2024 PGA TOUR ORIGINALS: THE JOHN SHIPPEN

INTERNATIONAL SCRIPT

STAND UP #1 & TITLES

DOUG SMITH: What’s going on everybody? I’m Doug Smith.

SHASTA AVERYHARDT: And I’m Shasta Averyhardt and we have the honor of hosting THE JOHN SHIPPEN.

DOUG SMITH: And we are in middle of Motor City right here at Detroit Golf Club celebrating the top amateur and black professional golfers in the country.

**WELCOME TO THE JOHN SHIPPEN.**

THE JOHN SHIPPEN EXPLAINED

**FOR THE FOURTH CONSECUTIVE YEAR, THE JOHN SHIPPEN NATIONAL INVITATIONAL CONSISTS OF THREE GOLF TOURNAMENTS FOR** **TOP AMATUER AND PROFESSIONAL BLACK GOLFERS AND CREATES ACCESS AND OPPORTUNITIES BY IDENTIFYING HISTORICAL BARRIERS.**

SOLOMON HUGHES: THE JOHN SHIPPEN is the only event that really, I would say, removes barriers to entry. We provide housing, we provide transportation, and we have no entry fees, and we also provide a purse for them to play on the top of an exemption. The only event to do so.

**THE JOHN SHIPPEN HAS BEEN DEDICATED TO PROVIDING MORE PATHWAYS FOR BLACK GOLFERS, WHILE CONTINUING TO HONOR THE HISTORY AND LEGACY OF THE TOURNAMENT’S NAMESAKE.**

GEORGIA OBOH: I started playing in these events in 2022 and at the time I didn’t really know that much about John Shippen, Jr. and after a lot of research I realized just how important he was to the history of golf in America and the world. And playing in these events is just a great way to continue his legacy and to help showcase the next generation in what’s possible in women’s golf.

**WINNERS OF THE TWO WOMEN’S EVENTS RECEIVE EXEMPTIONS INTO THREE LPGA TOURNAMENTS WHILE THE WINNER OF THE MEN’S EVENT EARNS A SPOT IN THE PGA TOUR’S ROCKET MORTGAGE CLASSIC.**

ASHLEY SHAW: Through THE JOHN SHIPPEN, the exemptions they give, it just brings more diversity into the game and that's extremely important.

MOLLIE MARCOUX SAMAAN: To give a young woman who’s so deserving the opportunity to live her dreams through the game and to be able to test herself against the very best in an environment that matters and that is big, I don't think that can be understated, and we are really proud to partner with THE JOHN SHIPPEN.

**… BUT WHO IS JOHN SHIPPEN?**

WHO IS JOHN SHIPPEN?

RUBY SIMMONS: John Shippen's story is a forgotten story to the world of golf. We talk about Charlie Sifford, Lee Elder and of course Tiger Woods, but no one has ever gone back that far to put him in as part of that history.

THURMAN SIMMONS: Shippen was the Jackie Robinson of golf. He transcended golf in an era where no African Americans were playing golf back. He made history three-folds - first American, first African American and the youngest American to ever play in a U.S. Open. John Shippen was born in Anacostia, Washington DC in 1879. He came to Shinnecock with his father and family to minister the Shinnecock Indians. John was nine years old then, and he and other members of the Shinnecock Indian Nation actually built the golf course by hand.

**AFTER HELPING TO BUILD THE NOW-FAMED COURSE, SHIPPEN TOOK AN INTEREST IN THE SPORT.**

**BY THE AGE OF 16, THE NATURAL TALENT WAS WORKING FULL-TIME AS AN ASSISTANT...** **AND IN A FEW SHORT YEARS, BECAME THE FIRST AMERICAN-BORN GOLFING PROFESSIONAL.**

THURMAN SIMMONS: 1896 that was the first official USGA tournament out at Shinnecock and no Americans ever played in a USGA tournament. The Scottish and Irish people were invited over to play and the members of Shinnecock had entered John Shippen, Jr. to play in this event.

RUBY SIMMONS: He was ostracized by the players that came from Scotland, calling them the colored boys, that they did not want to play with him.

THURMAN SIMMONS: He was only 16 years old. He finished fifth place and after that he played in five U.S. Opens. But when you look at the history of the game, Shippen should have a place in the annals of golf for what he did.

**SHIPPEN'S GOLFING PURSUITS WERE IN STARK CONTRAST TO THE NORM IN THE EARLY 1900S, WHEN BLACK GOLFERS WERE LARGELY PROHIBITED FROM PLAYING ALONGSIDE WHITE MEN AND WOMEN.**

RUBY SIMMONS: There was something about him that apparently piqued the interest of those that played the game at that time.

THURMAN SIMMONS: He was always somewhere being snuck on a golf course where he couldn't play, to play the members. He played this whole eastern seaboard from New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Long Island.

**BUT AFTER YEARS OF PLYING HIS TRADE ON THE ROAD, A NEW HOME EMERGED IN 1921.**

THURMAN SIMMONS: Shady Rest is important because it was the first African American Country Club in America. This is where African Americans came to have a good time and feel free and not feel threatened about anything.

RUBY SIMMONS: Duke Ellington, all of the big bands and they were here. Althea Gibson taught tennis, they had a tennis court here. They had the golf course.

THURMAN SIMMONS: John got to become the pro here in the late 20s. And he stayed the head pro here for 25-30 years. He lived right upstairs on the third floor. He just loved playing golf, and he loved teaching golf to the members of the club.

RUBY SIMMONS: John Shippen's story to me is very relevant. With everything that's going on today in our society, I think this is a good time to know about the past.

