2024 PGA TOUR: The CUT #28

International Script

COLD OPEN

ANNC: From TPC Deere Run in Silvas, Illinois, it’s the John Deere Classic. Since 2000, TPC Deere Run has been the host site for this event.

PGA TOUR Commissioner Jay Monahan called this event, the quote soul of the PGA TOUR.

We had a record setting opening as the field deep on Thursday. Scoring average just a tick over 68. The lowest we’ve ever seen on this D. A. Weibring design.

**WELCOME TO PGA TOUR THE CUT.**

SEPP STRAKA MINI

ANNC: Sepp Straka wins the John Deere Classic! That is a fantastic win. Second of his career on TOUR.

STRAKA: One thing I've tried to work on a lot and have done a better job of is being more consistent in my practice and that translating into tournaments but at my best, I do feel like I can compete with anybody.

ANNC: you look at the way he drives the ball, it’s wonderful.

Straka has become much more consistent.

STRAKA: There's not any crazy big swing changes, but just repeating patterns over time has changed my golf swing a little bit to where it is a little bit more consistent than it was maybe two, three or four years ago and I think that's probably the reason I've played better the last few years.

ANNC: Sepp Straka has shown us that when he gets into contention, he’s got a nose for the finish.

STRAKA: I don't feel like I ever really hype myself up too much. I just kind of try to prepare for the tournament and then try to give it my all when Thursday comes around.

ANNC: Oh, that was dead center. So good there from Sepp Straka and he continues to climb the leaderboard.

STRAKA: I feel like I've had a pretty good routine with my practice since early last season, just keep tweaking that practice routine and trying to improve on my golf game and the results are going to come from there.

ANNC: When he is on, he’s very, very good that’s for sure and I love his pace of play and his demeanor.

STRAKA: It’s always exciting when those things kind of work out and you can see the results in your game.

ANNC: Sepp Straka, first golfer in five years to make multiple eagles.

That’s clutch there for Straka at 17, a big par putt.

Sepp Straka putting together a masterful final round.

STRAKA: The putter all year’s been not as good as I would've liked but I made some pretty good changes and trending with the putter nicely, so I think that's kind of helped., but yeah, I’ve been hitting the ball really well. It's been nice to kind of have a lot of good events in the summer months because this is kind of the time you want to be playing well.

LUKE CLANTON WALK & TALK

ANNC: Luke Clanton, bursting on the scene last week. Florida State amateur. And he’s on a roll, coming in playing this week on a top-10 last week in Detroit.

CLANTON: It's been crazy. Traveling has been nuts, but it's been it's been awesome. I mean, like being able to play out here on PGA TOUR events like this, it's, it's kind of a dream, I guess you could say, but honestly, biggest thing for me is just kind of staying as level headed as I can with everything and, and be as calm as I can through the traveling and not working too much and all that, but it's been one hell of a journey.

You know, the perks of it's nice, definitely, to get some free food and get a car for the week and all that but it's been awesome.

ANNC: And what a week for this man, Luke Clanton. He shoots 72 today. The 20-year-old amateur from Florida State on a sponsor exemption. Fantastic job and I have a feeling we’ll be hearing more from him for years to come.

CLANTON: Waking up that morning and realizing that we are, I guess, three shots back of a PGA TOUR event win and it was kind of surreal. I mean, honestly, to be walking up 18 and realized that we just had one heck of a week and we were in contention to win an event, it's awesome. So, it kind of gave me that confidence, knowing that, you know, I can do it in the future.

My mom and dad have been just the support from both of them has been unbelievable. You know, no matter really what happens, no matter how good I play, no matter how bad I play like they're still there on 18 green waiting for me to give me a big old hug and it's been an unbelievable ride with him, for sure.

It's a blessing to be out here every single week and play golf every single day, just anywhere you honestly, it's been, it's been awesome.

ANNC: And Luke Clanton trying to finish with a birdie. How about this? How ‘bout it?! What a breath of fresh air this young man has been the last couple of weeks.

JOHN DEERE CLASSIC YOUTH CLINIC

HIGGS: That's a lot of humans.

BRYAN: It is. I like all these humans, except for the one wearing the Good Good hat in the front.

HIGGS: Oh yeah, competitor.

BRYAN: Nah, I’m kidding.

EMCEE: All right, how we doing today?

KIDS: Good!

BRYAN: Good.

EMCEE: Who wants to hear from our good friends, Harry Higgs, Wesley Bryan, two great friends of the John Deere Classic. Give it up for them.

