVSEY: It's just been a straight line going up like this with international players. So, I think it was inevitable that international players were going to start having an impact here.

**DATING BACK TO LYLE’S GROUNDBREAKING VICTORY, NEARLY 50 PERCENT OF PLAYERS CHAMPIONS HAVE COME FROM OUTSIDE OF THE UNITED STATES …**

ANNC: And that is gonna (Are you kidding me!?) put it away!

**NEW ZEALAND’S CRAIG PERKS SPARKED A 13-YEAR RUN THAT YIELDED EIGHT INTERNATIONAL WINNERS FROM EIGHT DIFFERENT COUNTRIES …**

ANNC: It couldn’t have been much better for Stephen Ames!

ANNC: K.J. Choi is a PLAYERS Champion!

**WITH ONLY FIVE AMERICANS WINNING DURING THAT SPAN – THE PLAYERS CHAMPIONSHIP ESTABLISHED ITSELF NOT ONLY AS A MELTING POT FOR INTERNATIONAL STARS – BUT A PROUD REPRESENTATION OF GLOBAL HEROS.**

***ADAM SCOTT***

ADAM SCOTT: It's an event that's revered around the world for international players. And having a fairly large list of international winners it certainly has a special meaning.

SEAN MARTIN: Adam in 2004, sort of like Davis Love III in ‘92 and Fred Couples in ‘84, it was another example of THE PLAYERS Championship elevating the career of a great young player.

ANNC: Got it! 23-year-old Adam Scott takes the lead.

ADAM SCOTT: Playing with Ernie Els on Saturday was a really calming thing for me. And I think that gave me a little bit of confidence going into Sunday.

ANNC: He’s been rock solid. I’ll tell you this was a great pairing for Adam Scott. Very calm, very much the same kind of demeanor as Ernie Els.

ERNIE ELS: When Adam came out in 2000, I kind of took him under my wing a little bit. We played a lot of practice rounds together.  I always saw him as a as the next generation because I always felt he had such a great swing, a great temperament, and he's good for the game of golf.

ANNC: Just his third PLAYERS and if this 23-year-old is nervous, he certainly has not shown it so far. Very, very poised and confident.

ADAM SCOTT: I was feeling pretty good after birdying 11 and 12. But, it was around 14 when I saw that Padraig Harrington had posted a number. And all of a sudden, things become a bit more difficult.

ANNC: He slips down to a two-shot lead with four holes to play.

TOM ALTER: He kind of let the rest of the field back in. And Padraig Harrington, took advantage of it. He went five under on the last five holes.

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: I made the charge. I had a chance, but it wasn't really my tournament. I didn't feel gutted about losing to Adam because it was his to lose at that time.

ANNC: Perfect. This ball going down the right side. This is perfect. Another great swing. There’s the right club.

ADAM SCOTT: It's very hard not to race ahead and think about winning, think about what all comes with that. And I was doing a pretty good job of things. But I kind of had an in-between yardage going into 18. I put the ball back in my stance a little bit and, and got a little out of rhythm and, and over hooked it.

ANNC: It’s caught the water!

SEAN MARTIN: One of the most beautiful golf swings that you'll ever see. And yet it malfunctioned on the 18th hole.

ANNC: He’ll be lying three. Double bogey means playoff with Harrington. Up-and-down means victory.

SEAN MARTIN: The way he responded, I think, shows one reason why Adam Scott is the great champion that he is. Collect yourself, take your drop, and then hit the chip shot.

LAURY LIVSEY: He was looking to become the third Australian to win this tournament and I just remember how clutch he was.

ANNC: And Scott survives! The youngest champion in the history of THE PLAYERS Championship!

LAURY LIVSEY: You were looking at a future star, which is what he has become.

ADAM SCOTT: I have really special memories about winning that afternoon, and everything that came with it. So, for a 23-year-old kid to become the youngest winner of THE PLAYERS, it was, it was a really big boost for my career early on.

***SUCCESS BY COUNTRY***

**SCOTT’S VICTORY WAS THE FOURTH BY AN AUSSIE-BORN PLAYER …**

**TWENTY YEARS LATER, THEIR TOTAL OF SIX IS THE MOST BY ANY INTERNATIONAL CONTINGENT.**

**CONVERSELY, ENGLAND SHOCKINGLY HAS YET TO CLAIM A PLAYERS CHAMPIONSHIP …**

MATT FITZPATRICK: It probably is a little bit of a surprise because, you know, we produce some very good players.