Sometimes people will ask us are we related or why are we doing this to someone who is not part of our family and we just say it’s part of history.

THURMAN SIMMONS: I think it resonates with people because 25 years ago most people thought African Americans couldn’t play golf or we didn’t play golf. Well, when you look at the history of the game, it was African Americans who actually played the game here first before any Americans played the game. So, the history has been buried for almost 100 years until me and my wife got involved this.

RUBY SIMMONS: It was African American and American history and we didn’t want to let it go.

SOMMER WOODS INTERVIEW

SHASTA AVERYHARDT: This is an opportunity of a lifetime. It's not just the exemptions that the players are competing for. I recently sat down with Sommer Woods, tournament lead, to find out what's new.

So, Sommer, we are back in Grand Rapids. It's been a year. How has everything been going for the past three years for THE JOHN SHIPPEN?

SOMMER WOODS: It’s been amazing. We're continuing to grow every single year and add additional opportunities. Blythefield is an amazing partner. Membership is great and supportive. So we love being here in Grand Rapids and being at the Detroit golf club and Upper Montclair as well, so.

SHASTA AVERYHARDT: Yeah, so the purse was added this year, so that was obviously, a new addition to 2024, how did that come to be?

SOMMER WOODS: So, we first started this event, we knew that it had to grow in a lot of different ways, not just in terms of opportunities, but also things that people can really benefit from and so, this year, we knew it was important to make sure that it was equity across all of our events and so we carved out, in our budget, to be able to have a purse starting in New Jersey and then carrying to Grand Rapids and Detroit and so the men and the women, because they're both national invitationals, we have the purse of $22,000 for each event, for the men and for the women, for first, second and third. So, we're really excited.

SHASTA AVERYHARDT: I love that equal pay, right? It's, obviously, a great event, so far. I mean, you got the purse going. You have the exemptions. What's going to be better for 2025?

SOMMER WOODS: We're working with and encouraging, elevating black men and women who are seeking to be professionals, right, on the LPGA Tour and the PGA TOUR, and so for 2025, we would love to have, you know, some more exemptions, right? We would love to increase the purse. We would love for other partners to come to the table with other assets. Because it's not just the money, the purse is obviously very big right, to be able to walk away with a check but also we have partners like JP Morgan Chase with the Marriott Bonvoy program, which is amazing. So, trying to find ways to eliminate the barriers that we see within trying to get to the next level on tour, and that's how we grow. So when we have a partner like Dow who truly put their money where their mouth is, they were the first ones to the table with an exemption for the women, and they continue to be that, but they take it to the next level, right? They went and said, ‘Hey, we want to support and have representation of our brand for the Dow Diamond. Supporting Lakaraber and Anita. You know, two great women players and two good just human beings. They're great ambassadors for Dow, and Dow is a great partner, so we appreciate them. So those are the things we want. So when other partners say, ‘Wow, we see that that return on our investment.’

SHASTA AVERYHARDT: They're a great example.

SOMMER WOODS: Man, a great example, for sure.

SHASTA AVERYHARDT: I played in it three out of four years, and I just feel like every year is getting better and better and so, we appreciate you.

SOMMER WOODS: Well, I appreciate you all. I appreciate the players, everybody's support system, we couldn't, literally couldn't do without the players and so ... takes a lot for players to readjust and look at their calendars and schedules and trying to make it happen, to even come to be a part of our event. So, we are very fortunate and blessed that it's a mutual respect and relationship and partnership to advance this game

SHASTA AVERYHARDT: Absolutely.

BUMP

**COMING UP … 15-YEAR-OLD ASHLEY SHAW IS ALREADY MAKING A NAME FOR HERSELF.**

ASHLEY SHAW: I think the thing I’m most proud of is how far I’ve come in this game with my parents. We’ve done it together and we’ve stuck together.

**…AND LATER, ONE OF MICHIGAN’S OWN CAPTURES THE MEN’S TITLE.**

WILLIE MACK III: It was an up-and-down day but I’m glad I got through it and came out on top.

COGNIZANT CUP SETUP & PAIGE CRAWFORD MIC’D

**THE FIRST OF 3 TOURNAMENTS FOR BLACK GOLFERS WITH EXEMPTIONS INTO LPGA AND PGA TOUR EVENTS ON THE LINE FOR WINNERS, TAKES PLACE IN NEW JERSEY AT THE JOHN SHIPPEN COGNIZANT CUP, WHERE DEFENDING CHAMPION PAIGE CRAWFORD FACES WET CONDITIONS DURING THE PRACTICE ROUND.**

CADDIE: Yeah, this is a lot of rain. What do you say we do, same thing as last year?    
    
PAIGE CRAWFORD: I honestly think we should do the same thing as last year. It worked, right?

What is it?

CADDIE: 188.

PAIGE CRAWFORD: Oh 188? Ok. That should be good.

**WHILE THE VETERAN PREPARED FOR THE DAY AHEAD… A 15-YEAR-OLD AMATEUR FROM ARIZONA IS READY TO MAKE A STATEMENT AT UPPER MONTCLAIR COUNTRY CLUB AND CONTINUE HER ASCENSION IN GOLF.**

ASHLEY SHAW FEATURE

ASHLEY SHAW: I was seven and my dad picked up a set of clubs at a garage sale and he thought it'd be something I'd enjoy, and he was right. I played in my first tournament about three or four months later, and just knew I loved it. I don't remember what I shot. I do remember where my first tee shot went, which is kind of funny. I kind of popped it up to the left and I took my first drop. I never knew what a drop was until that moment.

I went right into it and started playing on a lot of the local tours and I won three Player of the Years, and I got Sportsmanship of the Year award back in 2018.

