**2024 PGA TOUR CHAMPIONS LEARNING CENTER SHOW #12**

VO > PGA Tour Champions Learning Center.

VO > PGA tour champion stays in America's heartland. As the month of May spilled into June at the principal Charity Classic in Des Moines, Iowa. Wakonda Club underwent a major facelift, including new bunkering and five new greens. Yet the fierce competition remained a constant. And making it look easy was Hall of Famer Ernie Els. A magnificent bogey free round on Sunday, including a five hole stretch over his final nine that included three birdies and an eagle. Els fires a closing seven under par 65 and a record 21 under total to capture his fourth win on PGA Tour Champions, this after being tied for first entering the final round of his previous two events with more. Here's Bob Papa.

VO > PGA Tour Champions regular stop Des Moines, Iowa. Wakonda Club playing host to the Principal Charity Classic. Ernie Els and Rod Pamplin started the final round and a share of the lead at 14 under par. And Ernie Els rolls in this putt for birdie at the fifth after four straight pars to kind of get his day going John.

VO > A little slow start for Ernie, but this got him going in a big correct direction.

VO > Els hadn't won since the Hoag last year. And then this birdie putt at the 11th when he stood on the fairway on this hole, he was two behind Ames. And then he goes on a run including that tough one downhill.

VO > Yeah, a little downhill slider really got him going.

VO > And then his birdie putt at the 12th.

VO > For driving it in the corner of a divot. Played a brilliant little pitch shot to there and capitalizes on that. And how about this shot right here. Bob 225 yards four iron.

OC > Easy ball.

VO > At the par five 13th. And I mean you can't hit it any better than this using the slope and the greens. And this will trundle down that hill and give Ernie a brilliant look for Eagle at 13.

VO > And he's got a couple of fortunate kicks in there. And taken advantage of it

VO > And one of the areas that Ernie was rock solid in this week, John was putting. Pours this in for Eagle. Just catching that right edge, holding speed as you like to say. And now he's at 20 under. Made a great par save at 14 a great par save at 16 and wins in style.

VO > That he does. He's used to winning golf tournaments. He hit 36 of 42 fairways, 47 of 54 greens, only made one bogey for the week and putted brilliantly.

VO > Ernie Els shatters the Principal Charity Classic scoring record. The previous mark was 18 under par. He shoots 21. Defending champ Stephen Ames finishes two shots back. What a week for David Duval and Heath Slocum and Chad Campbell making his debut. But Ernie Els is your champion. Let's hear from our winner.

OC > Yeah, I mean, it's just I felt comfortable for once, you know, I just felt comfortable off the tees, you know? Iron plays, you know, always pretty solid. But I worked out pretty well. It was just a good mindset. And, you know, stuff we talked about, and I just kind of play a game within yourself rather than, you know, trying to win the tournament. You know, just take care of the small stuff. And it all comes down to a really good week. So I'm really happy that I kind of stay committed to to the mindset.

VO > What does this mean to you now for the rest of the year?

OC > Well, so I mean, I've been trying to get going. You know, I've been playing pretty solidly for since I've been on the Championship, but I haven't had to go my way. And I feel like this wins in me. You know, I just got to keep doing it. But today is going to have to be a steppingstone in the right direction. Yet I keep going on this trend. There's some great players on this tour. You got to be on it. But I respect that, you know, but I'm starting to feel like I'm ready to play.

VO > With that victory, Els jumps 12 spots to fourth in the Charles Schwab Cup standings. Stephen Ames second place finish has him closing in on leader Steven Alker. Paul Broadhurst and Richard Green round out the top five. An exceptional leaderboard at the Principal Charity Classic, and a wonderful event. The race just keeps getting better.

VO > Of course, the event extends well beyond golf. As an example, children's charity variety, a tournament partner, provides unique mobility equipment to children with special needs. And before round one of the principal charity classic, Maya Madrid and Griffin Russell received bikes donated by Stephen Ames and his wife Kelly. The idea is to help kids gain strength and independence while still having fun. The therapeutic benefits may take some time, but those smiles are instant.

VO > Oh, 50 is the new. Well, it's not new at all. It has long been the ticket to PGA Tour Champions. And last Friday, Chad Campbell turned 50 on the same day as the opening round of the Principal Charity Classic.

OC > Ladies and gentlemen, gentlemen, this next gentleman, This is his Champions Tour debut. Today is the big five. Oh! Happy birthday. Please welcome from Andrews, Texas, Chad Campbell.

VO > The four-time PGA tour winner has emerged from that late 40 stretch of competition leading the PGA Tour Champions. And Chad brought us up to speed on his journey.

OC > I've been playing a little bit. I've been playing some, you know, a couple tour events, some Korn Ferry events the last couple of years. And, you know, just trying to keep keep playing a little bit for turning 50.

