**2024 PGA TOUR CHAMPIONS LEARNING CENTER #10**

VO > PGA Tour Champions Learning Center.

VO > PGA Tour Champions welcome the first of five major championships last week right here in Birmingham, Alabama. Greystone Golf and Country Club, hosting the region's tradition. Sprinkled in some rain, some football and of course, legendary golf.

OC > Hi everyone, and welcome to Learning Center. I'm Vince Chiellini, continuing a totally unpredictable season on the over 50 tour. Coming up, we'll visit with some of the great football minds in the Southeastern Conference. But first, crowning a champion. Here with a recap the men who call the action Bob Papa and World Golf Hall of Famer Lanny Wadkins.

VO > But thanks, Vince. The region tradition the first major of the year for the PGA Tour Champions from Greystone Golf and Country Club in Hoover, Alabama. Doug Baron and entered the final round to share the lead with Ernie Els. Steve Stricker, our three-time champion, rolling in birdie. Could Strick mount a charge? Stewart Cink trying to give it a run as he rolls in this birdie putt at the sixth. And Stewart Cink would go out and 31, Lanny.

VO > Yeah but kind of died on the back nine. And then Steven Alker the guy who really put it together the last day this at 11 and a beautiful putt here.

VO > But for Alker was he started the day just too far back, seven back. Shot 31 on the front. Birdie at 13. Now birdie at 14. It's gotten to 14 under within 3 of the lead.

VO > Yeah. Looking like he can make a serious run and try to get there. But then Doug Barron did this at nine. Played a really nice second shot from a tough lie in the rough. Hello.

VO > Unlikely birdie at the ninth. Made the turn bogey free three under par 33.

VO > And then this was it right here for me Bob. He drove it in the bunker. Looked like they may come get him laid up. Really tough shot in here with the water right. Can't go long. And he just stuffs it.

VO > That got him to 17 under. And then he had three putts for the win. Needed only two. Doug Barron picks up his third win on the PGA Tour Champions and wins his first major, capturing the 35th edition of the Regions Tradition. Two shots clear of Steven Alker and three shots clear of Steve Stricker, Ernie Els and Stewart Cink. Let's hear from our winner, Doug Barron.

OC VO > Thank you. What a weekend. What a week for Doug Barron, his first senior major. You look so in control out there. You know you talked about being the best Doug Barron you can be after Saturday 66. There was talk about playing with the bigger names. And how did you do it. How did you stay? How did you stay true to yourself?

OC VO > Well, I'll tell you, I do a lot of meditation. I slept with like a meditation thing all night. I try to just, play against the names, just play against the golf course. And it's easier said than done, because you get out there and you watch Padraig hit it 50 or 100 by me on some holes. You watch Ernie hit some of the most beautiful shots you've ever seen. It's hard not to watch them, but I know my best is pretty good these days. It wasn't that good when I was on. I didn't think it was that good on the PGA tour. And maybe I think it's a little better now. So, I just did what I could do. I couldn't control them. And I just, I work on myself a lot, and that's all I've done. I've been off for nine months. I've got to watch a lot of TV and see what I could do to change myself.

VO > I was going to say this has been quite a journey for you because of the elbow surgery and coming back from that, and then the emotion of winning on Mother's Day as well. So that was it. There was a lot on the table, wasn't it?

VO OC > Well, I mean, I love my mother, my fathers in retirement home and my moms at home. I love them, I love my wife. She's the best mother I know to our two boys. I'm so proud of her. It’s tough. I love it. Love you. Leslie.

OC > Big career changer. Game changer.

OC > Oh, yeah.

OC > Great job. Doug.

OC > Going back to Hawaii.

OC > Aloha.

VO > Charles Schwab Cup standings. Another top five finish for leader Steven Alter. Stephen Ames is holding at second and with the win, Doug Baron jumps 20 spots into the top five. Steve Stricker and K.J. Choi both move into the top ten after the Regions Tradition.

