Production Transcript for REWIND\_24PLAY\_SCHEFFLER.mp3

[00:00:26] >> The architect and the champions --

[00:00:37] >> All in the drink.

[00:00:38] >> For Fred Couples, cheers reverberate.

[00:00:41] >> Better than most.

[00:00:42] >> Winner of the Players Championship, Scottie Scheffler.

[00:00:44] >> The PGA Tour is proud to bring you the season-long race for the FedExCup. Now, coverage of the 2024 Players.

[00:00:51] >> What a day on Florida's first coast. Sunny, light, wind, temperature in the mid-70s, and some scores in the mid-60s. It's day one at the 50th playing of the Players Stadium Course, TPC Sawgrass. We are ready to settle in for some great action and a good leaderboard. Rory McIlroy, Xander Schauffele right there at the top. Let's take you back to some of the action that happened this morning. And it is McIlroy's sensational start. Birdies on the first three holes. So often the conversation is, is the wedge play dialed in? And the answer from Rory was emphatic early on in those first three holes. He then birdied 14 and 16. Let's take you to the tee at 17. It's playing 124 today. The big crowd let out a big roar. So that birdie at McIlroy to 6-under par. I mentioned the bogey on 18. Came back and got some of that back, which we'll share with you in a second. But let me take you one group ahead of what Xander Schauffele was doing. It looked quiet. Started his first eight holes. This is ninth hole of the day, his second at the 18th. And that really got that stretch started. We showed you. Schauffele was made birdie at 1, 2, and 3. Maybe this is the shot in the penalty area, but playing his second at the par-4 5th. And watch what Schauffele did with this shot. Just fabulous as he and McIlroy had their two names at the top of the board, bobbing back and forth for about an hour or so, and then Rory took the lead alone at the 6th with his birdie putt. And had it to 8-under, and we were thinking about what Hoge did last year, shooting 62 in the course record in question. But you just saw what happened at the 7th with the double. Rory's got two left. And the highlight of the morning, without a doubt, happened in the 10th group to come to 17, the New Zealander Ryan Fox.

[00:02:51] And the ace at the famed 17th hole. Ryan Fox brought him out of their seats early and set the tone for this good scoring day.

[00:03:06] >> He's put a drive in the water off the tee, so a drop that took some time to adjudicate. Now, his third as he plays the par-4 7th. Took over 6 minutes of the players in the group and a rules official to try to get a good sense of where that ball actually entered the penalty area.

[00:03:28] >> Peter Malnati over at the first hole. So the morning and the afternoon waves blend here.

[00:03:34] >> Ideal place to putt from hole high right of the hole location. Little break to the left. Nicely done.

[00:03:41] >> To the 5th, we go C.T. Pan has this putt for birdie. And he rolls it in. So C.T. Pan with a good round going. He's got a few to go and he's 4-under par. Very good scoring on this opening day. In the par 5, 535 yards, Matti Schmid sets to play his second.

[00:04:03] >> Front left hole location here today. There's a couple of ways to get it close. You can land a little right of the hole, let it release, or go right at it like that.

[00:04:12] >> Just do that for the eagle opportunity. For Schmid, the better second shots we've seen in there, the 26-year-old from Germany.

[00:04:24] >> Got it.

[00:04:25] >> One of the players making his debut at the Players. Jump up to the 13th hole, the second shot at this par 3.

[00:04:36] >> Yeah.

[00:04:36] >> One shot.

[00:04:37] >> Going to land it on the top level. Let it release down to the hole.

[00:04:42] >> Oh, this is beautifully done.

[00:04:44] >> How about that?

[00:04:46] >> Oh my goodness.

[00:04:48] >> Ludvig Aberg has a nice look at it, too.

[00:04:50] >> Yeah, this would be for the fourth birdie of the day. And he gets it. Not getting closest to the pin, though. That goes to Aaron Rai just inside 6 feet.

[00:05:01] >> Let's go to 9.

[00:05:01] >> And Rory, third.

[00:05:04] >> Yeah, see more of an easier arm swing there.

[00:05:08] >> A great job of controlling the distance with his wedges earlier today. And that's a fine shot underneath the hole.

[00:05:16] >> Jake Knapp has his putt for birdie. Dunlap has already putted and missed. Love this trio. Not only of first timers, but winners early in this PGA Tour season. This for birdie and a share of the lead. And a little bit of history at the Players as well. McIlroy's 9th birdie. Four players have had 10, and he has 10 with that one. So, add to it, even with putting two balls in the penalty area off the tee today, still a 7-under par round of 65.

[00:05:56] >> That's where Justin Thomas's tee shot ended up. And he's all the way down, almost at the bottom of the grip.

[00:06:08] >> Yeah. What a terrific shot.

[00:06:12] >> What a shot.

[00:06:14] >> Thomas would make par.

[00:06:16] >> Let's flip over to the 13th, 186 yard, par 3, Nicolai Hojgaard.

[00:06:22] >> Back left hole location here, Mike. You can utilize the slope that's in the middle of the green, land it to the right of the hole and let it trickle.

[00:06:29] >> A little bit like that.