VO OC >You know, get back to playing with the guys that we, you know, kind of grew up, you know, on tour playing with. And you know, it's it's great seeing everybody. And it's been a great welcome. Everybody's been nothing but nice. I mean I think the goal every tournament you go into is to win. So you know I know it'll probably take me a little while to, you know, to get accustomed back into playing.

OC > Get some of the rust off from, you know, sitting around for the last few years. But, you know, hopefully it'll be good. I'm excited about it and I'm really looking forward to it.

VO > Campbell put together a really solid debut in Des Moines, finishing 15 under par, good for T8 at the Principal Charity Classic, and that's quite the hello on this tour.

VO > Boo Weekly is that rarest of things, a golf folk hero whose success has not altered his unique view on the game and on life. The latest example after return at the KitchenAid senior PGA Championship in Michigan, Bu decided to rent a vehicle to drive to Des Moines. His search led to just one option a 15ft U-Haul truck. Undaunted, who motored on foot on the gas and a line in the water.

OC > Well, this is my first-year rookie year out here on the senior tour, and, still learning how to, you know, play golf, but at the same time travel and do the things that we're doing. And. Well, you just got done playing in the PGA up in Michigan at n Harbor. We thought we'd maybe get a rental car to drive this to the next tournament, which is in Des Moines. And, unfortunately we couldn’t find one. But we have got to thinking outside the box. And we ended up in the box, a U-Haul box. So, here we are cruising down the road and did some radio.

Oh shoot, I can turn right here? La la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la. We having fun just cruising around the world playing golf. Loving it. Senior tour PGA.

OC > Oh, you had your cane pole and some crickets. You can't fire out of some brim right now.

OC > Got to walk down right here to the bank.

OC > Oh, he spit it out. Still looking for balls back there. Yeah. Good thing we are on this side right here. It’s always fun getting to fish these little old golf course pounds because you don't ever know what you're going to catch. You know, you’ll never know. You catch a carp. You catch a catfish. You don't know what you gonna catch. It ain't got no snakes up here, dude, I hope not. I don't know. And. How about I hope not? All right, I but I don't know if they give you. They probably got. But I don't know if they got any like really bad food. I don't know, they might have. Oh I would think that. At least have some water snake. When they sneak up on you and you gonna sneak up on him.

VO > Boo, what is it about fishing you love?

OC > Oh. This right here. Being quiet. Being by myself. Just doing my own thing, you know. I mean, more relaxing. Just being able to come out and enjoy what the good Lord put out here for us to enjoy. Oh, I got him. Haha. Well, if he was a little bit bigger and had about ten more of you are ready for dinner tonight.

VO > Is it safe to say you may love fish a little more than golf?

OC > I guess that's a very good thing. I don't know, I, I love the competition in golf. I mean, I don't think competition in fishing because you're trying to catch a fish, you know, if you don't want to get skunk. You don't hit the fish to win. But at the same time, you know, it is still fishing and golf. You know, it ain't going to make or break your life. You know, you just got to do your thing. Keep believing in what you're doing. It was a lot cheaper to fly the way I looked at it. Plus I like driving anyways. I think it's like the old days in the nationwide tour. We used to be able to drive, you know, we had 4 or 5 tournaments that was all within ten hours of each other. You know, where you can drive ten hours and the next two tournaments might be, you know, an hour and a half or two hours away or three hours away. So you kind of drove in your own vehicle.

OC > It might be the only bad thing this pond back here.

VO > Who’s better than Boo4. Well, DC gives it a shot. Darren Clarke has a soft spot for golf gadgetry. He loves it and shows us his latest golf gizmo when learning center returns.

VO > 54-year-old Mike Weir made his 31st tournament start last weekend in his national open, the RBC Canadian Open, after a promising start, firing a 2 under 68 in round one, Weirsy was three over in round two and missed the cut by one. Yet. And still, this Canadian golf icon showed the competitive fires burn as brightly as ever. Recently, we took some time to share a tip designed to improve your short game.

OC > I've got a shot into the green here, which not only myself struggle with sometimes, but a lot of amateurs especially. And I'm going to show you a couple little things that might help you. you can see if I use this leading edge, I'm going to take a lot of turf, and the club kind of sticks in the ground. So, we don't want that. We want to use the bounce a little bit more. An easy way to use the bounce is to get the heel, the club out of the ground. So, instead of having my hands kind of low, I'm going to get my hands up and you can see the heels off the ground a little bit. So, I'm going to use this part of the club a little bit more. And from there I'm going to have the ball and the shaft pretty, pretty neutral. My thumbs kind of down just a little bit. And from here I'm just going to keep turning. The other little little piece of advice as I do, that is never back up. Kind of keep your sternum and your weight forward and keep turning through. See if we can do it. There we go. Didn't dig it all. Nice little check on that ball. Give that a shot.