I've loved this game of golf. Just learning all the different rules and the little things of the game, it was definitely challenging, but I’ve done a few rules clinics and we've studied the game to figure out different rules and watch on TV, like “why are they doing that or what's going on?” but we figured it out over time.

SYLVIA SHAW: Sometimes parents will come and ask me questions and I just tell them, keep going. We remember when Ashley couldn't even hit the ball. She would just swing the club and the ball is right there and she’d miss. Those memories are fresh but stick with it and it'll pay dividends that you can't imagine.

ASHLEY SHAW: I think the thing I'm most proud of is how far, you know, I've come in this game with my parents. We didn't do it the traditional way. We didn't do it with the PGA coach and going to all the lessons, but we've done it together and we stuck together and how far we've come with just us doing this, it kind of blows my mind sometimes.

SYLVIA SHAW: It has been her journey, but we've always told her we will support you as far as you want to take this and even when it was a point where mom and dad, I know you guys didn't play the game, but I want you to help me become the best I can be at this and so we went to work and figured it out.

DOC SHAW: Ashley just takes every moment as hers. She owns it. If she's singing, she is singing loud. If she's dancing, she's dancing as if no one is watching and that's what makes Ashley unique.

ASHELY SHAW: I'm just out here being myself and playing the game and I let everything else take care of itself. My biggest concern in life is what I'm wearing the next day. That's my biggest concern. I'm not concerned about anything else. I'm just trying to be a kid. I'm just 15 years old.

I've always been into fashion. Whenever I can, I love for us all to match because when people look at us, I need them to know we're all together.

DOC SHAW: I tell her, if you show up, someone has to win. It might as well be you. Nothing's given to you out here in life, you got to go get it, and as a woman, as a black woman, you better figure that out quick, because this world is vicious and I want you to be the nicest one out there but it also requires you to put in the most work because you have a big hill to climb. If she listens, she could end up being special amongst her peers.

ASHLEY SHAW RIDE ALONG

DOC SHAW: Here we go.

CAMERA: How was practice yesterday?

ASHLEY SHAW: It went well. It was extremely raining and cold but got some good shots in. The course is in great shape, so I’m excited for today.

SYLVIA SHAW: I think New Jersey is the furthest East you’ve been to, isn’t it Ashley?

ASHLEY SHAW: Yes.

SYLVIA SHAW: If you made it to New York, what’s something you’d like to see if you made it there?

ASHLEY SHAW: I love pizza, so I’m defiantly going to find me some pizza.

DOC SHAW: Look it is so warm they are in short sleeves.

ASHLEY SHAW: It’s not warm, daddy.

SYLVIA SHAW: We’ve seen a lot of people in short sleeves, and we’ve been freezing.

DOC SHAW: That guy he’s not from here.

ASHLEY SHAW: No he’s not.

DOC SHAW: Yeah he’s in long sleeves.

SYLVIA SHAW: Nice day to play golf.

ASHLEY SHAW: Yeah it is.

SYLVIA SHAW: It’s comfortable too.

ASHLEY SHAW: It’s not too cool. I’m comfortable in this rain jacket.

THE JOHN SHIPPEN COGNIZANT CUP RECAP

ASHLEY SHAW: Starting the day, I was excited. You know that feeling when you just you show up somewhere and it's like, I can feel something exciting that's going to happen and that’s just the feeling I had.

**SETTING THE TONE FOR THE DAY, SHAW RECORDED AN EARLY BIRDIE.**

DOC SHAW: When I watch golf with Ashley, I don't count her strokes, I'm watching to see if she's having fun. I'm watching to see if she has what I call the Ashley bop. I say ‘okay, this is probably going well.’

**WHILE THE ASHLEY BOP WAS IN FULL SWING, COLORADO’S PAIGE CRAWFORD FELL OFF THE PACE, RECORDING 7 BOGEYS TO JUST ONE BIRDIE ON THE DAY RESULTING IN A 5TH PLACE FINISH.**

**23-YEAR-OLD NIGERIAN GEORGIA OBOH RECOVERED FROM EARLY TROUBLE TO MOVE INTO CONTENTION… BUT DOWN THE STRETCH, SHAW RECORDED A PAIR OF BIRDIES ON THE BACK NINE AND HELD STEADY THROUGH THE FINISH.**

ASHLEY SHAW: It was a tough track and we all went out there and did our thing and today I just happened to have the lowest score.

To win an event, that puts me in an LPGA event, all the work that we've put in was finally paying off. I did it, I reached my goal and I’m playing an LPGA event.

I just first want to thank THE JOHN SHIPPEN and Summer Woods for even giving me this opportunity to play and having this wonderful experience… and I definitely want to thank my parents and specifically my mom. She’s my coach and she’s with me every single step of the way and I couldn’t be more grateful and so thank you and happy Mother’s Day.

ASHLEY SHAW AT THE LPGA COGNIZANT FOUNDERS CUP

ANNC: Here’s a great story. This is 15-year-old Ashley Shaw. What a beautiful golf swing that was.

ASHLEY SHAW: This week has been absolutely amazing. I've had so much fun playing on an amazing course, and all the ladies have been extremely friendly.

I wouldn't even be here if it weren't for the John Shippen event. Without them, I would not be playing in my first LPGA event and I'm so grateful for the opportunity that they gave me and this is not my last time you're going to see me. I'll be back.

REJOIN:

**WELCOME BACK TO THE JOHN SHIPPEN.**

STAND UP #2

DOUG SMITH: Shasta, you’re not only co-hosting THE JOHN SHIPPEN, you played in Grand Rapids.