[00:06:31] >> Done.

[00:06:33] >> Hojgaard moves to 1-under.

[00:06:35] >> To 17, Emiliano Grillo for birdie.

[00:06:37] >> This one up the hill, turning pretty hard to the right. Got to hit it firmly enough. Just.

[00:06:43][ Applause ]

[00:06:48] >> Fitzpatrick very meticulous about how he sets that ball down. Very much in tune to that start line.

[00:06:59] >> Just like that.

[00:07:01] >> So Fitzpatrick quickly gets back to even par.

[00:07:07] >> Double up two, head to the 4th. And another man on the fairway here at this par 4.

[00:07:13] >> He's done such a wonderful job of elevating his game. Coming off the Korn Ferry Tour, you can see that huge power. Is this going to go down?

[00:07:23] >> Did he do it?

[00:07:23] >> Oh, it rims out.

[00:07:24] >> But he's going to have a tap in for another birdie.

[00:07:29] >> Wyndham Clark missed the fairway off the tee. Now, here's his third.

[00:07:32] >> Had to hit the long skipper here. See if he can get it all the way back there. Oh, beautiful.

[00:07:42] >> Here's Mackenzie Hughes from off the green.

[00:07:44] >> Front of that apron. And just like Harris English, not needing the put -- not need to get the putter out of the bag to make a birdie on the 10th.

[00:07:56] >> Echavarria has this putt for birdie at the par 3.

[00:07:59] >> Pretty big swing from the right.

[00:08:04] >> Nico missed the cut in his first Players last year, but able to make the birdie to get to 2-under par. And a nice start there.

[00:08:13] >> Scheffler for birdie at 4.

[00:08:15] >> Three in a row for Scottie. And he is now 2-under par. Look out, the World's number 1 Payer is on track again.

[00:08:27] >> Let's go see the six.

[00:08:28] >> Well placed in the fairway here at the par 4 is Hideki.

[00:08:32] >> Yeah, he's going to take that aim. Yeah.

[00:08:38] >> At the 12th, here's Cameron Young.

[00:08:40] >> He's going to loft the club, going to get a little spin on it.

[00:08:45] >> Yeah, it goes.

[00:08:46] >> Bingo.

[00:08:48] >> Beautifully done there by Cameron from off the green. Mark Hubbard on the tee with a pitching wedge.

[00:09:01] >> Looking to throw that past the hole.

[00:09:03] >> Going to bring it back a little. There you go.

[00:09:05] >> Back to 4 for Akshay Bhatia. This for birdie.

[00:09:15] >> Yeah, even though this is off the right side of the green, it's a real opportunity to make a three. And it just falls in the front edge.

[00:09:22] >> How about this start for Bhatia. Three-under to the first four holes.

[00:09:28] >> Up at9 nine with Max Homa. Remember the shot from the bunker? This the birdie putt coming back for Homa.

[00:09:37] >> He told us he likes to putt these greens.

[00:09:39] >> And in the same group, Ben An's got one, too.

[00:09:48] >> Two great shots to get the ball up onto that proper level.

[00:09:55] >> Cameron Young for eagle at 16.

[00:09:58] >> They've been cranking out eagles at 16. That is the 7th eagle on the par 5. Patrick Rodgers' second.

[00:10:08] >> Again, you get in a good spot in the fairway here. It's go time, Fax.

[00:10:12] >> Yeah, he had a long drive there, too. A lot of players don't hit driver off there. Oh, look at this. Come on. Dunked it.

[00:10:20] >> Back up to 18, J.T. Poston has this for birdie.

[00:10:28] >> Good drive down the right center of the fairway, kind of to the middle of the green.

[00:10:32] >> There you go, Gary.

[00:10:33] >> There you go. J.T. Poston doing his thing.

[00:10:37] >> I don't think you get in any hole and kind of breathe a sigh of relief, like, OK, I've got a bit of a breather here. I can kind of, you know, maybe a wide fairway or easy second shot. I just feel like every hole's got something that can, you know, can catch you out. Just drove it well, drove it like I feel like I can drive it. That has obviously puts me in a great position to, you know, to hit solid golf shots from there. And to me, it felt a bit more like my old self, drove the ball well, put it well. And that's kind of always been the key to when I played well, really.

[00:11:11] >> Three sixty-five pace the field after the first round. Rory McIlroy is looking for his second Player's title, while Xander Schauffele and Wyndham Clark hoping to break through for the first time. The second round is next.

[00:11:31] >> Eighty-three degree day. And what a beautiful Friday it is here at the Players. Gorgeous scene. It all builds towards that unbelievable finish of 16, 17, the Island Green, and then 18. But Wyndham Clark's already been through there. He's playing the first nine to wrap up his second round. And he is going crazy.

