**2024 PGA TOUR CHAMPONS LEARNING CENTER SHOW #6**

VO > PGA Tour Champions Learning Center.

VO > PGA Tour Champions closes the book on the month of March at historic Mission Hills Country Club in beautiful Rancho Mirage, California, making it back to back events in the Golden State for just the second playing of the Galleri Classic, a star studded field gathered for what has been an exciting and unpredictable early season run.

VO > Let's see how things unfolded Easter Sunday and historic Mission Hills. Final group and tight down the stretch. Retief Goosen at the par three 17th and par it is. Goosen was bogey free Sunday and he stays at 13 under. Steven Alker now the leader at 17. Alker misses his par putt and drops a shot to now sit tied with Goosen at 13 under. At the par five 18th drama after Goosen thinned a four iron into the water on his second shot. Alker stays aggressive and can't clear it with his second. That is wet and things are now very interesting. Goosen is away, his fourth shot, trying to get up and down for par and leaves it to makeable distance. Alker's fourth shot was short, leaving this long putt for par to stay tied with Goosen, and it does not have a chance. The bogey drops Alker to 12 under back-to-back bogeys for him and he is one shot back. And the result is this par putt for Goosen and the win.

VO > And there it is, Goosen makes par at 18. And the World Golf Hall of Famer has picked up his third win on the. PGA Tour Champions as he wins The Galleri Classic.

VO > Retief Goosen comes up big a victory in The Galleri Classic, his third victory on PGA Tour Champions and first since 2022. Yes, the goose is golden.

OC VO > In the conditions with tough yesterday and I've made up some ground in those finishes yesterday and today I got off to a slow start and then managed to make a good putt down ten and from down I was just hanging in. Obviously, the birdie on 15 was was crucial. And then yeah Steven finishing bogey bogey was all my luck. After eight and the water I thought, Steve is going to lay up and 28 in the water was a bit of a shock too.

VO > With the victory, Goosen shoots up 33 spots and into the top ten in the Charles Schwab Cup standings. Leader Steven Alker. Ricardo Gonzalez and Alex Cejka shared second place at the Galleri Classic, placing Gonzalez at number two and Cejka into the top five through six events.

VO > 54-year-old Robert Karlsson has yet to win on PGA Tour Champions. However, the six-foot five Swede has made it to the Charles Schwab Cup championship in each of his three seasons on this tour. If he's going to make it a fourth, he will do so after recovering from a second knee surgery, which took place six and a half weeks ago. Karlsson gives us an update on his return.

VO OC > Yeah, I had, my meniscus cleaned up. I had a tear. It's pretty bad. I just, it happened when I was preparing for going down to Naples. And very similar, I had the same thing happened last year in June. So very similar as well. I don't know what, it happens through an impact or it just kind of creeps on. It's been the same both times. So yeah, I just had to have it done and it feels great to be back.

VO > Golf has long been represented by high profile Australian players, with Greg Norman very high on that list. Years later, a new surge has hit PGA tour Champions as back in December four of five Q-School spot on this tour went to players from Australia, welcoming more of medalist Cameron Percy, Michael Wright, Steven Allan and David Branston. a player who just missed out on qualifying at new school, has made his presence known and wasn't surprised to see many of his fellow countryman earn cards for the season.

OC > You never know how guys are going to be in their 50s like and they good players. I know I've known all of them for a long, long time. I think it was really interesting that week that at four of the five played, the week before in the first stage. So, I think that was certainly hardened to to competitiveness in practice. But there's a lot of guys who are good players over 50 now. And so, it didn't really surprise me at all. It's just really cool for us. You know, we had dinner at Steve Allen's house that week because he lives there, and six of us in the field and four of those six got through. It was just me and Dave Mackenzie that missed out. But it was a cool, cool, cool story.

OC VO > You watch these guys on TV and all of a sudden you are now rubbing shoulders with them. And guys are coming up and saying, well done on Q-School. And you play, play, play better you get to play with the good players because they're at the pointy end and it's it's pretty cool. It's almost stuff of dreams, really.

OC > I think five spots at Q school, there's no there's no given that you have to really play well. So, I think that makes it more amazing that we actually managed to do it. But, yeah, they're all they're all really good players. And I can picture everyone having a good season.