**DESPITE 26 TOP-10 FINISHES BY ENGLISHMEN AT TPC SAWGRASS …**

ANNC: One last one in the chamber for Luke Donald.

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: It's an amazing stat that no Englishman has ever won it. When you look at some of the players that we've had over the years.

ANNC: Second shot of Nick Faldo – two back of the leader...

ANNC: No, it’s wet. That’s too bad.

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: I had a great chance to win in 2019...

ANNC: Just showing off now!

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: It didn't work out for me that week, but yeah, first Englishman will be very cool.

***RORY McILROY***

**WHILE ENGLAND STANDS WITH NIL IN THE TROPHY CASE … A RED-LETTER WINNER FROM THEIR NEIGHBOR IN NORTHERN IRELAND BROKE THROUGH IN RECENT YEARS…**

ANNC: THE PLAYERS has yet another incredible talent win its crown jewel! 

**BUT RORY MCILROY’S SAWGRASS MOMENT WASN’T ACCOMPLISHED OVERNIGHT.**

RORY McILROY: My history with TPC Sawgrass and THE PLAYERS Championship has been a little rocky. But it's always been a tournament that I've wanted to win.

NATS: Alright we’ll go ahead and get started. We’ll like to welcome Rory McIlroy to the interview room here at THE PLAYERS Championship.

RORY McILROY: It’s a golf tournament I grew up watching on TV, and it’s a great place, and you’ve seen a lot, a lot of great stories here over the years. I mean hopefully I can be part of one of those.

TOM ALTER: It's difficult for a player to win in his tournament debut because this course takes some knowledge.

RORY McILROY: I feel like over the past few years here, I've started to embrace this tournament and embrace the golf course more than anything else.

RORY McILROY: This is a tournament that I sort of struggled starting off with the first couple years I played. Feel like I’ve played a little bit better here as I’ve went along.

SEAN MARTIN: For Rory, the return to March, the golf course is softer, it plays longer. You don't have many players who drive a golf ball better than Rory McIlroy.

ANNC: He has been just about bulletproof on the back.

ANNC: Tracking toward the cup and it goes in, 15-under!

RORY McILROY: Kept telling myself two good swings and this thing’s yours.

ANNC: That is about as good as you can draw it up.

RORY McILROY: It was definitely one of the best swings I've ever made under pressure. And then from there, the rest of the hole is pretty simple.

RORY McILROY: To finally conquer that place – win on that golf course – it meant a lot to me, for sure.

ANNC: And Rory McIlroy is a PLAYERS Champion!

RORY McILROY: With everything that I have achieved in the game and that I want to achieve in the game, I would have been missing something if I wasn't able to call myself a PLAYERS Champion.

***SEGMENT F***

***MID 2010 MOMENTS TO PRESENT***

RICKIE FOWLER: Being on the 17th green and having a putt to win. And a really cool moment, I remember my caddie, Joe, was praying and hoping that I just hit a good putt.

ANNC:  Rickie Fowler owns the island green!

RICKIE FOWLER: To do everything exactly how I wanted to and being able to share that moment, the two of us, it was like we were literally standing on our own island.

**RICKIE FOWLER'S NOTABLE WIN IN 2015 KICKSTARTED A DYNAMIC LIST OF CHAMPIONS… ELEVATING THE STATURE OF THEIR RESUMES.**

**STARTING WITH JASON DAY, WHOSE CHAMPIONS STROLL DOWN 18 CAPPED OFF HIS EIGHTH WIN IN 15 MONTHS.**

JASON DAY SOT: To be able to walk off as a Players Champion is pretty special it is the toughest field in golf on one of the world's biggest stages, we hold that pretty high.

ANNC: 21-year-old Si Woo Kim from South Korea, he’s the youngest Players Champion ever.

**IN ONLY HIS SECOND START AT THE PLAYERS, A YOUNG CONFIDENT SI WOO KIM WON THE TITLE…**

**BUT THE LAST FIVE EDITIONS HAVE BEEN WON BY PROVEN CHAMPIONS.**

ANNC: Webb Simpson can add the title Players Champion to the resume.