[00:11:54] >> As we go through the afternoon, the other side is the top of the leaderboard. And it's two of the players who you have seen already, Scottie Scheffler. Here's how he's been working it around despite the work on that neck and pec area, the birdie at the 16th to get to 7-under. And Wyndham Clark, who made a birdie at 17 yesterday that ended a good run at the end of his round, makes one here to get to 8-under, and then ignites. A par at the 18th, and then Clark goes to the 1st, the par 4. Beautiful second shot. Watch the control that he's had with these seconds and these wedges on the way in. Outstanding there. Clark making that birdie to get to 9-under par. Now, as you've seen, Scheffler is in the group ahead. He made a birdie at 2, was uncomfortable hitting the shot at the 3rd. So this was his second. And he holds that just to kind of take a little bit of stress off this round. Scottie Scheffler getting the job done, but he did drop a shot with a bogey in a couple of holes later on. But Clark wasn't dropping anything. The birdie at 1 that you saw birdie. He birdied 2, birdied 3, saws off another finish at the 4th. And Brian Harman's ball, is there a little kiss? Clark made yet another birdie putt there. Then we showed you the added birdie putt that he makes here at the 6th. Everything rolling in. What a stretch. Five birdies in six holes. Clark goes from a clustered top of the leaderboard to massive separation in about an hour and 15 minutes. It is Clark, the US Open Champion, on a board full of big time winners and major champs. Five clear of Scheffler, Fitzpatrick, the German Schmid, who shot 68 with a double bogey on his last hole. J.T. Poston is one of the best rounds going. We'll see a lot of Rory and Xander as we go through our afternoon. To page two, other good rounds out there. Sahith Theegala continuing his good play. He's 4-under.

[00:14:01] >> Now, McIlroy from the first cut.

[00:14:07] >> Wants to find that slope as well, and does a masterful job.

[00:14:12] >> McIlroy jumps to 7-under.

[00:14:16] >> Sam Burns from less than 100. Birdie hole especially you find the fairway.

[00:14:27] >> He's looking like he's going to use that slope right there to plateau green there right and left. Could that go in?

[00:14:34] >> That came close.

[00:14:40] >> Horschel's third at 13.

[00:14:42] >> And that's a routine par.

[00:14:45] >> Easy par. No problem.

[00:14:49] >> Better reaction.

[00:14:51] >> Back to the par-5 2nd.

[00:14:57] >> Steve Stricker fighting to make the cut.

[00:15:06] >> What a shot.

[00:15:13] >> Burns from the bunker at 14.

[00:15:16] >> Well, that's what we saw, I think Troy Merritt. Oh, yeah. Maybe it's not that hard.

[00:15:22][ Cheering and Applause ]

[00:15:28] >> Yeah, long two putt here from Min Woo Lee. He's looking at playing in the final group last year. Kevin, you played in the final group here in 2015. What is it like coming here in that final group?

[00:15:40] >> There's a lot more intensity on this hole on Sunday than there is on Friday. But it's such a cool finish. What a putt. How you about jumped in the water?

[00:15:49] >> Oh, look at him.

[00:15:51][ Cheering and Applause ]

[00:16:00] >> Sixteen.

[00:16:01] >> Second for Schauffele.

[00:16:08] >> Big drive there by Xander.

[00:16:10] >> One seventy-two left.

[00:16:11] >> Unreal.

[00:16:13][ Applause ]

[00:16:21] >> Seventeen.

[00:16:24] >> No bogeys on the card today.

[00:16:26] >> He's hoping for one here.

[00:16:28] >> He sure is.

[00:16:31] >> Still no bogeys on the card.

[00:16:32] >> That would be the two boxer.

[00:16:38] >> Back at 16 to get him in second place alone. There's been already 24 eagles in two days at the 16th. And it is on a record setting pace, Woody.

[00:16:50] >> Yeah. That was just a remarkable drive into left to right. Hit this low burner right around the corner. One sixty-six front, just hit a beautiful 7-iron. Taking a look at this with his trusty companion, Austin Kaiser. This just looked like it had just a wrinkle left to right in and up the hill. It's a putt you can be aggressive with speed wise, Fax.

[00:17:11] >> Well, it sure is. It was ideal spot to putt from. This hole is playing easier than the 14th hole, which is hard to believe.

[00:17:19] >> This would go a long way. Make this and getting into that last group tomorrow. For the 25th eagle of the week at this hole, and we're not even through two rounds.

[00:17:30] >> Yeah. I expect this to go in.

[00:17:35] >> Yup. And I'll tell you what, this has been a nice comeback since that double bogey at the previous par.

[00:17:45] >> At 15, beautiful second shot from Taylor for the birdie.

[00:17:54] >> Yeah, nicely done. So bogey three times now. He's bounced back from a bogey with a birdie on the very next hole.

[00:18:03] >> Burns over there at 18.

[00:18:05] >> Hovland was just about ready to step into it, and then said, "All right, Sam, you go."

[00:18:14] >> It looks like he's got a little gap here. You know, you might --

[00:18:19] >> Yeah, like 45 up in the air.

[00:18:24] >> Yeah, guys, he got a really good break. His ball went into this fan experience just to his right. He got a free drop obviously. He's got one and 166 total, 160 to carry at the flag. And he can hoist this thing over those trees in front of him, get it to the hole with good contact.

[00:18:40] >> Probably wants to be a little right at what you saw, the TV tower behind the 18th green.

[00:18:45] >> Oh, it just looked like it might hop out of there. Remember, he needs par.