SHASTA AVERYHARDT: Yes, I did, in the Women’s National Invitational where there are two exemptions on the line, and it was also great to reconnect with some of my colleagues and my good friends.

THE JOHN SHIPPEN WOMEN’S NATIONAL INVITATIONAL - ROUND 1

STARTER: From Litchfield Park, Arizona, please welcome, Ashley Shaw.

**THE JOHN SHIPPEN COGNIZANT CUP CHAMPION ASHLEY SHAW STRUGGLES IN GRAND RAPIDS TO KEEP THE MOMENTUM GOING WITH A PAIR OF BOGEYS EARLY ON, BUT RECOVERS TO SHOOT AN EVEN-PAR ROUND.**

STARTER: Good luck, ladies.

**2021 CHAMPION ANITA UWADIA MATCHES SHAW TO TIE FOR SECOND AFTER ROUND ONE OF THE JOHN SHIPPEN NATIONAL INVITATIONAL.**

STARTER: From Federal Republic of Nigeria, please welcome, Georgia Oboh.

**GEORGIA OBOH SETS THE PACE EARLY, RECORDING TWO BIRDIES ON THE FRONT NINE.**

GEORGIA OBOH: I did ask my dad, you know, ‘What’s the score? What’s the score?’ and he’s like, ‘no, don’t worry about it. Just go and play well’ and then I ended up having a tap-in eagle which was unexpected and then it was just pars in.

GODFREY OBOH: It’s a pleasure. It’s a privilege for me to be able to watch my daughter play golf, especially on the highest level. I just pray that she plays well tomorrow and she’s able to play the LPGA tournaments.

SHASTA PUTTING COMPETITION & CHAT WITH 4 PLAYERS

SHASTA AVERYHARDT: Ladies, it is a beautiful day here at THE JOHN SHIPPEN Women’s Invitational, and I haven’t seen a lot of you in a while, so we’re going to do a little catch-up and see how life is treating you, how the game’s looking.

NATS: We should go from right here to that … something more realistic.

SHASTA AVERYHARDT: Ebonie, can I start with you? Because we haven’t seen each other since college.

EBONIE COX: Yes.   

SHASTA AVERYHARDT: And I remember we … so she played at Bethune-Cookman and I was at Jackson State. So, what’s been going on since then?

EBONIE COX: I’ve just been back home, sort of trying to …

SHASTA AVERYHARDT: In Bermuda, right?     
     
EBONIE COX: Bermuda, yes. I’m really passionate about the junior scene in Bermuda, as well as the ladies. So, I’ve, just in the last three, four years or so, put my focus into more coaching and teaching rather than playing.

NATS: Ooh, great putt!

EBONIE COX: Trying to do what I can to grow it in Bermuda for the youth, as well as people of color.

SHASTA AVERYHARDT: I know you went to LET (Ladies’ European Tour) Q-School with me in December and you have duel status on The Epson Tour and LET, how have you been able to balance that? Because that’s a lot of travel.     
     
LAKAREBER ABE: Yeah it’s definitely been … Anita’s laughing because she knows half of it.  It’s been a bit of a whirlwind and a learning experience. I mean, I’m very lucky and very blessed to have the opportunity to play both tours, so I’ve done my best to balance both tours this year.     
     
NATS: Too much speed. Way too much speed.

SHASTA AVERYHARDT: No, I won that.

LAKAREBER ABE: No, no, no, no, no, no way!

SHASTA AVERYHARDT: I won that. You hit my ball.

LAKAREBER ABE: Ok!

SHASTA AVERYHARDT: This is your second time playing THE SHIPPEN, right?

KENDALL JACKSON: Correct.

SHASTA AVERYHARDT: Ok, so talk to me about going into your senior year and playing THE SHIPPEN and just some of your experience that you’ve learned today and the last time you’ve played THE SHIPPEN.

KENDALL JACKSON: Just learned a lot about my game these last two years because I feel like physically, I’ve always been a strong player like just off-the-tee, distance-wise, but it’s a matter of matching that mental, not always going there with certain expectations, but also really just accepting the results and just focusing on what I can control. I will say playing events like THE SHIPPEN where you have an opportunity to do well, get into those big events, get your name out there, get that exposure. So thankful, so grateful for all the … all the people who make THE SHIPPEN happen, so, hopefully can do well this week and see what happens.

SHASTA AVERYHARDT: This is my third year playing THE JOHN SHIPPEN and I think it’s always special coming here, and aside from the opportunity, right, to win exemptions into LPGA tournaments, but more so just honoring John Shippen and the legacy that he left behind, how does every year differentiate from each other?

ANITA UWADIA: One of my favorite events just because of the people I get to meet and, I feel like it’s obviously, you’re out here to kick each other’s butts, but at the same time, it’s just a friendly environment and we joke around.

This is what not to do.

I just love that camaraderie that we all have, but also, I think she’s doing a great job in making it a very legit tournament and making it feel like you’re in a tournament and, you know, from my first year we definitely didn’t get … there was no purse and so, the fact that we get have a purse and even the gifts that we have and everything they’re doing to make it feel like a very legit event and to make us feel as comfortable as possible. The whole team is doing a great job and I just love coming back here.

SHASTA AVERYHARDT: Well, thank you, ladies, for getting together. I … I’m grateful for the conversations. I hope you play well tomorrow. Not well enough because I want to win, but I do wish you well the rest of the year. Lots of birdies, and fairways and greens.

NATS: Thank you, Shasta. Same to you.

THE JOHN SHIPPEN WOMEN’S NATIONAL INVITATIONAL - ROUND 2

ANITA UWADIA: Mother Nature, whatcha got today?