OC VO > No surprise really. We've got a a really good bunch of golfers in Australia. Golf's a really popular sport in Australia. And it's, it's played a lot at, junior level and club level and guys just get better and better. And we've just got so much golf out there that has produced a lot of golfers. And so, you know, we've we've had a, you know, an Australian PGA tour for years and a lot of good players that have that are playing there now currently and that have played in the years gone by. So, it's no surprise that some of them are coming through at their senior level now. So, you know, you know, there's still more knocking on the door too, so be careful.

VO OC > It's really great to see people. My first week, I was like, everyone just looks content, and everyone is happy, you know? And it's just great. It's a nice there's a really nice vibe and a nice feeling about this tour for the players. I think a lot of guys now recognize their very fortunate to be playing golf for a living in their 50s. and that that creates an environment everyone's pretty happy and content, I think.

VO OC > It's nice to see, you know, Stevie Allan sort of come out and come through. And Cam Percy, he's, you know, going to join in May when he turns 50 finally. And, you know, Dave Bransdon’s been, you know, around in my career a lot of, a lot of a lot of my career in Australia and overseas and locks was Michael Rod as well. So, you know, it's nice to have the guys out, you know, see more familiar faces if you like. you know, and, and, and you'll probably start to see a bit of rivalry between the Aussies you know too. So, you know, the guys are all, we're all fighting for those spots, so equally competitive.

VO > Is there a little competition within the competition among all of you here on the tour?

OC VO > Not really. No. I think everyone's pretty friendly and just happy to be out here. I think maybe as the season goes on, if you guys can figure it together, you can shoot a couple times with the same guys, but not really. Everyone's just having a good time at the moment.

VO > Yeah, that is until maybe Sunday.

OC > Yes, that's right, that's right.

VO > You're in contention with another…

OC > It would be good to have that problem, that's for sure.

VO > From awesome Aussies to a consummate caddie, Mike “Fluff” Cowan estimates he's looped over 5000 rounds and his carry the bags of some pretty high-profile players like Peter Jacobsen, Jim Furyk and of course, Tiger Woods. Find out what he considers the greatest single round he's ever witnessed. It's a profile of “Fluff” when we return.

VO > The man, the myth, the mustache. He's Mike “fluff: coward. And if he hasn't seen it all as a caddie, he's seen almost off. Now aged 76, Cowan tells us firsthand what makes for a good caddie, compares the PGA tour now to the old version of the tour, and ponders just how long he'll be handing out clubs on the course. It's all fluff stuff.

OC VO > I suppose the biggest thing that keeps me going is the love of the game. I love being whatever part of it that I am. I love watching the best players in the world play, and I'd say those two things are what keeps me going the most, you know? Plus, I'm trying to make a living. You see all kinds of things going on here, all kinds.

VO > Wait a second, “Fluff” is in the house.

VO > Fluff on the loose.

OC VO > Obviously, he's he's an icon out here. He's been around forever caddying.

OC VO > Yes. I get cat called a lot. You know, people yelling fluff and blah blah and all that.

VO > Very noticeable with the mustache, with, the physique. And I get a kick out of it.

VO OC > I do hear, goat from some people, I do, I do hear legend and that sort of thing. Well, I think the only thing that can make you a legend is longevity. So, you know, if that's the case, I'm in.

VO OC > He’s been out here for, what, 40 years caddying. And guess who was there to offer his own high five and celebratory manner fluff.

VO > He’s out here at 76. I think he just really enjoys what he does. He shows up for every work because he loves being a caddy. He loves being with the boys, you know, on the wall, whether it's smoking a cigarette, whether it's hanging out and talking about the day, whether it's carrying the bag and working, he's easy to get along with. He doesn't change whether we're shooting 82 or 58. He’s the same guy on the bag. And, it's been fun having around us. We're almost at, 25 years now.

VO OC > The actual part of what I would call caddying really has not changed, just become more of a business. Back when I first started doing it, we were just out there to have a good time. You know, if you man played well and you made a nice check, you partied hardier. If you missed a couple three cuts in a row, you had to cut your partying down. Back in the old day, we were pretty fun group. I'm not saying that the group today isn't, but they don't hold a candle to what we were like.

VO > Now he's just enjoying himself.

VO > The only one drinking a Diet Coke. I promise.

OC VO > The best round I've seen. I guess I'd have to say 58 if you related to score.

VO > Hall of fame career with a new chapter on the way.

VO > That's the best.

VO > Mr. 58 is Jim Furyk.