[00:18:49] >> Just a yard in the air.

[00:18:51] >> Needs par to play the weekend.

[00:18:56] >> Hoge for birdie would be his fifth on this finishing night for him today.

[00:19:02][ Applause ]

[00:19:09] >> Burns has to get this up and down to have a tee time tomorrow.

[00:19:13] >> He can't land it on the green.

[00:19:14] >> He just might have done it.

[00:19:17] >> Standing shot.

[00:19:18] >> He just might have done it.

[00:19:20] >> Landed right on the flat spot of the fringe.

[00:19:23] >> Just because you're not coming back for the weekend doesn't mean you're not still hitting good shots. Robby Shelton's over at 13.

[00:19:30] >> That was a 7-iron. We've seen most of the guys hit 8-irons, so this should be plenty of club. Yeah.

[00:19:45] >> And now, to make it to the weekend.

[00:19:49] >> I'm sure when he saw that tee shot in the air, he would have given anything for a tee time tomorrow, and he's looking pretty good right now.

[00:19:56] >> Still nervous over these, aren't you, Gary?

[00:19:58] >> Absolutely.

[00:19:58] >> Oh, yeah. I'm just saying, you know --

[00:19:59] >> As much as anything.

[00:20:01] >> Lining up straight to hit this. Yeah. That's really well done. But, yeah, you know what the cut is.

[00:20:07] >> Yeah, they know.

[00:20:08] >> They know right there. I'm going to plan the weekend.

[00:20:24] >> Only single blemish on the card, on any card all week, was that double bogey at 11.

[00:20:31] >> Let's go to 9. Sepp Straka is finishing what has been a good 36 holes.

[00:20:38] >> Should work a little right right at the end. Oh, yeah.

[00:20:42] >> Right.

[00:20:44] >> Nice way to finish.

[00:20:53] >> C.T. Pan with a nice little up and down at the par-5 16th.

[00:21:00] >> Eighteen.

[00:21:00] >> And Nick Taylor. Talk about a way to end the day. If this birdie falls to get into the final group, 11-under, crazy way to do it.

[00:21:11] >> You mentioned how good he was at waste management, Danny, a little bit ago. Those putts that he made, both to get in the playoffs, you know, down the stretch, he made everything he saw. And then, in the playoff, he made another one. Just incredible what he did.

[00:21:26] >> Curt, remember were making fun of him for laying up on the 15th hole thinking, what are you doing? You're three shots behind and made birdie there. And like you said, he kept coming.

[00:21:36] >> He just kept coming. Hit good shots and then just clutch with this club right here.

[00:21:46] >> Simple little rock of the shoulders. Just went away. That looked pretty good the whole time.

[00:21:55] >> All right, so 68 for Taylor. You've got two tied four back of Mr. Clark.

[00:22:03] >> Wyndham Clark scorched the field today and is just one shot shy of breaking the 36-hole record. While Xander Schauffele and Nick Taylor are tied second, just four shots back. Round 3 is next.

[00:22:20] >> Just 1 mile from the Atlantic Ocean. It's a spectacular Saturday in Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida. The temperature is 80 at the home of the PGA Tour. It's TPC Sawgrass. It's the famed Stadium Course. And it's one of the most anticipated weekends of the golf season. It's the weekend at the Players. And the man who won the US Open last June is in position. Wyndham Clark taking a four shot lead to the weekend, trying to win his fourth event in 45 weeks. The 30-year-old is on a roll. But as you see on that leaderboard, some names who know about winning are right behind him, trying to make a run on this Saturday. Schauffele, and Taylor, Fitzpatrick, Maverick McNealy. Good to see him bouncing back from the injuries he dealt with last year. Sam Burns in with that round of 65. There's the group at 8th, including Poston who made birdie at the 1st. Matsuyama's birdie at 2 bumps him to 7-under. Malnati finishing with 6-under 66 despite that bogey at the last. And there's Theegala, McIlroy. McIlroy and Day, both past champions of this event, in addition to Si Woo Kim. So you see the players lining up. Tight board after Wyndham Clark gives you that position up at the top, leading by 4.

[00:23:38] >> Chris Kirk lining up.

[00:23:39] >> This one should be left to right, up the hill here. Good look at it.

[00:23:45] >> There you go.

[00:23:47] >> Love that hole location on Saturday. You got a chance to make a two there.

[00:23:50] >> All right. Now, Schenk is going to belly a wedge here.

[00:23:55] >> Sure looks like it. I mean, you don't often see this when you go from putter to wedge off the green. This will break hard left to right. Again, a shot players don't practice. Never a doubt. That's going to be one of the better threes we see at 17 today.

[00:24:12] >> Brian Harman for birdie here. See if it'll break for. There you go.

[00:24:16] >> Feel like you need a birdie too on a day like today. Not a whole lot of wind and a par 5 early, you can reach into.

[00:24:23] >> And delicate little pitch here for Scheffler, Smylie.

[00:24:27] >> Definitely. The lie is very good, though. He's taking a pretty wide stance. Watch his head. It's really tough for him right now to look left. He's got to almost turn his whole body to do it. That's so classy.