VO > Three-time Regions Tradition winner Steve Stricker will be missing from this week's PGA Championship at Valhalla. The 57-year-old 2023 senior PGA champion has withdrawn from the event, citing both scheduling issues and the idea of gearing up for a huge event physically and mentally. Stricker explained his position last week in Birmingham.

OC > You know, it's a big it's a big event, actually. It's a big I'd love to be there because it is a big event, but it's a big course. I'm tired. I'm old, you know? I know where my place is. I think, you know, I really don't want to play that much. And, three weeks in a row just doesn't sound too appealing to me. So, I just, kind of pick and choose where I want to play. I think.

VO > Coming up in the heart of SEC country, shouts of roll tide, War Eagle and Go Dawgs! As top football coaches discuss the upcoming season, their golf games and take in some tips from the pros, don't miss it.

VO > Each year, the region's tradition Wednesday Pro-Am is a mini version of SEC Football Media Days, a chance for SEC coaches to step away from the sideline battles and come together to talk about the season ahead and their golf games. We spoke with several, including a man who's made it impact from Alabama to Athens.

OC VO > Well, he is the top dog, no pun intended, to the region's tradition program. Kirby Smart, the head coach of the Georgia Bulldogs football team, two-time national champion and now the highest paid head coach in college football. That aside, I was just wondering if you were paid, given your golf performances, where would you rank with that one?

OC > Well, there's not a lot of good golfing coaches, so I'd probably be middle of the pack because most of these coaches can't play golf, including me.

OC > The good news is you have no excuses now. You know, football to get in the way of your golf game. We should see tremendous improvement. And the pressure's on.

OC VO > Pressure is on. And we're not making that tremendous improvement that you talked about. So, you know, we enjoy the game. We have fun. Great, great game for relationships. And really, you know, overcoming adversity because you got to focus on every shot. So, it's good.

OC VO > You know times are changing year for sure. And next and so much for, you know, our program for our, sport. And you know, he's he's actually a really good friend to us, but we don't hurt seeing him go to retirement.

VO > You're like, enjoy your retirement.

OC > I'll play golf with you in Jupiter.

VO > You stepped into an entirely new realm now with the media as an analyst for ABC and ESPN. So welcome to the dark side. are you enjoying that? And are you keeping the rat poison at at a minimum.

OC VO > Trying. But, you know, I thought I'd be asked a lot of questions.

OC > You can once we do this interview. Are you enjoying It?

OC > No, I did enjoy the draft. And it's a new experience. So, it's a new challenge, which I look forward to. And, you know, hopefully doing game day. I like the team we have, at ESPN, a lot of good guys. So that was my biggest fear of leaving coaching was, you know, being a part of a team missing being part of a team. And I still feel like I'm a part of a team even though it's in media.

OC > I heard you're improving.

OC > I am improving being a little better today. I've in a better performance day than I have usually.

OC > I love competing at golf and Kirby's behind me, and so I'm kind of I want to beat him if we ever get to play each other head-to-head. So.

OC > We are pleased to be spending some time with the Regions Tradition Pro-am with Kalen DeBoer, the new head football coach for the Alabama Crimson Tide. And and coach, congratulations on all your success in Washington now here in the SEC. And the good news is there's no pressure at all on you, right?

OC VO > Yeah. Right. Yeah, I know it's been great. four months in already now. So, time's flying by and, it's been an awesome, four months. And, you know, guys got a little time off, but we're, ready for the summer and and the season to be here before we know It.

VO > your team is so consistent. 29 straight wins going into the SEC championship. 46 and two in your last 48 games, which is crazy. Golf is about consistency. How do you maintain that and not be upset on any given Saturday?

OC > Experience probably. I was more of a roller coaster coach early on in my career, and now realize that the consistency is the most important thing and developing players and you want to have a consistent roster, the only way to do that is to retain your players, and we've been able to retain our roster.

VO > It's, obviously about legacies, but you're building your own legacy. So how do you honor previous? Well, making sure that you take care of your own.