CHRIS WHITTEN: They're getting the full Michigan experience. They're going to get two very different weather days. So, the conditions will be a little different and we'll see who can adjust. These players are so good they're going to make a few putts today.

STARTER: Welcome to the final round of THE JOHN SHIPPEN National Invitational, first to the tee, Georgia Oboh!

**FOUL WEATHER KEEPS AT BAY AS GEORGIA OBOH BEGINS THE DAY 3 AHEAD OF ASHLEY SHAW.**

GEORGIA OBOH: It was cooler today, and I knew that it would definitely play a bit softer, and you could then be a bit more aggressive, and everything kind of just flowed.

This has been like my first time sleeping on the lead and knowing that I have a good enough lead that if I just stay ahead of everybody else, I'll win but the same time not taking it for granted.

**OBOH’S STEADY PACE OF EVEN PAR ON THE FRONT NINE OPENS THE DOOR FOR LAKAREBER ABE’S SIZZLING FOUR BIRDIES THAT TIE THE LEAD… BUT SHE FALTERS COMING IN.**

**OBOH ADDS TWO BIRDIES TO HER CARD AND EARNS THE JOHN SHIPPEN NATIONAL INVITATIONAL TROPHY.**

GEORGIA OBOH: It's just great to see all the hard work that I've put into my game. To able to showcase it now when it mattered, and to finally finish it off. This was that, ‘Finally!’ moment.

**ASHLEY SHAW CAPTURES LOW AMATEUR… AND WITH HER WIN, GEORGIA OBOH IS AWARDED A SPONSOR EXEMPTION INTO BOTH THE DOW CHAMPIONSHIP AND THE MEIJER LPGA CLASSIC …**

GEORGIA OBOH AT THE MEIJER LPGA CLASSIC

ANNC: One of the qualifiers this week, Georgia Oboh. She got into this event by winning THE JOHN SHIPPEN event here at Blythefield.

GEORGIA OBOH: It's been my dream to really play on the LPGA since I was probably six years old, and to finally be out here and playing an LPGA event … I just thank God for everything. Taking it one shot at a time. It's very easy to get carried away on the golf course.

ANNC: She’s putting up a really good showing so far here. Good putting stroke there.

GEORGIA OBOH: Just remembering that, I'm just as good to play as anyone out here and just be grateful for the opportunity, playing with the best players in the world.

ANNC: A birdie attempt. Not lacking in confidence.

NATS: Nice job, Georgia.

BUMP

**UP NEXT, WE HEAD TO THE MOTOR CITY FOR THE MEN’S COMPETITION.**

JERRIS BAKER: Golf is just like life. You're going to make a bogey, you're going to have tough days, but it's all about how you can bounce back and keep composure.

WALK & TALK WITH JOHN HAKIZIMANA & TROY TAYLOR II

DOUG SMITH: Gentlemen.

SHASTA AVERYHARDT: Hi. How are you doing?

DOUG SMITH: You've had an interesting time here, almost twice a winner. So, I'm expecting some things from you, Mr. Taylor.

TROY TAYLOR II: Hey, I hope I can just put myself in contention and see what happens coming down the stretch. So, looking forward to it.

SHASTA AVERYHARDT: John, it's your first year in the event, right?

JOHN HAKIZIMANA: Yeah, this is my first year from all the way from Africa to here. I'm so excited to be in THE JOHN SHIPPEN (Good) and I'm looking forward for this week.

DOUG SMITH: This first time seeing the golf course. Let's talk about impressions, both you guys.

TROY TAYLOR II: The course is straight in front of you. There's no trickery, but it's a beautiful golf course. It's a great test and I feel like if you play well, you get rewarded for that, and it will show your flaws if you're not doing the right thing.

DOUG SMITH: Let's talk a little bit about what playing in a PGA TOUR event would mean to you and your family and, and your confidence as you continue to grind.

JOHN HAKIZIMANA: I mean, this one I means a lot. It not even, not even into me, it's even into community where I came from, right? There's so many young golfers down in Africa who are trying their best to be in PGA TOUR or to be here, where I'm at right now, but if I make it you know, I'm gonna keep them like, working hard, and keep them moving forward and they can see there's opportunity for them to make it.

You know, like what John Shippen what they're doing, this is one of the best things. I wish, like, every, every PGA TOUR event can be like this.

DOUG SMITH: We're talking about the man, John Shippen. When you know that you're playing in a championship to potentially lead you into your first PGA TOUR event, like what does that mean?

TROY TAYLOR II: I'm just happy that I get to be a part of it and you know, get to carry on his legacy and he opened up doors for others, and others have opened up doors for me, and I just want to open up doors for you know, younger kids behind me, so just super fortunate.

SHASTA AVERYHARDT: Gentlemen, we wish you luck this week in the John Shippen, and we expect you to go career it.

TROY TAYLOR II: Appreciate it.

JOHN HAKIZIMANA: Oh well there you go.

DOUG SMITH: Wow.

TROY TAYLOR II: Appreciate it.

JOHN HAKIZIMANA: Thank you so much!

SHASTA AVERYHARDT: Thanks, Troy.

DOUG WITH PLAYERS ON THE RANGE

DOUG SMITH: How's it been though, since you been playing?

GREG ODOM JR: It's cool.

DOUG SMITH: You got that “a” off your name, huh?

GREG ODOM JR: I did.  You realize this is your job now.

DOUG SMITH: Yeah.

GREG ODOM JR: And to make more money, you got to have money. It's kind of crazy.

JERRIS BAKER: Funny enough, see, I wanted to get in this John Shippen, like a few years back. I really didn't know if I was gonna make, make the cut to get in. Like, I will move mountains to make it there.