[00:24:42] >> Did a lot of that the last couple of years. Scheffler would make birdie.

[00:24:49] >> Matt Fitzpatrick.

[00:24:50] >> Whenever you win a US Open, you know he can drive it well. And that's exactly what he's been doing this week. Led the field in strokes off the tee in Round 1. See if he can knock this tight here. It's going to be a little deep. See if it spins back.

[00:25:05] >> Oh, yeah. Beautiful shot.

[00:25:11] >> Sam Ryder looking for a two.

[00:25:16] >> With this tee up in that hole location, it turns into a birdie opportunity where most guys are trying to just make three and get out of there.

[00:25:26] >> Here's what Fitzpatrick did up on the green. All right. So he pays off that perfect start and a birdie on 1 for Fitzpatrick to join the group at 10.

[00:25:38] >> And back at one, Schauffele's second.

[00:25:43] >> This is on a very aggressive line right at the flagstick.

[00:25:50] >> Closer like Fitzpatrick did. You see the softness of that, Mike, coming back.

[00:26:01] >> One thirty-two total. And this is all strength. You have no excuse. No --

[00:26:08] >> Strength is the only thing that can dig this out. And he's got it out amazingly well for that hollow ball to sit.

[00:26:12] >> Let's see if it's going to sit.

[00:26:15] >> Oh my.

[00:26:16][ Applause ]

[00:26:21] >> Go to 2.

[00:26:22] >> And we've got a birdie look here for McNealy to join the group at 10-under.

[00:26:27] >> Just happy to be playing golf.

[00:26:30] >> This has been the most impressive part to me of his game. The confidence, the acceleration through it. Pacey hit that ball into the hole.

[00:26:40] >> Third straight day with a birdie at the 1st for Wyndham Clark. This was Lashley's bid for eagle.

[00:26:51] >> Jump up into that tie for fifth at 9-under.

[00:26:58] >> Looking good.

[00:26:59] >> How about in? Take that, guys, at 17.

[00:27:06] >> And Emiliano Grillo on the tee. The fans are settling in and enjoy making some noise. Let's just listen to him.

[00:27:22] >> They're starting to have some fun over there at 17. Grillo, not too close.

[00:27:28] >> Back to 12. Rory for birdie. Got to start filling it up if you're going to have any hopes.

[00:27:34] >> Good coaching there, Fax. Just total miss going right to left. Keep that putter moving. Follow that putter right.

[00:27:41] >> Over at the 6. Schauffele to close the gap to two.

[00:27:46] >> Really been in control of his golf ball all day. Little bit of right to left early, then it straightens at the end.

[00:28:00] >> Make it look easy. Xander Schauffele within two of Clark.

[00:28:06] >> Scheffler muscled it out of the rough with his second at the par 5, his third from 158.

[00:28:12] >> The cost of the rough is some 60 or 70 yards. He's hitting a pitching wedge.

[00:28:16] >> Unbelievable.

[00:28:18] >> Doing that pitch on the green.

[00:28:23] >> McNealy here in 2. Only Corey Connors on the putting surface in 2 today. McNealy the next closest.

[00:28:33] >> McNealy would make birdie.

[00:28:35] >> Hoge there in 2. Terrific second shot, this for eagle.

[00:28:38] >> See if he can kick start this round and get a good back nine.

[00:28:43] >> Looks good.

[00:28:44] >> Yeah.

[00:28:45] >> First eagle on the 11th today. And the 49th eagle in this 50th playing of the players.

[00:28:52] >> This is for his 20th birdie this week, Mike.

[00:29:04] >> And back to back and Rory's at 8-under par.

[00:29:11] >> It reduces.

[00:29:11] >> He's up to 18.

[00:29:11] >> Putting from off the green, Lashley trying to finish off a really good day.

[00:29:16] >> Hard to hit it hard enough to get all the way there.

[00:29:20] >> Oh, yeah.

[00:29:22] >> At 18, Matsuyama for par to cap off a 4-under round of 68 for Matsuyama. He came home strong after going out in 1-under, 3-under on his second nine.

[00:29:38] >> Back to 15. And this is McNealy's fourth. Remember, putted off the green.

[00:29:45] >> Putting it here. Back up the slope.

[00:29:47] >> It's got to slow down.

[00:29:50] >> Oh, come on.

[00:29:50] >> You can't make it up.

[00:29:53] >> Man.

[00:29:53] >> Fourteen. Schauffele coming across the green.

[00:29:59] >> This is not one you practice very often from this green. But it's straight downhill this last half.

[00:30:08] >> Picking up speed. And Schauffele holes it. They're going in from everywhere, Dan.

[00:30:18] >> Wow.

[00:30:18] >> US Open Champion co-leader on the 2.

[00:30:28] >> Oh, very short.

[00:30:29] >> Wow.

[00:30:29] >> Very short. He was all the way over in the left side of the tee box.

[00:30:32] >> Clark bogeys the 17th.

[00:30:35] >> Fitzpatrick. Everything's been going on for Fitz here on the last hour and a half. Finish it off, buddy. Oh, boy.