OC > Yeah, I think it's critical, especially at places, like Alabama, to embrace everyone that's come, come before you and made this program what it is, alumni, coaches, of course, all the all the fans. But, you know, you just you just be you, you know, there's things I'll do differently just because that's how I've always done it. And that's what, that's how I've, had my success. But, man, this program's got a lot of tradition. So, you just continue to build on that.

OC > You know, coach, it's May a but come August and September, do you think you'll miss the Alabama sideline?

OC > You know, I did it for 50 years. I'm enjoying the challenges. you know, I love the game. And I want to continue to try to promote the game the best I can for players in all sports. So, we're going to continue to work on that. But I'm sure there'll be a little, little time in there where I want to call play.

VO > And lastly, how do you look at it perspective wise from what was a heartbreaking loss to Alabama? I know in the in the moment it's it is crushing. But then you have to think we had these guys beat.

OC > Yeah. Well, I tell everybody recruiters are more confident ever after year one that that we can return Auburn to the glorious wants experience because we really didn't have our recruits yet or anything. And we went toe to toe with both them and Georgia right down to the wire. So, it's it gives me more confidence we can get it done.

OC > September 28th, Tuscaloosa. your friend Nick Saban won't be on the other sideline. Will there be time for sentimentality or are you going, hey, Nick, enjoy that retirement. Go.

OC > Well, it's not about him. You know that kid is going to do a great job. Nick's a great person. He supports college football. looking forward to that matchup because of the venue we're going to play in, which is special.

OC > I'm excited to come in here and be at, the highest level and, be challenged, you know, as, as much as you possibly could be. And so, love our fans, love everyone. that supports the program.

OC > Obviously, Kalen’s a fine coach also, and we'll do a great job. I'm sure Alabama has all the resources and players, but anytime there's a change like that and you lose a guy that's done what Nick's done, you got to feel like, man. All right, this this could be our opportunity. And I think you have to view it that way.

OC > And finally, you were quite the athlete that the University of Sioux Falls, football and baseball. So, I'm wondering, what about the golf game? Do you do you apply any of the baseball skills out here?

OC VO > You have you seen me? Okay, no, it's, It's I love the game. It's a great game, but I'm out here to enjoy it, and I spent a lot of fun here, though today.

OC > Coach. Welcome. Thank you. Best of luck.

OC > Thank you. Roll tide.

VO > They say a coach who's too good at golf may not be devoting enough time to his program, which is quite the quandary. In any event, the Regions allowed some player tips and general interaction with our guys and the coaches. As usual, learning center did some eavesdropping. You know, champions meeting champions.

VO > Coach, I'm gonna tell you, if you're going to shake one, all we again is to the right here. Right here. Please welcome new University of Alabama football coach, this is Coach Kalen DeBoer

OC > I'm glad all y'all are back here.

VO > And the greatest football coach of all time Nick Saban.

OC > So, this is my second time playing with Steve. Last time his wife is here caddying for. But he's playing good today so he's to stay focused.

OC > All right. Easy easy.

VO > Pure, athleticism

OC > That'll work.

OC > It's a pleasure to play with coach here. And I was going to ask you how to I'm going for a three peat here. But I understand they just told me, but I understand that was something in your career that you weren't able to do.

OC > Weren’t able to do. We won it twice and really had a good enough team to do it and couldn't stay focused. You know, too much complacency. Complacency creates a blatant disregard for doing what's right. You create bad habits.

OC > Yeah.

OC > Which you haven't done.

OC > I got a lot of bad habits.

OC > I haven't seen them today.

OC > No more than two 220 245 front about 20 yards short is a good.

OC > I worry if I pull it, I go to the fairway into, but I can't cut it perfect like you now.

OC > If just how you coach, you know you get them to layup.

OC > We go for it.

OC > Get it out and go for it.

OC > Are we are we poppin here?

OC > So, this just makes a shot. You got a good lie. I keep my weight forward so you can have a descending blow and looks. It looks.

OC > What club would you use.