BRYAN: Who wants to see Harry hit a golf shot?

HIGGS: Oh man.

BRYAN: Who wants to see me hit a golf shot? Okay, we'll start with Harry. That was louder. All right, which one should we go for first? The third one, the third big one. You're gonna hit a shot then I’m gonna hit a shop.

HIGGS: Is that three?

BRYAN: Yep. Third one. Look at that!

HIGGS: And I hit the wheat.

BRYAN: All right. Oh, was that under?

HIGGS: It went just over.

BRYAN: That was over?

HIGGS: Just over.

BRYAN: All right, it’s Harry’s turn.

HIGGS: Just over.

BRYAN: Oh! All right. Now, Harry, Harry's got two of them. I gotta get the last two.

HIGGS: Ok, Wesley’s gotta go first. Bang! That was so… that was right in the middle.

BRYAN: Was it? Okay! So Harry's got one shot to win the thing. Oh, this one's going to hit it. I guarantee it, watch. I'm not even gonna watch it. I'm just gonna listen for it. See, look at that!

HIGGS: So satisfying.

DAVIS THOMPSON WINS THE JOHN DEERE CLASSIC

ANNC: This will be the 24th first time winner at the John Deere Classic, the most of any tournament since 1970. This event has served as a springboard for so many over the years.

THOMPSON: This week my goal was to just kick the door down and get a win.

ANNC: Absolute clinic this weekend by Davis Thompson. His 63rd career PGA TOUR start. Davis Thompson… remember the name! His first career PGA TOUR win!

THOMPSON: It just feels great. A lot of hard work went into this. Thankfully I was able to get the job done this weekend. My caddie kept me grounded, he did a great job and I'm just so thankful to be the champion.

**WITH THE VICTORY, THOMPSON SITS JUST 302 POINTS AWAY FROM CRACKING THE COMCAST BUSINESS TOUR TOP TEN WHICH REMAINS UNCHANGED THIS WEEK.**

THOMPSON: I was just able to play really well and thankfully I'm in a good spot for the rest of the year.

FEDEXCUP STANDINGS

**THOMPSON’S WIN PUSHES HIM UP 29 SPOTS IN THE FEDEXCUP STANDINGS TO A CAREER BEST, 22ND.**

RESTORING YOUR SCORE

KELLEY: We're here at Firestone Country Club to attempt a recovery skip shot that was hit on the PGA TOUR.

ANNC: He did it. Watch this skip. Watch it, watch it, watch it. Magnificent golf shot! One bounce in the water, you see the ripples spreading and there the ball is, no more than 20 feet from the hole.

KELLEY: So this shot was hit in 1979 by Lon Hinkle. It's changed a little bit over the years, but this is about the spot where he hit it and now that I'm standing here, I can understand why he hit the shot. Because these trees are overhanging, if I tried to land this on the green, there's no chance of stopping it. He used one bounce to kind of skip it into the bank. So that's what we're going to try to do today but if disaster strikes, I got myself four mulligans in the pocket to try to pull this shot off. Here we go.

Oh come on. Oh, see that one just landed a little shorter with not as much pace, and it just kind of skipped 2 or 3 times and into the water and that's what can happen and I have mulligans, so let's try that again.

Oh come on. Oh, listen that's on dry land. So, I wouldn't be too mad at that in competition.

We have two balls left here.

Oh, what a perfect kick. Oh! Oh my goodness, that’s like 3 or 4 feet from the hole and it just started raining here and I had four mulligans, but luckily I only needed two of them. Perfect timing. That's huge, let’s go.

Lon actually went on to win this tournament, but the fact that he pulled that off in round with the amount of variables that goes into this shot was so impressive. So, what a fun shot to hit. I was just happy to recreate it. That was awesome.

VICTOR PEREZ FEATURE

ANNC: Victor Perez has got the putter out from the fringe at 11. Thank you very much! He’s been making arrangements to move over to the U.S. courtesy of his win in Abu Dabi.

PEREZ: Victor Perez from Semeac, France.

ANNC: What a hugely impressive performance it’s been by the tall Frenchman.

PEREZ: One of my big goal’s is to win a major to get the world number one, to achieve what no other French player has achieved.

Growing up in the south of France has been very helpful for my game. The majority of the courses are quite short, quite narrow. Taught me from an early age to try to hit the ball as straight as possible I was quite a bigger kid growing up, but we’re not particularly taught to like it is in the new age where kids are now, you know, try to hit the ball as far as they can so it helped me create a great sense of control.