[00:30:41] >> Did he ever?

[00:30:44] >> Matt Fitzpatrick comes home, was out in plus-137. And Schauffele taps in for par, 13 of 14 and up and ends this week.

[00:31:02] >> Xander Schauffele cards a bogey free 65, overtaking Wyndham Clark for the lead with seven birdies. Brian Harman jumps to solo third with an 8-under 64. The final round is next.

[00:31:16] >> If they didn't have the skill, they wouldn't be here in the thick of the greatest golf on earth. But who has the grit? What it's going to take week in and out to scratch their way to the top of a field of anomalies. The stakes are higher, the play always better, the risk always real, and no one is getting what they want. Only what they've earned.

[00:31:49] >> Seventy-nine degrees. Another beautiful day in Northeast Florida. This St. Patrick's Day 2024, the brilliant shades of green popping all across the Stadium Course. TPC Sawgrass, perfect setting for the final round of the Players Championship, where the defending champion, Scottie Scheffler, has been playing through neck pain for the last two days. Yet he's carded three rounds in the 60s. And World number 1 still has a chance to become the first to ever repeat at the Players. The last man to win a major is in position for another big time title. Brian Harman followed up 65 with 64 yesterday. And the Champion Golfer of the Year is in line for a Players Championship. US Open Champ Wyndham Clark looked on his way to the title at the halfway point. But yesterday, his four shot lead evaporated. And at 17, a moment to forget. And now, Clark is chasing the lead, which belongs to Xander Schauffele, winner of the Tour Championship as a rookie, a regular on leaderboards at big events. Is today the day he gets another big one? A bogey free 65 has the reigning Olympic gold medalist with a chance to get his hands on the gold trophy at this 50th anniversary of the Players.

[00:33:06] >> Schauffele will start the final round leading by a shot after a 65 on Saturday.

[00:33:12] >> Theegala for birdie at the 1st.

[00:33:15] >> From about 11 feet.

[00:33:16] >> Yeah, it's a quick putt, too, Mike. I like his chances.

[00:33:20] >> Fitzpatrick will try to put one birdie on top of the other. Both guys miss the fairway. Both guys walk away with three.

[00:33:39] >> Scheffler from 82. Got to get it going after three straight pars.

[00:33:52] >> This one ought to be dancing around the hole.

[00:33:54] >> Kind of like that.

[00:33:56] >> Oh, it might go in it. Unbelievable.

[00:34:00][ Cheering and Applause ]

[00:34:11] >> Meanwhile, back at the 2nd, Clark with his second.

[00:34:14] >> Two twenty-five front, 247 total. Coming out today, swinging much, much better than yesterday. Yesterday, way right off the first, way left off the second. He's piped his first two drives. And this is 4-iron with that left to right breeze. Starting out left of the green, cutting it back. This is on a really good line, fellas. Is it ever?

[00:34:36] >> Going to get really close here. Should break left here at the end.

[00:34:42][ Applause ]

[00:34:48] >> Now, up to the green.

[00:34:55] >> He's going to have a chance to hoop this one.

[00:35:09] >> Gave it a good run.

[00:35:15] >> It's just a wrinkle of right to left in this.

[00:35:18] >> Clark and Schauffele both settle for birdie.

[00:35:27] >> And Scottie Scheffler coming off his second career eagle at Sawgrass.

[00:35:34] >> Four hundred and sixty yard, par 4, one of the best holes on the golf course. You see that hole location tucked over that little knob there.

[00:35:45] >> To 11. And Sam Ryder has this birdie attempt.

[00:35:48] >> Well, this is a really gettable par 5. And to have a putt this long for birdie here is not what he would have planned on day on the tee, but didn't make it.

[00:36:07] >> And let's return to the 5th. And Scheffler, the eagle at 4, try to go eagle birdie here.

[00:36:12] >> Yeah, playing with Lashley. So we saw that putt go in. Will it be contagious?

[00:36:17] >> Yeah. Here comes number 1 in the world.

[00:36:23][ Applause ]

[00:36:29] >> He could even land this well to the left and short of the green, and it will kick forward. Or he can try and fly it a little bit farther onto the flat. Looks like he's going for that big flop.

[00:36:41] >> You're almost hoping to muff that a little bit. And he got a lot of ball.

[00:36:49] >> Thirteenth.

[00:36:50] >> The guy making a run is Sam Ryder. Seven birdies, first 11 holes. Want to get you thinking about 13 because you got a chance to hit it close here today.

[00:36:59] >> See that little putt bunker in the middle of the green? That's your target. And then, if you can turn up, but the wind's blowing a bit to the right here, so it's hard to get the ball to turn over there and that.

[00:37:17] >> Did he hit it?

[00:37:18] >> No. So, first bogey of the championship week for Schauffele comes at the 4th.

[00:37:25] >> Clark for birdie now at the 4th.

[00:37:32] >> In the hole.

[00:37:34] >> Right away.

[00:37:37] >> Check in with Theegala. This for birdie, 13-under, four back.

[00:37:42] >> Long putt coming across here and should feed to the left at the very end.

[00:37:46] >> Kind of like that. Theegala making a move.