OC > I would use a 60 here and probably try to land it about three feet on the green and let there, you know, let everything else let the slope take it to the hole.

OC > Yeah. So, close the 60 down a little more. Do you leave it?

OC > You know, I like a pretty square face. I don't think you have to open it up. You don't need extra loft. Here is. You ought to be able to hit the shot. So, you're just a little bit. Wait. Wait left and use the touch. You. You've been you've been doing all day.

OC > That’s beautiful.

OC > Oh, no.

OC > That rolled laid up to it.

OC > Perfect layup.

Sounds great Strick.

OC > Thank you.

OC > You just landed in about three feet.

OC > Oh, yeah. You said, three feet on. If you don't I, didn't I, didn't you. All right, well, let's do it one more time. I wasn't very coachable.

OC > Haha okay, I'll tell Kisner I went for it.

OC > There you go. There you go. It’s perfect. You’ve got great touch. You got great test.

OC > Very good teacher, very good teachers.

OC > You got to have a plan, right? Y

OC > You gotta have a plan.

OC > You're not going to go play LSU or somebody this year or you don't play us. But probably one of the teams you play, you don't go in without a plan.

OC > No you don't. And that's, you know, that’s the crazy thing that you get frustrated with in this game that y'all are so good at is I didn't even think about three feet on to the second shot. Where I heard you say it.

OC > Yeah.

OC > But I was talking about man, just get contact.

OC > Then you are worried about contact.

OC > The next time I said, I need to fly this on the green.

OC > You're too good to worry about contact. You got to have a plan for what you probably gonna do.

OC > Yeah, sure.

OC > So I heard that, Alabama's coming up to Wisconsin this year. And part of the reason why you retired is because you're afraid to come up and coach against the Badgers.

OC > Well, look, when I coach at Ohio State, Michigan State, we didn't have many good memories from the Wisconsin. I can tell you that.

OC > I'm sure you wouldn't have a problem at Wisconsin either. But enjoy the time with you, as always. And I can tell you're more relaxed. You're taking this retirement thing seriously, and, you're having a lot more fun with it. So, it's been a pleasure again today.

OC > Well, you know, one of the things that I learned was I spent 50 years being in hurry.

OC > You're not in a hurry anymore.

OC > I never knew what it was like not to be in a hurry. Yeah, so it's kind of nice.

OC > Goo for you.

VO > And still ahead on Learning Center, a true winner. The inspiring story of Andrew Hinson, who found his path to golf success thanks to a PGA Tour Champions player who once walked in his shoes. You won't want to miss it.

VO > Ken Duke and Stacy Lewis both overcame scoliosis, which is an excessive rotational deformity of the spine. During her teenage years, Stacy Lewis wore a back brace and ultimately had surgery to correct her spine. Ken Duke also wore a back brace growing up and had spinal surgery, which required the placement of a 16-inch metal rod to help straighten the spine and relieve pressure on his lungs and heart. Both players have had successful professional careers, giving hope to junior golfer Andrew Johnson.

OC > Great to meet you guys.

OC > Nice to meet you too.

OC > Pleasure, man. Thanks for coming out.

OC > Yes, sir.

OC > Enjoyed it.

OC > Yeah, it's a little rain for us, but besides that it's all good.

OC > Yeah. Place is sweet out here.

OC > You should hit a few shots for me.

OC > I wish I could. Almost there.

OC > We can do that. How are you guys doing?

OC > Okay. It's so nice to meet you, too. Jane.

OC > Yeah, I'm. I'm Brian.

OC > Thank you guys for coming up.

OC > Thank you.

OC > thanks for having us.

OC > Just appreciate you connecting with us and being such an encouragement to Andrew.

OC > That's what it's all about.

VO > Meet Andrew Hinson, a junior out of Huntsville, Alabama. He won the 2023 AJGA Huntsville Junior and has a verbal intent to play golf at the University of Alabama. His path here, however, was rife with challenges.