VO > I think the world of golf improvement gadgets is only for 18 handicappers. Well think again. Every player wants to gain an edge and few on PGA Tour Champions can match Darren Clark. When it comes to the latest doohickey made to improve your game. Ahead of last weekend's principal charity classic, Clark ordered his newest golf apparatus and offered a demonstration.

OC > I was perusing Amazon the other day and I came across this beautiful little gadget, and because of having grown up in links and a lot of links, golf, a lot of my bad habits and my swing is that I have a little bit of movement this way and this way, especially this way into Link's turn, hitting it into the wind, going up, playing links, so my head moves forward. One of the basics of, of, ball striking is that for the most part, the hand's got to stay very stationary and turn and use your body and stuff. So, I came across this beautiful pro head thing and I thought, this is a pretty good idea. So, we got to that this morning and whoops, we got to that this morning and basically you put your head in here. and then with the hat there my head can't move. You watch all the pictures off the best ball striking stuff in the game and they're they're all like, it's their heads right there. I've had a tendency I've gotten my head too far that way, and then I've got a backup out of it. So, that's the theory behind. So, I have had a lot of golf abuse from my fellow Champions Tour professionals this morning, but let me tell you, if I have a good week this week, I think there may be a few more purchases in Amazon next week.

VO > Golf, perhaps more than any other sport, offers the most unique and compelling backstories among its participants. One such story is authored by Chris Irwin, currently on the bag of Kenny Perry, formerly serving in the United States Army and always captivated by golf's glory and its hardy. Chris Irwin's life is service to all around him.

OC > This for all you boys back home to think he had to have grass, play golf.

VO OC > The appreciation I have for what we have over here is something that you. Might not be able to fully fathom until you do something like I did. People go through very difficult situations over here, and I don't want to ever take anything away from. Everybody has hard times in life, but until you separate yourself from something like this for an extended period of time, that's what I really learned about myself. I mean, I knew, like I, I'm pretty mentally tough. Like if I set my mind to to do something, I can do it. I mean, it didn't work out in golf for me, and I'm okay with that. KP and I, we've known each other for almost 20 years. He's been a mentor to me from a very young age I just wanted to play golf. I had a a goal of mine get a college scholarship, and I worked as hard as I could at it, and it kind of fumbled into like me playing full time. I never made it to the PGA tour. I never had status on the Korn Ferry Tour, and he has helped me out more than anybody, more than anybody could in like, the game of golf, right? Whether it's really just support, equipment, anything. So out here, I was really kind of nervous caddying for him because I never really worked for him. This just were two and a half tournaments into it and we've had a blast. I hope that I can be an asset to KP. I hope I can help him enjoy his time out here as much as he can, you know. Golf, introduce me to my wife, golf, introduce me to KP. I'm just very thankful and joyful for golf. I mean, over all the frustrating times that I've had, there's no place I'd rather be then right here, right now working for KP. I haven't won on the PGA tour like I've dreamed of, but it's okay. I'm very happy. I got a wife and four girls. We've been married almost 18 years. I'm still going to compete at golf, whatever that looks like. I love golf, but, as far as playing full time, I'm going to be done. So, unless the Champions Tour, you know, comes around, I'm only 41, so.

VO > When Learning Center returns, a look ahead to this week's American Family Insurance Championship in Wisconsin. Tournament host and Wisconsin native Steve Stricker descends in Madison. And why an early Stricker family celebration took place last weekend. So stick around.

VO > In two weeks, John Daly will be playing in Oklahoma and a Korn Ferry Tour event. No, not that John Daly, but his son, Little John, the redshirt sophomore at Arkansas, accepted a sponsor's exemption into the event, and his father offered up this advice.

OC VO > Just play your game. my son is just as long as those guys, he's got the game. Just, you know, I hate for me to say this is pretty stupid, but he he has it. Be patient, you know, and he's pretty good at it. So I think the experience is going to be great for him.

VO > The Midwest stops continue on PGA Tour Champions this week with the American Family Insurance Championship in Madison, Wisconsin. The University Ridge course will again host the event where a year ago, a record smashing performance took place as a native son broke through to win.

VO > Steve Stricker, the tournament host, fashioned a record 18 under par finish too easily out distance the field as part of his sensational player of the year season. More than this, Stricker was so proud of the event itself, again raising around $2.5 million for charity each time it's played. A wonderful Stricker family moment in giving back.

VO > Speaking of Stricker family moments, they celebrated on Sunday as daughter Izzy Stricker graduated from high school. She will follow her sister Bobby's footsteps in attending Wisconsin and like her older sister, she will also play for the Badger women's golf team. The Stricker name continues to be a part of the game and will be for a long, long time. Congratulations to Steve and Nikki.

VO > And with that, we have reached the clubhouse, another PGA Tour Champions Learning Center in the books, and we will see you in Sconi. I'm Vince Joannie, as always, we thank you for watching.