ANNC: Rory closes the deal, after a lot of close calls.

RORY MCILROY:  Very proud, very honored to be able to call myself a PLAYERS champion.

ANNC**:** Justin Thomas has it!

JUSTIN THOMAS**:** This week was huge to win a big championship like this; it tested me mentally, physically, emotionally, and I'm very proud of myself for getting it done.

**OVERCOMING THOSE DEMANDS IS ONLY PART OF THE WINNING EQUATION.  REPEATEDLY ACHIEVING THAT SUCCESS IS A MORE ARDUOUS UNDERTAKING.**

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: We're all trying to chase that consistency. That's something that I've tried to chase for a number of years… That's what we're all trying to achieve in just pretty difficult game.

**CONSISTENCY AT TPC SAWGRASS – PERHAPS MORE THAN ANY EVENT – AS WE’VE LEARNED THROUGH 50 YEARS – IS AT A PREMIUM.**

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: It's such a great golf course in that sense where when you're hitting good, you can score low. But the minute you start missing fairways and you start getting offline, the golf course gets really difficult, really fast.

**SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER’S WIN AT THE PLAYERS WAS THE HIGHLIGHT OF HIS PLAYER OF THE YEAR CAMPAIGN. ALONG WITH HIS RECORD-BREAKING SEASON CONSISTENCY, ANOTHER PIECE OF THAT PUZZLE WAS A REPEAT VICTORY IN PHOENIX.**

ANNC: Back-to-back titles at the WM Phoenix Open. He knows how to defend.

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I was able to defend my title in Phoenix and then to win THE PLAYERS. That's a tournament I grew up watching people play on TPC Sawgrass for a long time and to be able to walk the fairways and finish that tournament off and was really special.

**BUT TO *REPLICATE* – WHAT HE WAS ABLE TO *DUPLICATE* IN PHOENIX, AT THIS YEAR’S PLAYERS – WILL BE NO EASY TASK…**

TOM ALTER: What I'm looking forward to most of the 2024 PLAYERS championship is to see if Scottie Scheffler could successfully defend his title.

**…AS THERE HAS NEVER BEEN A BACK-TO-BACK WINNER IN THE HISTORY OF THE EVENT.**

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: It's such a good golf course in a sense that it doesn't really suit one type of player. You don't really see the same guys year in, year out at the top of the leaderboard. It's always a mix and it's really the guys that are just playing the best at the time.

**IT’S A STAT THAT COULD BE CONSIDERED AN ANOMALY BY TODAY’S CURRENT PGA TOUR STANDARDS – BUT IN FACT, THE PLAYERS IS THE OLDEST TOURNAMENT ON THE CURRENT PGA TOUR SCHEDULE WITHOUT A SUCCESSFUL TITLE DEFENSE.**

JORDAN SPIETH: The course itself is probably why. So much can happen, you have to be so on your game.

RICKI FOWLER: The PLAYERS obviously with the golf course, it's not one that necessarily suits one specific type of player.

JASON DAY: It's just very difficult to go back-to-back because it just brings a different golf course every single day.  The spring can bring cold weather and can bring nice weather. And it can bring different types of wind.

ANNC: With the rain coming a switch in the wind. Especially notice over by 17.

JORDAN SPIETH: You can hit some shots depending on the weather that are pretty good and end up Just in some really tough spots with just the way Pete Dye designed it.

**NOT EVEN THE LEGENDARY FIRST CHAMPION COULD PULL IT OFF ON ITS INITIAL COURSE ROTATION…WHILE HE HAD DONE SO AT NINE OTHER EVENTS.**

**THOUGH THE GOLDEN BEAR HAS COME THE CLOSEST… WINNING THREE TIMES – ALTERNATING IN A SPAN OF FIVE YEARS…**

**BUT THE BEST HE COULD MUSTER FOLLOWING A WIN IS A TIE FOR FIFTH IN 1977.**

**TWO OTHER PLAYERS JOIN JACK AT THAT MARK FOR THE BEST FINISH IN A TITLE DEFENSE.**

TOM ALTER**:** Is very difficult to win because the field is so strong from number one to number 144. So, you have to compete against all the best at their best. So, you need to bring it every year.