OC VO > I started back when I was probably 11 to 12. I, I start having some back pain, especially. I'd sit in the car for a really long time. It wasn't when I would play golf, but just when I would sit still. And so, we went to an appointment, and we found out I had scoliosis.

OC VO > Devastation, really just, you know, he's always been such an active, kid and loves sports of all kinds. And so, I was worried that this would impact that and possibly limit him.

OC > They start out with a brace and I would I would wear that for a little bit, but it got really got really annoying. I didn't want to wear it to school. And just over time getting worse and worse.

VO OC > At the time he was bracing and every time we would go back, it would progress, even when he was compliant with his brace. And so, you know, I just kept doing research on what are our options, if we get to the surgical level. And I just prayed that he would it. But of course, realistically, I knew it was possible. But then I also could see his discouragement and his fear of, you know, is this going to end my golf career and my dreams of playing in college and professional golf?

VO OC > We had a yearly checkup, so I went to my checkup and back in, oh, in December, and they said, you're getting a lot worse, and that I could either wait it out and get surgery down the road or get surgery now. And I figured I didn't want to take a chance of having to get it in college or anything. So, I went ahead and got it done now so I don't have to worry about it down the road.

OC > Still doing rehabbing stretches?

OC > Well, there wasn't that much rehab, but I just started doing physical therapy a little bit. There's like a person, Huntsville, who specializes in just scoliosis. Well, yeah. So, I was working to make sure I get a mobility I can get.

OC > That’s good. You can kind of see my swing. It's a little shorter because I'm restricted to where I can go. That's just a way up. Yeah, but that's just the way I play. Everyone's different. I know Stacy, you know, there's going further back to me. Yeah.

OC VO > Seventh, eighth grade. They were had a routine check, at our school. You know, the doctors would, check you out, check your back. And my back was a little more curved than normal. So, they said, hey, you probably should, get this checked out. So, we kind of went forward in that when I was in the seventh grade, eighth grade, ninth grade, I wore a brace because it was really curving. I have a C curve like this and more. Sometimes people have an S curve, so I was more of a C curve, and it just got worse and worse as I was growing at that age. And when I was in the ninth grade, the doctor said, I think you got to have surgery. I was, 58-degree curve. So, when they put the rod in my back to 16-inch rod, they, they moved the curve down to 38 degrees. So that's where it is today, and that's where it's going to stay. Now the technology, they put two rods in your back and sometimes they can take the curve out. Sometimes they can’t.

OC > What's your strength your game?

OC > It was always it was always the driver. But maybe I can certainly to short and hopefully short game was always my worst thing.

OC> Yeah.

OC> Hopefully it’s a lot better.

OC VO > It wasn't about sports. I mean I played all sports whenever it was time to play them. But it wasn't about that. It was about I was very short winded because the curve was going into my lungs, I couldn't breathe, I couldn't condition like all these other kids. I dreaded back in basketball and after the holidays, we always had to run, and I dreaded it because I couldn't I couldn't condition.

OC > …really long. Might help me a little bit. And my coach would always get off me for going to play passed parallel.

OC > There's only one guy that can do that that's John Daley.

OC > Yeah.

OC > It's just been special. I've talked to some kids and, it's just all. It's all about giving back.

VO OC > I was so encouraged when I read his story. Just that he had had surgery at a similar age as Andrew, and he just had great success in a long career on the PGA tour. And so, it was just exciting to know that it was possible.

VO OC > Because a lot of kids reach out to me on social media and they're athletes and they see my story; they see Stacy Lewis the story. They want to know if they can play golf or if they want to play another sport. But I tell every one of them, it's not about that. It's just not about that.

OC VO > It was really fun meeting Ken. I was really excited meeting him with how much he helped me with, my surgery and everything, and he was just as nice as I thought. So, I really enjoyed meeting him.

VO > What a great story. And here's wishing Andrew Hinson all the best. And as we say goodbye on Learning Center, the song stylings of one John Daley, I'm Vince Cellini so long.

OC > Knock, knock, knocking on heavens door.