VO OC > That day was pretty. Oh, it was easy. It was unbelievable how easy that day was. You know he played awesome obviously. Holed it on one of the hardest holes on the golf course for a two. Shot 27 on the front. Started the back side birdie, birdie, birdie. And all of a sudden, I'm thinking wow that's that's pretty special here.

VO > All right.

VO > Again.

OC VO > You know when you're in the midst of a round like that you don't want to stop and think about it. You don't want to interrupt the flow of it. So, I didn't know we'd shot 58 till it was over. I mean, I had a sort of an idea, but, you know, you don't allow yourself to even go there in your own mind. You just keep doing what you do and and add them up when you're done. The money is not what makes you happy. You have to, you have to do things that you enjoy and let the bad times roll off your back and and just continue to continue. Just keep on keeping on. Again, it's something that I've kind of lived by most of my life, and I've remembered all my life ever since I first heard it, and it was my grandfather who said, son, don't worry about a thing. It’s all going to come out in the wash.

VO OC > He loves what he does. And I think first and foremost of anyone in the world, you know, it's what I'm kind of instill in my kids. I mean, your first job out of school, you're probably not always going to love what you do, but you kind of worked so that, you know, you really enjoy what you do in your life and enjoy the occupation you have. I think it makes your life wonderful and Fluff does.

VO OC > I think of myself as just another caddy, just somebody who's out here doing something, that I love doing. Been doing it for quite a long time. And I feel very lucky, very fortunate that this is what I fell into. And I managed to make a pretty good living at it. I've learned my entire life without planning anything, just kind of let it fall where it falls, you know, kind of the Grateful Dead in me, I guess you go with the flow, and that's what I'm going to do, and it will come to me as to what my next move should be.

VO OC > He's always going to be a friend, and now it's become more I feel like he's a friend first. But when we get out there on the golf course and he's carrying the bag and we're working, he kind of has to play a different role. He has to, you know, be a caddie, and he's got to work for me. And so being able to hop in and out of those two relationships sometimes can get very difficult. It can get tricky, but Mike's really good at it. It makes it super easy and makes, that transition where, you know, it's just got good timing where he can poke fun at me in times like, like a friend would, but but also knows when it's time to kind of buckle down and for us to go to work. And so, I appreciate that. And.

VO > And the old guys, well, you tend to get a little more emotional when you get to this age.

VO CO > It seems like he's going to carry forever, but he's probably not. And, you know, I'll definitely miss when, we're not out here together.

VO > That's his daughter next to him who goes to Clemson. Thus “Fluff” sporting the Clemson hoodie.

VO OC > The timetable that I would set is my daughter has one more year of college. And when that said and done, that might be me saying said and done. But who knows, I might try to go till I’m 85 just for grins.

VO > Coming up on Learning Center with Masters Week soon approaching, past champions take us inside Augusta National. Jose Maria Olazabal shares wonderful anniversary stories celebrating 25 and 30 years since his wins there. Mike Weir checks in preparing to return as the 2003 champion and a Canadian hero. And Fred Couples walks down memory lane and tells us what it's like to walk up the 72nd Hall with a two-shot lead.

VO > The month of April is a rebirth in the state of Georgia. Spring offers nature's breathtaking backdrop of trees, plants and flowers abundantly featured at the first major championship of the year, The Masters. Next week brings us the 88th edition of a tradition unlike any other.

VO > And this year, two-time Masters champion Jose Maria Olazabal celebrates not one but two Masters milestones. This year will be the 25th and 30th anniversaries of the Spaniard winning the 1994 and 1999 Masters. Decades have passed, but the memories remain crystal clear as Olazabal reflects first on his 94 triumph.

VO OC > I remember, getting to the tournament, with, high hopes and confidence, in my game, like great golf and, I put myself in contention on Sunday. And I remember sitting just outside the locker room, just, overviewing the first tee. I was, sitting next to a Sergio Gomez who was my manager in those days. And, we didn't say a word for about 30 minutes or 40 minutes. We just stay there watching everybody tee off one. And all of a sudden, I remember, Tom Watson, getting onto the first tee, and those were the my only words, that I said to Sergio. Sergio. I mean, look how cool this is. You know, Tom Watson, this thing of, the first and, we're waiting here for, for our tee times. So, yeah, I mean, it was it was a great week. Obviously, everything ended up, my way, and, well, wonderful memories.

VO > And then 1999, your thoughts on that?