DOUG SMITH: Like no question. Like let me get in here.

JERRIS BAKER: Like hey, I’ll walk. Like I’ll walk to Detroit if I have to, just to make it.

DOUG SMITH: All right, I'm looking forward to see what you do with this opportunity, man.

JERRIS BAKER: I'm in the same boat. I want to see what I do too.

DOUG SMITH: I hope you hit it like that all week.

ANDREW WALKER: [Inaudible]

DOUG SMITH: What’s up boy? Long time, no see.

ANDREW WALKER: You too.

DOUG SMITH: How you been?

ANDREW WALKER: I've been well, I've been well. Can’t complain.

DOUG SMITH: How you playing?

ANDREW WALKER: Playing well.

DOUG SMITH: Good.

ANDREW WALKER: Having a good, good stretch here. So I'm looking forward to the weekend.

DOUG SMITH: I feel like you have something to prove. Do you feel like that this week?

ANDREW WALKER: Definitely. I think it kind of goes both ways. I feel like I definitely have something to prove, but at the same time, it's also like, I got the call three days ago, so you know, nobody was expecting me to be here, and now I'm here, so we'll see if we can't show them why I feel like I deserve to be here.

STAND UP #3

SHASTA AVERYHARDY: Now it’s time for the men’s competition.

DOUG SMITH: Yeah, and the winner of THE JOHN SHIPPEN National Invitational presented by Rocket Mortgage will earn the exemption into the Rocket Mortgage Classic, right here at Detroit Golf Club.

THE JOHN SHIPPEN MEN’S NATIONAL INVITATIONAL – ROUND 1

**14 BLACK PROFESSIONAL AND AMATEUR GOLFERS WILL COMPETE IN A 36-HOLE STROKE PLAY COMPETITION ON THE TOUGH DONALD ROSS LAYOUT.**

SHASTA AVERYHARDT: Today the conditions at Detroit Golf Club are extremely windy out of the northwest. It’s 89 degrees and players are flighting the ball down. They got to keep the ball in the fairway because the rough is extremely thick.

**AS DAY ONE BEGINS IN DETROIT, IT’S AN AMATEUR FROM ILLINOIS WHO MAKES WAVES EARLY ON.**

SHASTA AVERYHARDT: Marcus Smith just made the turn at 3under par with a fabulous up-and-down on 11 and birdies holes 12 and 13 to get to 5-under par. I feel like he’s in momentum to just keep the round going and finish on a positive note.

**SMITH GIVES A PAIR OF STROKES BACK DOWN THE STRETCH BUT BIRDIES 17 TO RECORD A 4-UNDER 68.**

MARCUS SMITH: I made an emphasis today that I wanted to go out and start off well, so I made a birdie on the first and that kind of set the tone for the day.

DOUG SMITH: We’re talking about opportunities at THE JOHN SHIPPEN lends to players, you look at a guy like Willie who we’re following today and not long ago, he was playing in the US Open there at Pinehurst No. 2 and now bringing what he’s learned there to Detroit golf club and it’s really no surprise honestly as we follow Willie down the seventeenth he sits at 7 under par with a chance to get to 8 right here.

WILLIE MACK III: Just sticking to my gameplan, try to hit the greens and give myself as many looks as possible. I feel like my game is good and hopefully I can keep it up tomorrow.

**AFTER DAY 1, MACK’S COMMANDING 5-STROKE LEAD LEAVES A LOT OF WORK FOR THE REST OF THE FIELD TO CATCH UP, INCLUDING AMATUER JERRIS BAKER WHO STRUGGLES IN THE OPENING ROUND BUT STILL RELISHES THE OPPORTUNITY TO RETURN HOME FOR THE WEEK.**

JERRIS BAKER PROFILE

JERRIS BAKER: I’m back home on my way to Rouge Park, it’s the course I grew up at. It’s been… like my dad calls it the best babysitter he’s ever paid for. A lot of older guys have seen me since I was knee high to a grasshopper and so for them to be able to see me turn into the young man I am now, it’s kinda of cool.

NATS: Hey how you doing?

JERRIS BAKER: I started playing golf at Palmer Park, which is right behind Detroit Golf Club. I ended up winning my first tournament, and it was, it was like a bug, and I couldn't stop playing golf.

I was a big baseball kid. I played travel ball for the Motor City Madness for a whole year and I wanted a different change, so I told my dad, ‘Hey, dad, I want to try golf.’

JERRIS BAKER (DAD): He said well dad it’s golf season now. I'm like golf season? I've been waiting for this opportunity.

Now I used to bring him to work with me here at Rouge Park, and some of my friends would take him out and play.

JERRIS BAKER: Man, my dad was probably the best role model ever ask for. He's a short game wiz, you know, there's been times where he'll walk out of the cart, drop a ball, chip it in and then go on about his day.

JERRIS BAKER (DAD) NATS: What’s the first three letters of fundamentals?

JERRIS BAKER NATS: F U N.

JERRIS BAKER (DAD) NATS: Go have some.

JERRIS BAKER (DAD): He has grown tremendously in the aspect of, how he's thinking about the game of golf.

JERRIS BAKER: Golf is just like life. You know you're going to make a bogey, you're going to have tough days, but it's all about how you can bounce back and keep composure.

A lot of people from Detroit, they can make it anywhere. It's just something that you have in you. It gives me a sense of uniqueness and I've been able to take that everywhere and make genuine connections and it's all paid off.

The biggest thing about being able to play in this tournament is just to be able to inspire. It's always been a drive of mine to be able to be that voice to lead the younger generation into a different venue. It's okay to try something new and what it can do for you.

JERRIS BAKER (DAD): This will be one of those defining moments for him and his career. To think that he won his first golf tournament at 12 across the street at Palmer Park now he's playing in THE JOHN SHIPPEN with an opportunity for an exemption into the Rocket Mortgage Classic, I couldn't ask for anything more.

JERRIS BAKER: I'm just really excited to play in THE JOHN SHIPPEN tournament. You know, it's nice to have my quote unquote debut tournament in Detroit and it's always been a dream of mine to be able to play in front of friends and family on a large stage and it's finally happening.

REJOIN

**WELCOME BACK TO THE JOHN SHIPPEN.**

DETROIT ROUNDTABLE

**BEFORE THE FINAL ROUND OF THE MEN’S INVITATIONAL, I HAD THE CHANCE TO SIT DOWN WITH SOME OF THE PLAYERS IN THE FIELD.**

DOUG SMITH: Guys, congratulations on being, you know, the top black golfers in the country. I mean you guys we’re at THE JOHN SHIPPEN and the process is so strenuous to get into this tournament, when you got that call, like, who was it from and how did you feel?

GREG ODOM JR: These are one of them ones, these one of them tournaments you want to get to every summer. This is a great opportunity to play in the PGA TOUR event, limited field. I'm just blessed to be here, blessed to be with my people and blessed to showcase my game.

MARCUS SMITH JR: I always look forward to playing in this event. I mean, just the course alone is very pretty and it's not every day you get to play a Detroit golf club. So, there's going to be some great golfers here. So just look forward to seeing the guys play and you know seeing how they do and how I stack up against that.

DOUG SMITH: When I think of Shippen and his legacy, but also kind of fast forward to now so like then my question becomes has golf done enough to kind of make golf look like America and then we have THE JOHN SHIPPEN where you come and it's all black field. Like what's that feeling like versus you go to, you know Matthew maybe a AGJA event a couple years ago but for you and you may be the only black face, but now you come to an event like this where everybody's black.

MATTHEW VITAL: Yeah, I mean it's so, it's very different, just like the whole vibe, everything about it, you know, coming to a tournament like this, and I see, like, a bunch of people I know, talked to before, I've played with in tournaments like the APGA events and everything. It's very welcoming to be in a field like this and see a bunch of faces that you know and look like you.

MARCUS SMITH JR: Being here and just seeing so many black people, but not even black people, black great golfers too and there's so much you can learn from it, and I mean, connections are built that way too.

NYASHA MAUCHAZA: I'm eternally grateful for the opportunity because it's like, I wasn't fully familiar with the history of this course. It's a great place to be, a great spot to be with some good guys. It's nice to meet them in person for the first time and kind of see like that the future looks bright.

DOUG SMITH: You know, it's interesting, this whole notion of growing the game. I feel like it's a buzz word now, do you feel, Marcus, I'll start with you, do you feel like you are helping to grow the game by just being out here? Or is, what can golf do to, to grow, or does it need to?

MARCUS SMITH JR: Just seeing more black people in the field would be cool. As far as growing the game, I feel like I try to help build it but like you know it's one of those things I just try and make it look cool, you know, you see what I got on man.

DOUG SMITH: We all see what you got on. We came in with you.

MARCUS SMITH JR: So, you know, I just try to make it seem cool as like a game that, you know, black people can play and you know hopefully as I propel I can be one of those people that helps, you know, create more avenues for young kids to get started playing in the game. Because that's the thing. I mean, you got to get started in golf.

DOUG SMITH: Well, guys, I appreciate you all sitting down to chop it up with me, but y'all got to go because y'all got to get ready for a championship.

THE JOHN SHIPPEN MEN’S NATIONAL INVITATIONAL – ROUND 2

DOUG SMITH: It’s a final-round Sunday. THE JOHN SHIPPEN National Invitational presented by Rocket Mortgage. We saw Willie Mack get off to a hot start in the opening round. Two guys at 4-under par, do they have what it takes to track him down today?

SHASTA AVERYHARDT: I think Marcus and Nyasha are sitting really good in second place. It’s just a matter of the players being present and patient and we’ll see who comes out on top.

STARTER: From Flint, Michigan, please welcome, Willie Mack III.

DOUG SMITH: Willie Mack does have a two-shot lead, but now he’s let a lot of players back in this field. Kevin Hall, at the moment, has the round of the day going at 3-under par.

**HALL, MAUCHAZA, MACK ARE JUST NINE HOLES AWAY FROM ONE OF THEM EARNING AN EXEMPTION INTO THE ROCKET MORTGAGE CLASSIC.**

SHASTA AVERYHARDT: The players are heading to the Area 313 with Willie Mack still leading at 6-under par, and Nyasha following behind at 3-under par. Kevin Hall is having a great day today at 4-under par, 2-under for championship.

**MACK WAS CLUTCH DOWN THE STRETCH BIRDIEING THE 18TH HOLE TO WIN BY TWO STROKES AT THE JOHN SHIPPEN NATIONAL INVITATIONAL PRESENTED BY ROCKET MORTGAGE.**

DOUG SMITH: The champ is here. Congratulations, man.

WILLIE MACK III: Thanks, bro.

DOUG SMITH: Proud of you, dude. Good playing.

SHASTA AVERYHARDT: Proud of you. Great playing.

WILLIE MACK III: Thank you.

DOUG SMITH: Man, it looked tough out there today.

WILLIE MACK III: Yeah, tt was rough. Those first eight holes … had me nervous out there.

DOUG SMITH: Good luck this week. Back to the Rocket Mortgage. We’ll see if you can finish the same way out there and get another W.