Being from France we've obviously had some success, but I don't think we've had quite the success that I would expect French players to have, because we have good weather, good facilities, good junior program, good funding. I think everything’s built to create great young champions.

Jean was probably one of the closest obviously with what happened at Carnoustie. Levet lost in a playoff in Muirfield against Ernie Els, there's no need to, you know, beat around the bush and find excuses. It just hasn't been done. It needs to be done.

ANNC: He’s traveling on it, look at that!

PEREZ: I wouldn't say I had the greatest amateur career I had to go through Q-School to the Alps tour, which was the equivalent of the Canadian Tour for us. I was able to finish fifth my first season, which got me the promotion onto the Challenge Tour. I was able to finish third my second year, which got me in the DP World.

ANNC: And it is a victory for Victor Perez.

PEREZ: My first win at the Dunhill links in 2019 at St Andrew's in my first year was just something that I think I'll always remember. That was a great springboard, gave me a lot of freedom as a rookie.

ANNC: Victor Perez from France is the first every French Champion on the Old Course of St. Andrews. He’s the Alfred Dunhill Links Champion for 2019.

PEREZ: I got inside the top 50 and then struggled for a bit, made some changes and then I was able to win in Holland.

ANNC: That is just sensational from the Frenchman!

*GFX: PART OF THE REASON FOR RENEWED SUCCESS CAME FROM A RELOCATION THANKS TO HIS AFFINITY FOR THE COUNTRY OF HIS FIRST WIN.*

PEREZ: Living in Edinburgh has been fantastic. To come to Renaissance, to play on the great course. Scotland is the birth of golf and I think Links Course teaches you a lot about patience and being accepting of the conditions, the bad downs, the good downs, which I think carries over a long way when you go onto more traditional courses you get to deal with the unfairness gives you that sense that you don't really control as much as you think you do.

ANNC: Oh, go on then. Ohhh, shot of his life!

PEREZ: Winning always takes something a little bit special and I think it was really reflected.

ANNC: He’s the first Frenchman to win a Rolex Series event.

PEREZ: Those events obviously give me confidence to have done it and then going out to America, having some good results at the Match Play.

ANNC: Bang. He slams it shut.

PEREZ: It gives me a lot of confidence that the game's there and it's just a matter of playing my game and stay focused on the task at hand.

Someone needs to win a major. Someone need to win a FedExCup. Someone is to win a race to Dubai. I'll be happy if it's me, but I'd be happy if any of us does it and I think it's a matter of us French players put ourselves more in position and then eventually one's going to fall. Once you feel like someone who is no different than you has done it, it gives you that belief that you can do it and then it's kind of carry over to show that it's possible and then really put French golf into a different dimension.

TV TIMES

**FOR THE 3RD TIME, THE GENESIS SCOTTISH OPEN IS A CO-SANCTIONED EVENT BETWEEN THE DP WORLD TOUR AND THE PGA TOUR, WITH THE LAST TWO CHAMPIONS, MCILROY AND SCHAUFFELE IN THE FIELD.**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE FEATURE

ANNC: Xander Schauffele the hottest player in golf in the summer of 2022.

SCHAUFFELE: I’m playing some of the best golf of my life and capitalizing on playing really well. I feel like I’ve been successful in getting the most out of my game.

ANNC: Xander has been knocking on the door ever since he won that ‘22 Scottish Open. Playing good golf, but hasn't been able to break through.

SCHAUFFELE: I'll hold my head up high. It was the most fun I had losing in quite some time. My team and I were working on the right stuff, you know, to get these results, playing sort of whatever, coming into the playoffs to sort of peak and play really well at the right time is important, and so I think we're working on the right things.

ANNC: Xander hasn't won in the last two seasons, but the season before that, he was prolific, and he has been knocking on the door seemingly every week. Boy, this is so good. Just can’t tell you how good that is.

SCHAUFFELE: It’s been a while since I had a lead out here. I've been in a few foul groups, but was chasing at that point, so just been trying to join myself, remind myself that I'm good enough to win. Trying to compete out here, you have to have some things go your way.

ANNC: So Schauffele comes up short again as he chases his big championship. It's another 54 hole lead that he can't close the deal.

SCAUFFELE: I tell myself all the time. If you're trying to win, you to walk through the fire, and if you're able to walk through unscathed, then you're going to win the tournament. My dad told me a long time ago to commit, execute and accept. I'm swallowing a heavy dose of acceptance right now, but that's kind of what I did. You know? I try to commit. I executed poorly on some shots, and here I am accepting it.