VO OC > To be honest, I wasn't driving the ball well. I was driving the ball poorly. The rest of the game was was really good. And I remember, playing couple of practice rounds with Seve. We played together. And then after the second day, after we finished the practice and we went into the champions locker room, and he looked at me straight in the eyes and said, Jose, can I say something to you? I said, of course. Seve, I mean, sure. You know, I see that, you're driving the boat pool, but the rest of the game is really on, it’s sharp. So why don't you try to, take the club back as slow as you can? And don't try to hit it hard. Just try to put the ball in play of the tee. And, you know, if you do that, I mean, the rest of the game is there. So, that's what I did. I didn't drove the ball, particularly well, but I managed to get the ball in play and, and the rest of the game, as I said, it was sharp and, I managed to win, but, I'll have to say that 99 I really enjoyed every step I took, on that golf course on Sunday, I, I enjoyed the light, the the the colors, the atmosphere. So, it was it was so much more special.

VO > 2003 Masters champion Mike Weir will return to Augusta National next week. His victory there was the first and only for a Canadian player in a major. Weirs shares with us what it takes to have success at Augusta National, including an impeccable short game. He needed only 22 putts in round two of that Masters victory. Speed control on the Augusta National Greens is a must.

VO CO > Yeah, Augusta, you have to have a great short game. no doubt about it. You know, lengths, you know, a huge advantage there. But, you know, if you don't wedge it well and you don't putt well there, you know, you'll you'll get exposed, and you have to you have to make the putts at the right speed at Augusta. That's the biggest thing. You know, watching Ben Crenshaw you know Jose Maria, Seve in those days you know they they just kind of drip the ball in the hole. And I think that's the way you put those greens. And so, you got to have great touch and you got to put, put the time in because those greens putt quite differently than, than any other green, probably in the world.

VO > 32 years ago, Fred Couples won the 1992 Masters. At that time, he was the hottest player in the world. His five starts prior to the Masters, he had two wins, two runner up finishes and a tie for 13th at the players. So, it didn't surprise many when couples approached the 72nd hole at Augusta National with a two-shot lead. But as we learn in this week's Couples Chronicles, that margin still produced doubts as Fred moved closer to slipping on the coveted green jacket.

VO OC > Well, my thoughts walking up 18th at Augusta with a two-shot lead after I hit this drive, I was not thrilled because once again I went not being cocky, but Joe, I’m going to start at the bunker, and I'm going to cut it. Just blast it. You know? And I didn't do that. So, when we got up there, then I saw the lie.

OC VO > Unfortunately, I was thinking, very well, you can make a six and all of a sudden getting a playoff, you know, Fred's buddy Raimundo, and it's supposed to be the other way around. Fred almost calmed me down like I got this shot. And, you know, he'll always undersell it, but he was a heck of a lot, you know, fairway bunker player back in the day. Normally I like to think I'm, you know, 99% of the time pretty positive. But I was thinking kind of negative thoughts. And there I'm thinking myself, okay, you fat this bunker shot and you're knocking on into three because now you got a wedge. Maybe you spin it off, maybe laid it a little bit into the face and it comes back. Bunkers at Augusta are great, especially the fairway bunkers. I mean, if you hit the shot, you're going to get rewarded. Doesn't mean you're always going to hit the shot. If you hit the shot, you're supposed to you'll get rewarded.

VO OC > For me personally, it was like, I mean, I've heard people explain how they feel, but for me, it was like a 160 yards of just walking on air. And when I when I got up to the to the front of the green, I could see it was on the top. And as Joe said, you you leave that ball down the bottom, you putt it by, you putt it four feet by and you miss it. You make six. It can happen. But for me it was like walking on air. It was a accomplishment. But like Joe said earlier, you know, I was playing so well, that doesn't really mean anything. But it certainly helped those couple months of playing great golf and finally winning Augusta.

OC VO > And the best part for me was as much fun as I love. As tight as we are, it was fun for me to have to rake the bunker, because now I can kind of sit behind Fred and let him enjoy his walk up there, you know, 60 or 70 yards ahead of me to see the crowd rise like that and get all jacked up, because Fred was the most popular player back in the day. And that was fun for me to watch Fred up there enjoying stuff like that. But it worked out very well, obviously.

VO > Yes.

VO > Before the buzz with Masters Week buzzing, a couple of PGA Tour Champions notables, and you thought there were no cuts on this tour. Until next time, I'm Vince Cellini. We thank you for watching this edition of Learning Center.