[00:37:48] >> And here's this monster par 3. Scheffler on the tee.

[00:37:58] >> Two forty-three, going for a high fade to that back hole location. Want to land at probably 8 or 10 steps shorter hole high.

[00:38:05] >> Get it to chase back there to it. Terrific shot there. Going to have a great look. Uphill, left to right putt there from about 12, 14 feet.

[00:38:17] >> McIlroy's birdie try at 10. And that curls in.

[00:38:24] >> And now, Scheffler trying to pay off. A beautiful tee shot here at 8.

[00:38:32] >> Saw Hideki's ball move to the right at the very end. Another one falls for Scheffler. You said you'd like 20-under. About to have a chance.

[00:38:43] >> He's getting there quickly, isn't he? Par-5 9th coming up. Still three par 5s to go.

[00:38:50] >> Here's Harman trying to salvage a par.

[00:38:58] >> No, I think he hit it normally. His 5-wood, what he hit on the last hole, and it went pretty far just now. So --

[00:39:06] >> Perfect. Finish on that bunker.

[00:39:07] >> Perfect.

[00:39:08] >> Scottie Scheffler with 3-iron in hand, 264 to the front. The conversation was between the 3-iron and the 3-wood. I love this club.

[00:39:15] >> Smylie, he talked about how it's harder for him to hit a draw. Let's see if he can do it today. That'll really show if his neck's a little bit better. Oh, he did it.

[00:39:33] >> Oh, he did, Brad.

[00:39:37] >> Oh, it's got to set now.

[00:39:48] >> To 7.

[00:39:49] >> Man, there were a lot of birdies. Noted nine of them yesterday for Brian Harman. This for his first of the day.

[00:39:55] >> Yeah, a little tougher going for him. Not as precise from tee to green as he was yesterday, but hit a diamond here just underneath the whole 7 feet, just inside that left edge. Beautiful look.

[00:40:10] >> Here we go. Good acceleration there in that one, Mike.

[00:40:15] >> We were talking about, you know, this -- I have this great quote. Success brings clues, you know. And he got this new putter. He got a little taller. The putter is longer, the mallet.

[00:40:25] >> And he's rolling them in more often. What a front nine for Scottie Scheffler, 5-under 31.

[00:40:33] >> To 7, and Schauffele's second.

[00:40:38] >> One forty-nine back into the breeze. Good angle. That was 9-iron.

[00:40:43] >> Beautiful approach there.

[00:40:58] >> Nailed it.

[00:41:00] >> Locked it right in.

[00:41:00] >> And Xander -- Absolutely. Xander Schauffele right back to the top of the board at 18-under.

[00:41:09] >> Harman for birdie at the 8th.

[00:41:12] >> Back to back birdies here. Chance after a little bit of a struggle to start.

[00:41:18] >> Yup. You don't forget ever about Brian Harman on a golf course like this.

[00:41:23] >> And he's got this putt for eagle. And he is going to be one of those guys who will be right at the top of the board in terms of number of eagles when this season is done.

[00:41:38] >> That upslope came up very nice just on the flat here. So speed very predictable. Not a whole lot of break. This is a great look.

[00:41:57] >> Hopped a couple of times there on the way.

[00:42:04] >> One thirty-two total, 123 front edge, helping breeze. He'd love to have a full shot into this such to impart full height and spin. But he's off a little bit of a downslope. He goes hard at this. This could be L wedge. If he takes a little bit off, it's probably sand wedge.

[00:42:22] >> The hardest part of this green is right where that flagstick is on the high shelf.

[00:42:27] >> Talked about two palm trees, about 10 yards right of this hole location. Good looking shot here.

[00:42:33] >> Oh, yeah.

[00:42:34] >> He's just been --

[00:42:36][ Applause ]

[00:42:41] >> Now up to the green for Schauffele's third.

[00:42:43] >> Got it up nice.

[00:42:46] >> Boy, he has got such a good feel for this ruffle and green. It's amazing. You think there's a little luck, but he does it every time.

[00:42:52] >> Johnny caught a nice lie. That's a big break on a shot that wasn't that far off. And that'll be an easy tap in birdie. Got it.

[00:43:05] >> Big one. After Schauffele pours one in, birdie right back on top by Clark. And it is right where we started. A one shot lead for Schauffele over to Clark. Off they go to the back nine here at the Players with a great leaderboard.

[00:43:28] >> Scheffler just short of the par 5 and two in the bunker. Unlike Matsuyama, a group earlier, this is third.

[00:43:35] >> Little uncomfortable with the foot out of the bunker.

[00:43:38] >> Helps you get some height. A lot of spin there.

[00:43:40] >> Scheffler would make and move to 18-under. Harman now for eagle at 11.

[00:43:54] >> Back there. So that'll be four birdies the last five holes for Harman.

[00:44:03] >> He's just got the confidence of the putter when the pressure is on.

[00:44:06] >> I love this routine. No line on the ball. Looking and reacting.

[00:44:12][ Cheering and Applause ]

[00:44:17] >> Yeah. This is no fun. Just probably 45 yards and no green to work with. You got to take a risk here, Kis, don't you?