ANNC: This is the fourth time that Xander has been in the final pairing on Sunday with no conversions.

SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, a bit of buzz saw, to be honest, if I could have just put a little bit of pressure down through that mid part where I started leaking oil, it probably would have looked a little bit different. I probably had to shoot what 7-under today again ballpark to tie him, maybe, or win by one.

ANNC: Not everything is about winning on the PGA TOUR, consistency is definitely something that is highly valued by these players. 23 out of 23 cuts last year cannot call that a slump at all.

SCHAUFFELE: A result is just a result. It really is. I think that's why I was able to just keep chugging along through a lot of close calls, because I just knew you have to put yourself in that position and just keep running it and that's what I told myself.

(04:57:20): Good as gold! Xander Schauffle!

PHOTOS from PGA Championship

SCHAUFFELE: It's a dream come true. It really is. It's something I've wanted since I was a little kid and you just never know when it's going to happen… to be realistic, if it's ever going to happen, you know, you need a lot of things to go your way and you need to beat a lot of really good players.

SWING THEORY – ERNIE ELS

ELS: My primary swing thought is to finish my backswing. I want to make a nice full turn on the backswing. Get the shoulder under the chin, get the back to the target, and then everything flows from there.

FURYK: Relax.

HARRINGTONL: Focus on the target.

DAILY: Low and slow.

STRICKER: Try to make a good turn.

LANGER: Staying down through impact.

IMMELMAN: Six foot, three inches… a giant of a man with a graceful, powerful, enviable golf swing, Ernie Els.  The Big Easy oozes rhythm and tempo, and his classic swing has been a model to many, including me.

ANNC: Well, this man's got whatever he needs.

This is just pounded on.

IMMELMAN: He's a three-time major champion and 19-time PGA TOUR winner, and in my opinion, is as talented and complete a golfer as I have ever seen. In fact, Ernie is pretty much the reason I gave up playing competitively and took to teaching.

ANNC: Gets it up the right-hand side and hits it kind of low, it'll take off. This is a bullet down the right-hand side. See if it does, that's got a chance to get way down there, and it's gonna cross the card path and work continually down the fairway. Ernie Els is going to have nothing into this par five.

IMMELMAN: The Big Easy. He's a big man. He's graceful. He creates a lot of speed, and I'd love to show you how he does it. First off here at a dress, I want you to notice this… can you see how it's like his upper body has just eeked over to his forward side, a little bit? That's almost in a preamble to push off that forward leg and create some sideways movement going back, just enough to kick the back swing off.

Then secondarily, he's got these big, long arms, and I feel like he's always done a great job of keeping this handle of the club low and as he keeps it low, he sets up a big, wide swing arc. So away from the ball, little forward press, the body shifts right and right there… can you see? It's like he's driving the handle down with force as the wrists are hinging up. Notice how he's moved off that forward foot, back into his trailing foot, and he's now able to just wind his core and turn to the top of his back swing. This is classic Els as he winds up and completes the swing.

Now, right there, he looks like he is loaded and primed to unload. Bodies wound up, shoulders complete turn, club shaft parallel. Gorgeous, but look at this look here. See it's like there's almost a downward look. Some force onto that forward leg and I want you to pay attention to the belt buckle, because you will see that it won't just turn, it’ll push upward, and that push up will create a slingshot effect to basically propel this clubhead through the ball with very little effort.

So watch this, forward, up. See how the clubhead accelerates. Beautiful. A little forward, a little rotate, a push up. Can you see how that belt buckle is raising upward? Watch this, down, pushed up, turned out of the way, so much so that this club head, it slung past Ernie's hands without him even trying and now watch this, the forward foot. There's been so much upward going on that as he goes into the completion of the follow through. He pushed himself off that forward leg. The arms cross over, the body continues to turn and watch this, he's almost repositioned yet still balanced as he finishes this graceful yet powerful golf swing.

There he is, vintage Els. That balanced, enviable follow through. A lot of us copied it. Ernie does it naturally. He can swing so easy because of the engine he has underneath.

ANNC: He's as long as anyone out there. That's why he's in the World Golf Hall of Fame. That's exactly right.

Ernie trying to hit a cut up the right side and does a pretty good job of it. Looks like it's smoked. Oh yep, say goodbye to Steven Alker. That really was pound town! Whoa!