WILLIE MACK III: Yes, sir.

SHASTA AVERYHARDT: And you’ll have a lot of Flint supporters following you.

WILLIE MACK III: Flint Town.

SHASTA AVERYHARDT: Flint Town.

DOUG SMITH: Y’all with that ‘Flint Town’ stuff. Get out of here, man. I’m out.

WILLIE MACK III AFTER THE WIN

CADDIE: Man, you did nice, man.

WILLIE MACK III: Thanks, bro.

CADDIE: You’re welcome.

WILLIE MACK III: My man.

This year has been amazing so far. Getting to the U.S. Open and then being able to win THE JOHN SHIPPEN. Hopefully, I can just keep it going and play well next week.

TROPHY PRESENTER: I’m going to invite our champion Willie up here to say a few words and congratulate him.

WILLIE MACK III: Want to say thank you and hopefully I can represent THE JOHN SHIPPEN next week and play well for everybody that played in the tournament.

WILLIE MACK III BEFORE THE ROCKET MORTGAGE CLASSIC

WILLIE MACK III: Willie Mack.

NATS: Congratulations.

WILLIE MACK III: Oh, thanks!

NATS: I think that’s it!

WILLIE MACK III: Perfect. Thank you.

NATS: Ok well good luck. Play well and congratulations.

WILLIE MACK III: Oh, thanks!

Being able to see all the members and everybody I know here, it's kind of like a home team thing.

Kinda surreal just to be back playing in a tournament in my hometown. I’m playing good so it should be a good week.

**WILLIE MACK’S GOOD WEEK IS MADE EVEN BETTER WITH BROTHER ALEX TO SHARE THE EXPERIENCE WITH HIM.**

ALEX MACK: After the round on Saturday when he shot nine under he was like, ‘hey, I'm probably gonna make it’ he’s like ‘so just get ready to leave on Monday morning’ and I said ‘ok!’ I got here 8AM the next day.

WILLIE MACK III: He don’t get too up-and-down. I'm the same way playing golf so it kinda works out.

ALEX MACK: If we have a bad hole or what not, I'll just be like ‘hey wanna hear a joke?’ Usually, it’s not funny but he’ll change his mood just a little bit.

Oh, crap I gotta get this divot.

WILLIE MACK III: Ain’t going to be no divot with no 6-iron.

ALEX MACK: The later it gets the sooner you need to go to bed.

WILLIE MACK III: No that’s me.

ALEX MACK: OK, I’ll be in the bed at 11 o’clock, latest, every night. When I’m home… when I’m here…

WILLIE MACK III: Yeah right, I turned off all the lights last night and this dude on the phone, not even under the sheets.

ALEX MACK: I had just got out the shower.

WILLIE MACK III: I really don’t need to do too much preparation now. We played THE JOHN SHIPPEN Invitational on Saturday and Sunday and I played a practice round on Friday, so I know the course by now.

WILLIE MACK AT THE AREA 313 CELEBRITY SCRAMBLE

**MACK CONTINUED HIS PRE-TOURNAMENT ACTIVITIES WITH THE AREA 313 CELEBRITY SCRAMBLE.**

HOST: Willie, you want to start us off?

WILLIE MACK III: Sure.

**A CHANCE TO PLAY A FEW HOLES ALONGSIDE SOME AREA CELEBS…**

AIDAN HUTCHINSON: That’s an absolute dart.

**…AND OTHER GOLFERS IN THE ROCKET MORTGAGE CLASSIC FIELD, LIKE SCRAMBLE PARTNER RICKIE FOWLER.**

RICKIE FOWLER: You get tee times yet?

WILLIE MACK III: Yeah

RICKIE FOWLER: Are you early late or late early?

WILLIE MACK III: I’m late early. What are you, same?

NATS: Willie!!

WILLIE MACK III COMPETES IN THE ROCKET MORTGAGE CLASSIC

ANNC: From Detroit Golf Club in Detroit, Michigan, it’s first round of the Rocket Mortgage Classic.

STARTER: Now on the tee, Willie Mack III.

ANNC: This is his ninth PGA TOUR appearance. He’s made the cut here twice. I mean the guy’s just … he has battled.

First birdie of the day from the 35-year-old Michigander.

**WHAT AN OPPORTUNITY ... WINNING THE JOHN SHIPPEN NATIONAL INVITATIONAL PRESENTED BY ROCKET MORTGAGE AND EARNING AN EXEMPTION INTO THE FIELD.**

ANNC: That’s a first round 72 for Willie Mack III, gotta go low tomorrow but he’ll have a chance.

One of the oldest golf courses in the United States. It is the second round of the Rocket Mortgage Classic … and Willie Mack III, solid start today with birdies on two of his first three holes.

WILLIE MACK III: That’s golf. Sometimes you have good days and you have bad days.

**DISAPPOINTING FINISH FOR MACK, CARDING A 73 TO FINISH ONE OVER TO MISS THE CUT...BUT PLENTY OF UPSIDE IN HIS GAME. WON’T BE THE LAST WE SEE OF HIM.**

WILLIE MACK III: I've been playing well this year. So, just frustrated I didn't play well this week. Maybe a little tired from traveling the past six weeks, but I’m definitely not giving up. It's just a little bump in the road and I'll be back.

STAND UP #4

DOUG SMITH: Shasta, what a week it’s been right here at Detroit Golf Club. It’s amazing to see how these players games stack up on a TOUR level course under TOUR conditions and we’ll see where their careers go from here.

SHASTA AVERYHARDT: Absolutely and we’ve enjoyed following their stories this week and we hope you enjoyed watching THE JOHN SHIPPEN.