RICKIE FOWLER: There's just a lot more guys that have a real chance of winning. It's the strongest field we play.

MATT FITZPATRICK: You look at the previous winners, it's not like you have a lot of the same guys winning. All sorts of different types of games have won there and I think it really varies.

**15 PAST PLAYERS CHAMPIONS HAVE REPEATED AT OTHER TOURNAMENT VENUES – GIVING PROPS TO THE DIFFICULTY OF THE STADIUM COURSE SINCE IT BECAME THE HOST COURSE IN 1982.**

**SINCE THEN – ONLY FIVE DEFENDERS HAVE CRACKED THE TOP TEN AFTER CONQUERING THE STADIUM COURSE THE YEAR PRIOR – AND ONLY SIX HAVE OPENED WITH A ROUND IN THE 60s.**

RICKIE FOWLER: It's not overly long; it's very much a shot makers golf course. It helps if you can move it both ways, but length isn't necessarily a big key.

COLLIN MORIKAWA: They've had a bunch of different winners, right? Short hitters, long hitters, drawers faders of the ball. Sawgrass is an amazing golf course.

**IN THE YEAR FOLLOWING VICTORY – DEFENDING CHAMPIONS PLAYED THE THREE CLOSING HOLES AT A COMBINED 84 SHOTS WORSE THAN THEIR TRIUMPH.**

JORDAN SPIETH: Your misses have to be in the perfect spots. The finish just requires such precision. It requires such a level of patience, too, because you don't really have to go low. You just can't make big mistakes. It's just the golf course that makes it so difficult to repeat.

TOM ALTER: Scottie Scheffler could be the first repeat champion in the history of the players because he has all the tools. He’s the best ball striker I've seen since Tiger. And what's amazing is you think he's going to slip and fall on every single shot.

SEAN MARTIN: As we've talked about TPC Sawgrass being so demanding from tee to green and there is right now no better player in that facet of the game than Scottie Scheffler. The best ball striker on the planet right now at one of the most penal golf courses that we'll see all year. It's a recipe for success that he doesn't have to worry about some of the things that other players do.

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Last year, I just had such a good ball striking week that I was able to kind of extend myself and stay out of trouble.

SEAN MARTIN: Scottie believes himself as he should, and I think that definitely makes it easier and also the ability to handle mistakes.

**WITH HIS SEEMINGLY UNFLAPPABLE CONSISTENCY – SCHEFFLER’S CHANCES MAY “BE BETTER THAN MOST” – CONSIDERING WHAT HE OVERCAME LAST YEAR DOWN THE STRETCH.**

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Going to number eight…That's kind of an area of the golf course where a lot of stuff was happening. There was guys kind of making moves in the wind had really started to pick up. I was just doing my best to try and stay patient; not trying to force things.

ANNC: Scottie Scheffler! First birdie of the day! Chip in here on the par 3!

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Then I got the chip in and then momentum starts happening and I'm walking off 12, I knew that it was me against a golf course at that point.

ANNC: The Scheffler victory train just keeps on rollin’! And back on top of the world!

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: It was such a great season being able to accomplish a lot of stuff that I dreamt about accomplishing as a little kid was great.

***ROLLOUT***

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER**:** It's really hard to put into words how special it is to win this tournament. It's so hard to defeat this field and this golf course. I'm very proud to have done it.

ADAM SCOTT:  The level of respect from your peers is high. And that is a nice feeling. It means a lot to be a Players Champion.

RORY McILROY: It’s history of this event and what it means to PGA TOUR players feels special.

**AN EXCEPTIONAL TOURNAMENT ON AN ICONIC GOLF COURSE – AFTER 50 YEARS, THE PLAYERS CHAMPIONSHIP STANDS ALONE.**

SEAN MARTIN: Deane Beman built a tradition. You return to the same place every year and history accumulates.

ANNC: Oh my. Oh!

DEANE BEMAN: I tend to think about things as they could be, not as they are. It gives me a great deal of pleasure to be able to know that fans of golf all over the world revere this tournament.

**WHO WILL BE CROWNED “THE GOLDEN CHAMPION”? ADDING THEIR NAME TO A LEGACY THAT WILL RESONATE WELL INTO THE NEXT 50 YEARS.**

RICKIE FOWLER: It never gets old coming back here. This is our championship.