[00:44:26] >> Yeah.

[00:44:26] >> Get this close?

[00:44:27] >> I'm not sure we can get this one super close. I've taken 10 or 15 feet past the hole for sure.

[00:44:32] >> It's not a shot players practice a lot either.

[00:44:37] >> Boy, distance looks great.

[00:44:39] >> Clark would finish that off for birdie.

[00:44:49] >> Somewhat similar to a shot he had on 9 over the green yesterday, isn't it, Woody?

[00:44:52] >> It is. The only difference here is it's on a downslope once you get onto the green. So very fast.

[00:45:03] >> You called it, Woody. Hit the fringe.

[00:45:06] >> I'm telling you what, I cannot tell you that kind of touch, how good that touch is.

[00:45:16] >> Scheffler now with his third.

[00:45:19] >> The lie is perfect. A very simple shot.

[00:45:22] >> This is holeable here, Smylie.

[00:45:24] >> Caught a chunky.

[00:45:25] >> But it's rolling out, Smylie. And it's going to be a birdie for Scheffler to push it to 20-under.

[00:45:35] >> Scheffler moves to 20-under. Schauffele now to save par at 14.

[00:45:47] >> He just -- Did he hit it?

[00:45:49] >> After navigating the tee shot, Scheffler has a long birdie putt on the Island Green.

[00:46:05] >> Not bad, not bad. Really good putt. Birdie putt at 15.

[00:46:18] >> How big is this?

[00:46:19] >> To get within one. Brian Harman.

[00:46:22] >> Yeah, I love it.

[00:46:27] >> Right on his ball.

[00:46:28] >> Right on his ball. Forty shot.

[00:46:31] >> Forty shot?

[00:46:31] >> Yeah.

[00:46:33] >> He's right in between a pitching wedge and a gap wedge. Right now, he has pitching wedge in his hands.

[00:46:38] >> Smylie, don't you think from the fairway here at 18, with this hole location, it's one of the easier second shots on this second nine here?

[00:46:45] >> It is. He's got to take a little off of this. Makes it a little bit trickier downwind.

[00:47:03] >> And the ball striker extraordinaire puts it just right at a stick hole high.

[00:47:11] >> He makes this in post 21. With everything that's going on behind us, I think he wins the golf tournament.

[00:47:17] >> And if he does, Kis, it would be the lowest final round by a Players Champion in history. You talk about checking off all the boxes.

[00:47:40] >> Scottie Scheffler, who will see if 20-under is good enough, saves his best for last.

[00:47:52] >> Clark's going to hit first at 16. Close proximity over there across the water at 17.

[00:47:58] >> Another ridiculous drive here into the wind. Just 159 front, 189 total. Starting at the left edge, the green now cutting towards a flag.

[00:48:11] >> Oh, man. And who knows? Clark could play his way back into this conversation late.

[00:48:21] >> Schauffele for eagle at 16.

[00:48:29] >> Didn't hit it. Clark for eagle to pull within one.

[00:48:42] >> We move to the 17th tee.

[00:48:51] >> It's not a good line.

[00:48:51] >> And it's a good shot. Going to get a look. It's going to get better and better. Wyndham Clark stepping up.

[00:48:58] >> That's the least amount of time they took to make a decision all day long, when it mattered the most.

[00:49:12] >> Same line. Did he get the spin?

[00:49:17] >> Come on, a little bit more. A little bit more.

[00:49:18] >> Come on down.

[00:49:22] >> It comes. What drama.

[00:49:40] >> This to get within one. And Wyndham Clark shows some guts.

[00:49:53] >> Harman with a chance to join Scheffler at 20-under.

[00:50:05] >> On the green at 18, Schauffele has this to force a playoff.

[00:50:18] >> Let's go.

[00:50:25] >> That is a beautiful putt. But two putt par there is not going to get it done for Schauffele.

[00:50:35] >> So one more to dodge for Scheffler. Make, he's in a playoff. Miss, and Scheffler makes history.

[00:50:58] >> Unbelievable. How did that not drop?

[00:51:06] >> But Scottie Scheffler is the 50th Players Champion and the first to go back to back in a half century.

[00:51:22] >> What a finish. Unbelievable. That ball was almost all the way down below the entire surface of the hole and spun all the way back 360.

[00:51:34] >> Looked in the entire way.

[00:51:36] >> Never thought it was missing.

[00:51:38] >> Either did Wyndham.

[00:51:46] >> In the hole.

[00:51:47] >> That took just about all of the hole.

[00:51:49] >> Wow. Whipped out of there.

[00:51:51] >> That's a rare lip out that hard. He walked --

[00:51:54] >> Look how far down the ball got.

[00:52:01] >> He was ready to fist pump three in a row in. Two stepped it early.

[00:52:08] >> Scottie Scheffler hugging his wife, Meredith. She's omnipresent on the scene. They're expecting their first child next month. Lots to celebrate for Scottie and Meredith.

[00:52:33] >> Scheffler, back to back winner of the Players.

[00:52:39] >> This concludes the PGA Tour's coverage of the Players from TPC Sawgrass in Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida.