Production Transcript for 24INTCUTCH - KAULIG - MASTER.mp3

[00:00:39] >> It is the 42nd playing of the Kaulig Companies Championship, the fourth major of the year for the PGA Tour Champions at famed Firestone in Akron, Ohio. Steve Stricker is the defending champions, won seven major championships throughout his PGA Tour Champions career. Stricker's won this event two of the last three years, but still looking for win number one in 2024.

[00:01:05] >> There are moments in every player's career that will stay with them for the rest of their life. Firestone Country Club holds many of those moments.

[00:01:15] >> Can he do it again? Yes.

[00:01:17] >> No.

[00:01:17] >> Yes.

[00:01:17] >> Lanny, can you believe it?

[00:01:28] >> Oh, you know you can't do that.

[00:01:35] >> How about that, huh?

[00:01:40] >> He's left them in the dark again.

[00:01:43] >> Jerry Kelly for the second time in three years.

[00:01:49] >> The dominance continues.

[00:01:50] >> This week, a major champion will be crowned in a spot in the 2025 Players Championship is on the line at historic Firestone Country Club.

[00:02:00] >> Oh, my goodness.

[00:02:00] >> It's firming up back there, boys.

[00:02:03] >> It is.

[00:02:03] >> We might have a little fun here late.

[00:02:07] >> Only one will have their name etched in history and a career change forever --

[00:02:12] >> As a major champion.

[00:02:21] >> The PGA Tour Champions proudly presents the season-long race for the Charles Schwab Cup. Today from Akron, Ohio, it's live first round coverage of the Kaulig Companies Championship. It is the 71st consecutive year that PGA Tour golf is coming to Firestone Country Club. The South Course being used, this famed venue, the 14th venue used in the 42nd playing of the Kaulig Companies Championship. Steve Stricker is your defending champion. Par 70 measuring just over 7,200 yards. The winner this week picks up a PGA Tour Champions major and punches his ticket to the players next year. Kenny Perry won this event back in 2013 at Fox Chapel, just outside of Pittsburgh. He's at 4-under par through his opening seven holes, has a one shot lead over Duffy Waldorf and Paul Stankowski. You see the defending champ, Steve Stricker, just two off the pace. Ernie Els, yet to win a major on the PGA Tour Champions, number 1 here at Firestone, would like to end that drought here this week. Vijay Singh, another hall of famer in the field this week. Retief Goosen, he won the inaugural Kaulig Companies Championship at Firestone back in 2019. Obviously, the golf course playing difficult as always. Bob Papa, World Golf Hall of Famer, Lanny Wadkins, who won on this property three times during his career. John Cook and Phil Blackmar calling the action. Let's take you over to the 5th. Ernie Els has this putt for birdie. Phil Blackmar with this group.

[00:04:02] >> Yeah, turning a little bit to the left. Good par, 384 yards. Beautiful day out here today, guys. The course is very receptive. Ernie playing pretty well.

[00:04:12] >> Ernie started his day on the 10th, split tees here in Round number 1 of the Kaulig Companies Championship.

[00:04:23] >> After turning 50, Miguel Angel Jimenez won his debut event at the Mitsubishi Electric Classic, And won every single year until last year. So has not won in almost two years. And, Phil, what do you think the reason is for Miguel?

[00:04:45] >> I was looking at his stats earlier, and really nothing stood out at all, Bob. I think -- Actually, I think right now, the quality of play on this tour is really deep. Maybe the deepest it's ever been. That's certainly playing a part in it, I think. Lanny, don't you?

[00:04:59] >> I don't think there's any question. Yeah, the guys are just playing better and better. They're working harder. They're staying in good shape. They really --

[00:05:05] >> Go to 11 now. Steve Stricker to play his second.

[00:05:10] >> Yeah, just in the first cut on the left-hand side, hole location tucked right over that bunker. He's got 142 in, 136 clears that bunker, if he chooses to go at the flag.

[00:05:23] >> They just put the flag in, so you're good.

[00:05:25] >> I don't think there's any reason he wouldn't go with the flag here. Jimmy Johnson is caddie, been around this game a long, long time from Dallas and --

[00:05:33] >> It's kind of weird not seeing a Stricker on the back.

[00:05:35] >> Yeah, it really is. But the short rough here is no problem. Don't think there's any chance of a flyer here for Steve. Might as well go flag hunting.

[00:05:43] >> Yeah, not at all. And the greens are very receptive. Just a little left of the hole, right over top of the flag. Good shot.

[00:05:50] >> That's perfect.

[00:05:51] >> Rocco Mediate over at 16 for birdie. And that gets Rocco to 2-under now.

[00:06:04] >> Now, Stricker for birdie.

[00:06:05] >> Now, I wasn't in the junior program in 1929, but I was in the junior program in about '63 and '64.

[00:06:12] >> This got to be outside the left, maybe a ball, Cookie.

[00:06:16] >> That would be no more than that, Lanny. Pretty flat putt. Not much as far as speed goes.

[00:06:23] >> Yeah, it just depends on the pace he hits this. He got it further out and it -- Oh, it did move. It moved. He got it about two out there, but the pace was so good, it got in the left side.

[00:06:35] >> That looks more like the Stricker we're used to.

[00:06:36] >> Yes, it does.

[00:06:40] >> Sixteenth hole the day for Miguel Angel Jimenez as he plays his second at the par-3 7th.

[00:06:46] >> Very difficult bunker shot, flat lie, green going away from him. He's got enough green. Watch how he plays this bunker shot. I love to watch him around the greens out back. He's got that facelift way open. Each releases the club under a huge release. Beautiful shot.

[00:07:00] >> He's got magnificent hands. He really plays a lot of those shots with just his hands, and that was really well done.

[00:07:07] >> Well, Phil, Steven Alker must have gotten a pretty good feel for Ernie's putt and how slow it is.

[00:07:12] >> Yeah, particularly. Going up that hill, being so slow. Good looking putt.

[00:07:16] >> He makes a lot of long putts, and that was a beauty right there. I think he might owe Ernie Els an assist on that one.

[00:07:25] >> Over at 14, Tim O'Neal for his birdie.

[00:07:28] >> This would get him to win in one.

[00:07:31] >> Long putt. He's probably just thinking getting the pace correct. He did. He got everything correct, pace, bottom, birdie. How about that?

[00:07:42] >> Clean scorecard for O'Neal. He's at 3-under and a shot back. Now, over at the 9th, final hole of the day for Richard Green, playing his second into the par 4.

[00:07:52] >> Yeah, beautiful tee shot here by Richard. Getting it anywhere in the 9th fairway is job well done. Hole location kind of right front here at 9 today. Should fit his -- He likes to hit a little draw, which for a left-hander, moves left to right. So, right over towards that hole location.

[00:08:12] >> And beautiful shot. Right on the money there. Great swing. Good shot in the 15 by Tim O'Neal. This is for birdie.

[00:08:22] >> Got to get this one. He does. Can't let a shot that good get away.

[00:08:29] >> That's his third birdie on the incoming 9. Four birdies in total, no bogeys for Tim O'Neal, who's now in a share of the lead at 4-under.

[00:08:39] >> Now, Vijay up at 13. Pretty good look here, John.

[00:08:43] >> Yeah, no doubt about it. It's just on that crest there, Lanny. A foot short, it might have come all the way off the green. But a foot past that, it might have gone all the way to the hole. So, underneath the hole, real good look. If it does anything as it slows down, it might fall to the right just a little bit.

[00:09:10] >> Oh, what a good putt that was. That was rolling in the whole way.

[00:09:17] >> And it seems like, you know, Vijay hits the ball great. Alker has won inside of their par putts, Phil, for birdie.

[00:09:29] >> Well, and a good example here, which you guys were talking about it not being a sprint because you're playing 72 holes this week, Alker has this to post 2-under par 68, and he's right in the middle of it. And a little bit of a tricky putt here. Only about 4 feet, but is coming down the hill. May try to wiggle right, just a tench.

[00:09:47] >> Yeah, he was over par earlier. He's fought back. Really nicely filled -- you know, really posed a good round here.

[00:09:59] >> It's a heck of a finish for Steven Alker. Makes birdie at the 9th, at 2-under 68. Currently has him a couple off the lead. Last hole the day for Mark Hensby at the 9th, has this for birdie. And that gets him to red figures.

[00:10:14][ Applause ] Playing with Ken Duke and Scott Dunlap.

[00:10:25] >> Over at the par-5 16th, Broadhurst for birdie.

[00:10:28] >> On the proper level. Oh, good putt there by Broady.

[00:10:37] >> Paul, 7th in the Schwab Cup standings coming into this week. At the 5th, Kenny Perry for birdie. Started his day on the 10th.

[00:10:53] >> Should move left to right. He put it out there. Oh, what a good putt by Kenny Perry. Not going away.

[00:11:03] >> Kenny Perry with a long birdie putt at the par-3 5th, offsetting his bogey at the 3rd. He's back in a share of the lead at 4-under.

[00:11:14] >> K.J. Choi, a winner of the Players, has this for birdie at 16. Good grouping here of past Players winners. K.J. Choi.

[00:11:31] >> I would love for Steve to get this close, Cookie.

[00:11:33] >> Yeah, he just has to guard against going long. Other than that, this is right up his wheelhouse right here. He doesn't overspend it like you said, Lanny. So, love the way that he comes in real shallow, kind of soft, flights it down.

[00:11:46] >> Yeah, you just got to be careful. The last thing before you hit it, you don't say don't go long, and then you come up 25 feet short.

[00:11:54] >> This is typical Stricker.

[00:11:55] >> How's that?

[00:11:56] >> Yeah, it's pretty good.

[00:11:57] >> That's kind of what we've come to expect from Steve with his wedges. I mean, this is a really well played hole. This is how -- You couldn't draw it up any better, and he's playing this hole right now.

[00:12:09] >> Over at the 6, Kenny Perry for birdie. Started his day on the 10th and pours that in. And Kenny Perry now has the outright lead at 5-under.

[00:12:31] >> Now, Vijay Singh for birdie. He hit a really nice shot from severe uphill lie on the face. It wasn't in the bunker, but kind of just past the face of the bunker. A great look here. Not much to this. Like you said, Lanny, I'm sure players have been over reading this. This is very straight.

[00:12:53] >> Well done for Vijay. That looked nice. Gets one to fall.

[00:13:00] >> Vijay now, 2-under.

[00:13:01] >> Over at 16, Paul Stankowski to get to 2-under par.

[00:13:07] >> On the proper level, and takes care of business. Well played hole there for Paul.

[00:13:13] >> Good score, 2-under.

[00:13:16] >> Angel Cabrera for birdie. And he pours that in.

[00:13:20] >> Lanny, that's my group right there. He played a beautiful wedge in out of that left-hand rough. Over the water, kept it short of the back bunker. What a four.

[00:13:27] >> Kevin Sutherland for birdie at 17. And nicely judged in read.

[00:13:38] >> Yeah, good read right there. We've seen a lot of those misread down the hill at 17.

[00:13:42] >> Obviously, the putts have not fallen today for Kevin. The reaction illustrates that. Steve Stricker, Duffy Waldorf in the clubhouse with 4-under par 66s. Richard Green, again, third major in a row. He's right in the mix. Kenny Perry with a hole to play as the 3-under par had gotten it to 5-under. Steven Alker with a 268. Paul Stankowski with a hole to play. He's at 2-under. Flesch, O'Neal, they're in at 2-under par.

[00:14:13] >> Darren Clarke shot 1-over on his front nine, 2-under on the back. Rocco Mediate, Mark Hensby, K.J. Choi, 1-under par 69s. And then, Ernie Els, Jimenez, Parel, Mike Weir, all even par 70s.

[00:14:37] >> It's the fourth major of the year for the PGA Tour Champions. From Firestone Country Club in Akron, Ohio, the Kaulig Companies Championship Round 2 in full swing. Take a look at some highlights. And Angel Cabrera, two-time major champion, started his day at the 10th, rolls this in for birdie at 16. And Cabrera gets to 5-under par for the tournament.

[00:15:00] >> Steve Stricker, the defending champ, playing his third, Lanny, at the par-5 2nd.

[00:15:05] >> Yeah, two big shots, got it just off the front edge in two. And a beautiful little chip and run classic shot there by Stricker.

[00:15:11] >> Stricker would knock that in. That would get him back to 6-under par. How about Steven Alker, second in the Schwab Cup standings, from long range at 7th?

[00:15:18] >> Yeah, I don't think anybody makes more long putts than Steven Alker. And here he is again, another bomb.

[00:15:24] >> And that got Alker to 4-under par. Steve Stricker has missed a couple of short birdie putts, including one at 4. Stricker, currently 2-under on his round today. He's one shot clear of Angel Cabrera and Robert Karlsson in Round 2 of the Kaulig Companies Championship.

[00:15:41] >> Jerry Kelly, who's won the Kaulig Companies Championship twice, 2020 and 2022, pours that in for his birthday. Jerry, of course. Ernie Els, tee shot at 12. Phil?

[00:15:57] >> Starting look a little more comfortable with his golf swing here the last few holes. Another good looking shot here.

[00:16:04] >> Needs to stay right there, and it does. Leaves him right underneath the hole, about 3 feet.

[00:16:11] >> Take you over to the 12th. And a couple of good looks for birdie for Alker and Els. Jimenez, third member of this group, when he is outside of the other two.

[00:16:25] >> Well, and Alker will have to pay close attention to this one because he's on a very similar line to this coming back down the hill. Not a lot of movement in this green, Lanny, but it's a tricky little hole location right up there on that front of the green. You miss it a little shorter left and it's running back off. And it's kind of a tricky pitch from down there. So, good shots here just to put it into the middle of the green.

[00:16:45] >> Yeah, just anything just past the hole, having this essentially the same look that Jimenez has, but just maybe a little closer is what you would like. He obviously had one club too many. Had it passed.

[00:16:59] >> It's not a big green. So if you were to put it right in the center of the green, you're not going to have a long putt at really any hole location here on this.

[00:17:05] >> No, no question. And this hole, I think from this angle, at the very end, is going to try to get right, I think, on him, isn't it?

[00:17:12] >> Just a touch.

[00:17:15] >> Yeah.

[00:17:15] >> Not much. Reasonably straight.

[00:17:17] >> Miguel's last win at the 2022 Boeing Classic, he won three times that year, 13 wins, but the drought has gone almost two years.

[00:17:30] >> Well, he's getting at that age. Great putt there. But he's getting that age, the double nickels, 55. A lot of players say your game starts to trail off a little bit, other than Bernhard Langer.

[00:17:43] >> You know, you're starting to go downhill as you lose some length, maybe 5, 10 yards. Miguel really has not.

[00:17:49] >> Phil, you mentioned that Alker was going to keep a close look. He got the perfect read, didn't he?

[00:17:54] >> He got line and speed. Can't ask for any more than that, can you?

[00:17:57] >> No. That putt stayed really straight the last 6 feet, too. Didn't move at all.

[00:18:02] >> Yeah, I remember you talking. It was year before last, I think, Lanny at Houston, Alker made an adjustment during a rain delay and came back out and just strung together a bunch of birdies. He kind of has that look today, like he's found a little something in his swing. His irons are really clicking today.

[00:18:19] >> Yeah. Houston that year, he saw that he was underneath a little too much. It got back on top of it, he saw a couple of swings in a rain delay and then shot like 5, 6-under the last nine and one. Oh, he dripped that one in. That was beautiful. Love the pace on that one.

[00:18:36] >> Now, Els and, Phil, look, it's Friday. It's a four-day event. It's a major. But you just feel like with some of the quality shots Ernie's hit in, needs to see one of them go in.

[00:18:48] >> You're exactly right. And I think it's important to get yourself in position today where you don't have to come from too far behind with the weekend coming up as well.

[00:18:55] >> If he can get this to go to 2-under, which he does, now, he's within shouting distance. Four back is not a lot of shots to make up here at Firestone.

[00:19:08] >> Third shot for Jerry Kelly at 14. Two-time champ. Oh, he hit it. Jerry. Listen.

[00:19:14] >> OK, I'll just walk away. That was well done.

[00:19:20] >> Very nice.

[00:19:25] >> Robert Karlsson trying to bounce back after that bogey at 11.

[00:19:28] >> Yeah, quality shot in here. And he takes advantage and walks off here with 2, adding to the total of twos on this hole today.

[00:19:40] >> Showed you Darren Clarke, one of the Open Champions in the field here this week, has this putt for birdie at 16. Darren made a nice run late yesterday. So he currently sits now at 2-over par.

[00:20:01] >> Phil, the third for Ernie Els at the par 3.

[00:20:04] >> Only shot he had was to play into the bunker with his second. What a beautiful -- Look at this.

[00:20:09] >> Almost a great three.

[00:20:11] >> Yeah, what a three that would have been.

[00:20:15] >> Now, over at 15, after a wonderful tee shot, Steven Alker. He escaped pars at the last two, Phil, and now has a look at birdie.

[00:20:26] >> It's a little kind of a long, 125 feet, but not a whole lot of break in this putt, up and over a little ridge right at the hole. Bob was talking to his caddie, Troy Martin earlier he said big difference here today, has been there this week, is making a lot more putts. This club right here is cooperating this week.

[00:20:42] >> I mean, that par save putt at 14 was trying tremendous.

[00:20:52] >> Oh, it held his line really nice. I thought he might have lost --

[00:20:56] >> That is tremendous too.

[00:20:57] >> Yeah. I thought he might lost it right, but it hung in there good. That's a great two on 15. And he takes the lead.

[00:21:05] >> Seven-under, doing that -- despite that double bogey that he made early in the round.

[00:21:13] >> Richard Green has this putt for birdie.

[00:21:16] >> Needs one, needs something to go in right now. And there you go. Gets back to even par, but still 3-over par for the day.

[00:21:27] >> Jerry Kelly, a two-time champion, has this for birdie. And Jerry rolls that in, so.

[00:21:36][ Applause ]

[00:21:43] >> So short birdie putts for Mike Weir. And he'll have a foot and a half for his birdie. Stephen Ames taps that in for birdie. So, Stephen, 1-over today. I mean, 1-over -- Yeah, 1-over today, 4-over for the week.

[00:22:06] >> Cute little putt here. He's got to be careful. This can get to the right. It's probably left center, left inside for him.

[00:22:13] >> And it went right, but he hit it with enough pace to get it done.

[00:22:22] >> Bounce back for Ernie.

[00:22:24] >> Here's Karlsson over at 16, playing his third.

[00:22:27] >> After a good tee shot, just a nice layup to the yardage he wanted. And this is time to go flag hunting right here. Spin back. Oh, there you go. Yes. Just like that. Beautiful. I mean, think about the first at the Players. It's going to be goofy amounts of money. What? Eighteen, 20 million? These guys, they haven't seen that kind of -- for the whole tour before. That's incredible amount of money to be playing for one week.

[00:23:01] >> And, you know, to be able to make the cut and --

[00:23:05] >> Yeah.

[00:23:05] >> -- see what you can do on the weekend. And Jerry Kelly had that thrill. I remember two years ago, he was actually in the TV window down the stretch on Friday, and there were a lot of 50 plus year old guys following Jerry Kelly, rooting for him to make the cut. How about birdie, birdie finish for Mike Weir? Oh, excuse me. Par for Mike Weir.

[00:23:27] >> Felt like a birdie when you make one that long.

[00:23:29] >> Seventy-one for Mike. Karlsson for his birdie at 16.

[00:23:34] >> Got to be left edge. This thing will go to the right on him. There you go. Good putt. Beautiful shot in there. Really well controlled by Karlsson.

[00:23:45] >> So he's at 5-under.

[00:23:47] >> Now, back at 18, Richard Green, his putt is for birdie. Got a good read from Mike. Weir.

[00:23:52] >> Did he hit it? Yes, he did. Right in the middle. Good putt there. Disappointing day, but good finish for Richard.

[00:24:02] >> This was a moment ago, the fifth shot for Duffy Waldorf. Duffy shared the overnight lead with Steve Stricker, 4-over today, and stays 4-over today as he pitches in for par. He's got off to a rough start, and no birdies on the scorecard today.

[00:24:28] >> Steven Alker, Steve Stricker, Kenny Perry will be in the final group for Round 3 of the Kaulig Companies Championship. Alker with a 65 today. Defending champ Steve Stricker with a 68. Kenny Perry, 2013 champion, shoots 65. Karlsson and Jerry Kelly, a two-time winner, really good rounds today with a 66 as well. Billy Mayfair shot 67. Glen Day, Kevin Sutherland, Rocco Mediate, all under par for the week.

[00:25:05] >> Start your engines. It is moving day here at the Kaulig Companies Championship at Akron, Ohio, at Firestone Country Club. Third round action, fourth major of the year for the PGA Tour Champions. Jerry Kelly has won the Kaulig Companies Championship on two occasions, off to a fast start at the par-4 1st. Rolls this in for birdie. And then, Lanny, takes advantage at the par-5 2nd.

[00:25:30] >> Yeah, par-5 2nd is gettable for almost everyone. Jerry did not get there, but hit a nice pitch underneath the hole and handles this for birdie four.

[00:25:38] >> That's two in a row for Jerry. And why not keep it rolling over at the 3rd?

[00:25:44] >> Yeah.

[00:25:44] >> Twenty-five feet.

[00:25:46] >> Yeah, down the slope. Got to be careful with this. Look at the pace. Just drips it over the front edge. Just beautiful. Really well done.

[00:25:53] >> So Kelly birdies his first three to get to within a shot of the lead. Steve Stricker after a par at the 1st, got home in rolls, this in for birdie. That gets him to 7-under par. Everybody started the day chasing Steven Alker. And Alker gets his birdie.

[00:26:10] >> Yeah, he had a long eagle putt on this hole. Left it well short, but gets that one to go. So a good start for the leaders here at the first couple of holes.

[00:26:20] >> Steven Alker, with that birdie at the second, is at 8-under par. Steve Stricker is at 7-under. Jerry Kelly with those three straight birdies, two shots off the pace, with Robert Karlsson and Kenny Perry three back. Now, over at the 5th. Jerry Kelly trying to bounce back with a birdie.

[00:26:36] >> Coming up the hill, swinging to the right. Got to watch Rocco Mediate's putt to give him an idea.

[00:26:42] >> How about Jerry Kelly, who's birdied four of the first five holes, and Jerry now two back?

[00:26:49] >> Well, we saw Ernie Els miss a makeable birdie at 4, and a makeable birdie at 5, has this at 6.

[00:26:57] >> Pretty nice stroke right there. He stayed right in that one the entire way. That was great hold of birdie.

[00:27:07] >> Angel Cabrera, he's in the mix this week for his birdie at the 5th. And he drips it in. So Cabrera gets to 5-under, former Masters Champion and US Open Champion.

[00:27:21] >> Looks like the putters behaving a little bit better for Angel today.

[00:27:25] >> K.J. Choi, past Players Champion, for his birdie at the 5th.

[00:27:33] >> Good positive stroke there by K.J. Been fighting the putter somewhat.

[00:27:38] >> Robert Karlsson has a look at birdie at the 6th.

[00:27:46] >> Got it in here almost hole high. This pretty flat putt should move a little left to right for Robert from this direction. Green slopes mostly from back to front. Maybe a little on the downhill side. Not much.

[00:28:21] >> Oh, good putt.

[00:28:27] >> Now, at the 7th, Choi for birdie.

[00:28:30] >> Up the slope. Did he hit it? Yes. K.J. all of a sudden has the putter working.

[00:28:35] >> Jerry Kelly short-sighted himself at the 8th, Phil.

[00:28:38] >> Not a good lie at all. He got it to come out of there nicely. Very impressive. Good shot out of that lie. Grass was going all sorts of different directions around his ball.

[00:28:48] >> Tim O'Neal has this putt for birdie.

[00:28:58] >> Good three at the 10th.

[00:29:01] >> Even on his round today.

[00:29:03] >> Over at the 11th, after birdie at the 10th, Mark Hensby for birdie. And turns it in. So Hensby. One win on the PGA Tour Champions, came at the Invited last year. He's at 3-under.

[00:29:23] >> Michael Wright, making the move of the day, has this putt for birdie at 13. And pours that in. And Michael Wright is 8-under par today. Paul Stankowski hit a wonderful shot into 10. This his birdie putt down the hill and in. Now, over at 11, Ernie Els. Again, another good shot in, but can he make the putt?

[00:29:57] >> He does this time. And that was a good looking stroke there with some purpose.

[00:30:01] >> So Ernie us just two off the lead.

[00:30:08] >> Jerry Kelly for birdie at 11. And Jerry now in a share of the lead at 7-under.

[00:30:13] >> Great shot in there. Takes advantage of it. Kelly, just the opposite of Alker, just peppering fairways and greens.

[00:30:21] >> Robert Karlsson for birdie at the 12th. Two-under, no bogeys on his card.

[00:30:26] >> Got to take advantage of this shot, Bob. This is a beautiful play in here.

[00:30:30] >> And he does so.

[00:30:31] >> Oh, yeah.

[00:30:31] >> So, Karlsson now in a share of the lead, back from that knee injury, looking for his first win on the PGA Tour Champions. Five runner up finishes.

[00:30:41] >> Now, over at 11, Stricker for birdie. And that is a wonderful birdie by Steve Stricker, and a great bounce back for the defending champion. And he gets to 7-under and in a share of the lead with Wright, Kelly, and Karlsson.

[00:31:02] >> Y.E. Yang for birdie at 18. Bounces that off the flagstick and in. So, Y.E. shoots 64 today.

[00:31:13] >> Back at 14, the third for Stricker. And, John Cook, you got to like his chances here.

[00:31:18] >> Yeah. It's pretty good lie going uphill, pretty basic pitch shot.

[00:31:22] >> Oh, yeah.

[00:31:23] >> Good call there, BP.

[00:31:24] >> Good call, Bob.

[00:31:25] >> That was not on tape, people. That was a good call by Bob Papa.

[00:31:28] >> That was live.

[00:31:30] >> So Steve Stricker pitches in at 14, and he now has the outright lead at 8-under.

[00:31:35] >> One of those days for Steven Alker.

[00:31:43] >> We've all had them, Cookie.

[00:31:44] >> We have them. Yeah, we do have them.

[00:31:46] >> Alker's lone birdie came at the 2nd. That got him to eight under and maintained a one shot lead over Stricker, who also birdied the 2nd. That got Stricker to 7-under. But bogeys at 8, 9, a double at 10, and bogeys at 13 and 14. Have Alker 5-over today.

[00:32:05] >> Yeah. He just has not hit a fairway, but how about it? There we go.

[00:32:10][ Applause ]

[00:32:16] >> Take you over to 18. Robert Karlsson has this putt for birdie. Cabrera has missed his long birdie putt. Karlsson has this for birdie to match Els in the clubhouse at 8-under

[00:32:37] >> Robert won eleven times on the DP World Tour, won the Order of Merit, two-time Ryder Cup team member, looking for his first win on the PGA Tour Champions. Five second place finishes in his career.

[00:32:53] >> Needs two putts here, Bob, to go into the final group tomorrow. One's even better. There you go.

[00:33:08] >> Robert Karlsson, bogey free here in Round 3. And on moving day, he makes a nice move. Shoots a 4-under 66, and now has a share of the lead.

[00:33:24] >> John, lie OK here for Steve?

[00:33:26] >> Yeah, it's sitting down a little bit. But he's got plenty of green. And we know what he can do with this club right here around the greens.

[00:33:33] >> Remember, he pitched in for birdie at 14. Obviously easier than what he has here, but as a master at this shot.

[00:33:41] >> Yeah, no doubt. A little bit on the uphill. So he's got to keep some speed up. Should come out with a little overspin. Oh, flew pretty good.

[00:33:50] >> Go in. Go in.

[00:33:51] >> Wow.

[00:33:51] >> Well, you got the call from somebody behind him.

[00:33:57] >> Somebody behind called go in, and they were right. How about that?

[00:34:02] >> That was tracking, too. That was moving.

[00:34:05] >> At 14 and 18, Stricker pitches in. And just like that, Steve Stricker has the outright lead at 9-under heading into tomorrow's final round.

[00:34:18] >> So Steve Stricker pitches in at 18, which means he'll carry a one shot lead into the final round over Ernie Els and Robert Karlsson. Karlsson looking for his first win on the PGA Tour Champions. Els, his first senior major. Two-time champion Jerry Kelly, K.J. Choi, and Michael Wright will start the day three shots back.

[00:34:43] >> Final round of the Kaulig Companies Championship is underway, the fourth major of the year for the PGA Tour Champions in Akron, Ohio. Firestone Country Club playing host. So how did we get to this final group? Robert Karlsson, who's never won on the PGA Tour Champions, rolls in this putt for birdie at 18. This would get him to 8-under par. Karlsson with a bogey free 4-under 66. How about Ernie Els, is yet to win a major since turning 50, at 17? A one hop eagle. That got Els to 8-under par. He shot a bogey free 64. And the defending champ, Steve Stricker at 18. Pitches in for birdie to get to 9-under par. That's how we've gotten to this point. And our final group. On the line, a spot in the 25 Players and the Kaulig Companies Championship. Stricker starting the day with a one shot lead. And that lead is 1-over Ernie Els. Robert Karlsson even through his opening three holes. K.J. Choi and Y.E. Yang, three shots off the pace.

[00:35:50] >> Take you over to the 4th. And Ernie Els at this difficult par 4 on the tee. And John Cook is with this final group. Bob Papa, World Golf Hall of Famer Lanny Wadkins, so glad you can join us. John Cook and Phil Blackmar out on the golf course.

[00:36:03] >> Good to be with you all. And Ernie Els, tee shot at 4. Good one. Right down the middle. Probably might find that first cut of that left rough.

[00:36:18] >> K.J. Choi for birdie, Phil, at 5.

[00:36:20] >> This one's fast going the opposite direction of Kelly. There you go. How about that? Back to back birdies.

[00:36:27][ Applause ]

[00:36:35] >> Els for the park.

[00:36:36] >> Yes. Been nice to have had birdie here, Bob, but you really never going to complain with four.

[00:36:43] >> Bring you to K.J. Choi.

[00:36:45] >> This is his second in the 6th.

[00:36:49] >> That's where the hybrid from 197 yards. Hole cut in the back center of the green. Good looking shot. Look at this.

[00:36:55] >> Boy, is it ever?

[00:36:58] >> John, Ernie for his birdie.

[00:37:00] >> Golden opportunity here. About 6 feet, moves slightly from left to right, has to keep speed up.

[00:37:05] >> Oh, dead center.

[00:37:07] >> So Ernie Els with a birdie at the 5th, matches Stricker at 10-under.

[00:37:12] >> Phil, K.J. Choi after that wonderful hybrid in for birdie.

[00:37:16] >> For three in a row and a dream start to his final round.

[00:37:22] >> K.J. Choi never want to major on the regular tour. Did win the Players in 2011. Well after a nice par save at 7. Nice par saving putt. Y.E. Yang for birdie here at the 8th. And Y.E.'s had some nice results this year. He's been in contention, just hasn't finished it on Sunday. In 14 events, 10th in the Schwab cup standings, a couple of tied for thirds. Certainly in contention in Morocco.

[00:38:13] >> I was wondering if he's going to take this flag out with the wind blowing it. I would not think you'd want to sit there and putt with the wind moving that flagstick around like that. Hard green to read here at the 8th. It tends to break up the hill. From what it looks at in certain areas of this green, he's looking at this just outside the right edge. That's good work there. That was a heck of a second shot.

[00:38:49] >> Els needs to make this to remain at 10-under.

[00:38:54] >> Yeah, up the slope a little bit, so didn't have to worry about speed. Not much to this. Pretty straight.

[00:39:06] >> Good up and down for Els. This was a moment ago at 13. Mark Hensby playing his third shot. And how about that for birdie?

[00:39:25] >> Big tee shot for Ernie Els now.

[00:39:27] >> Yeah. Really his only loose swing of the day that I've seen has been on that last tee ball. And this is also going left. Hang in there. Not quite. First cut.

[00:39:38] >> Yeah, stays in the first cut, it's OK. First cut is fine. No issue, especially with the hole location being over to the right side.

[00:39:46] >> Now, Stricker playing his second at the 11th. Just picked up a shot on Els by making par at the last.

[00:39:53] >> Really the hole location just sitting in the wide open, 157 yards, but the wind has just gusted up.

[00:40:01] >> You can see the trees moving around a lot right now, maybe swirling. Hard to pick out exactly what it's doing right here in this little corridor.

[00:40:11] >> Yeah, green is protected a little bit. Flag is moving in and out of the right.

[00:40:25] >> Is it enough for him to start controlling the trajectory here?

[00:40:28] >> Definitely.

[00:40:29] >> Hundred and sixty yard shot.

[00:40:32] >> Yeah, I like that. Hundred and fifty-seven is actual. I'd say 160 yards would be where he would want to land this ball. So that 57 is playing 65. Flights it down nice and low. Can come up short, though. Got a big bounce. Oh, and it got another big bounce.

[00:40:56] >> Wow.

[00:40:57] >> That was pretty fortunate right there. Hit on the downslope. I thought it was going to check, and then it took another big bounce. What a golf shot.

[00:41:03] >> Yeah, into the wind, you would think you would have just sat down pretty quick. But really cool play there by Stricker.

[00:41:12] >> Ernie Els, first cut of rough. No big issue here other than 148 yards. Going to see what type of shot he wants to play. Sometimes it gets a little sticky, ball will come up short.

[00:41:31] >> Makes it a little higher in the air. Also on a nice line. Flew all the way back there, right to hole high. That was e nice golf shot.

[00:41:39] >> Yeah, a very good shot there by Ernie Els. Very bankable putt, so.

[00:41:43] >> Over at 13, we're going to follow the second of Y.E. Yang. Trackman technology sponsored by ServiceNow.

[00:41:50] >> Was acting like he wasn't sure about it, but he just knocked the flag out of the hole. Beautiful shot by Y.E. Yang.

[00:41:59] >> Now, Stricker for birdie and a share of the lead.

[00:42:04] >> Looks like just inside 3 feet, but does have a little movement, maybe left of center, inside left. No more than that.

[00:42:34] >> And we are tied now.

[00:42:37] >> Heading to 12.

[00:42:40] >> Stricker at one point led --

[00:42:42] >> By two after the opening hole. Ernie flipped the script and led by two. Well, Ernie Els now last to play at the 12th.

[00:42:53] >> Yeah, pretty open target. Wind has died down.

[00:43:00] >> Two pars. Birdie came on Friday here at 12.

[00:43:08] >> Yeah, that's up the left-hand side. They'll get off the left side of the green.

[00:43:14] >> That club didn't quite set that time. That looked a little quicker at the top than we've seen with Ernie's swing.

[00:43:21] >> Els' two shot lead is gone. He and Stricker share the lead at 10-under, playing the 12th at the Kaulig Companies Championship.

[00:43:36] >> Karlsson from the green side bunker at 12.

[00:43:39] >> Yeah, short side. This is not easy.

[00:43:44] >> How good is this?

[00:43:45] >> Wow.

[00:43:46] >> Oh, boy.

[00:43:46] >> He made it look easy.

[00:43:48] >> Yeah.

[00:43:48] >> Wow, what a shot.

[00:43:48] >> It wasn't that easy.

[00:43:50] >> No, it wasn't. That was beautiful.

[00:43:52] >> So Els hasn't lost his turn. And Ernie missed the fairway at 10 with a two shot lead, made bogey, and then didn't make his birdie at the last. Stricker did. And now, has this to stay at 10-under.

[00:44:08] >> Yeah. Cookie, this is huge, I think, for Ernie.

[00:44:11] >> Oh, no question about it.

[00:44:12] >> I mean, he said --

[00:44:13] >> In a number of ways, just to, you know, perhaps stay tied for the lead, but also kind of leaking oil a little bit. Let's see one go in.

[00:44:20] >> Yeah. I mean --

[00:44:21] >> Get back on track.

[00:44:22] >> You think, you know, three holes ago, he had a two shot lead. Then, he can walk off here one down. That's not good.

[00:44:30] >> Yeah. Good 8 feet. Has to keep the pace up. It will break to the right.

[00:44:34] >> Clutch.

[00:44:34] >> Oh, what a good putt that was. Great read for starters, and then went in perfect pace. That's big time there. He knows it too.

[00:44:47] >> Over at 15, Y.E. Yang for birdie. And this for a share of the lead. And he drips it in. So Y.E. Yang has birdied two of the last three after the bogey at 12, and he's at 10-under par. And a little fist pump from Y.E. Jerry Kelly trying to add his name to the list of rare birdies at 15 today.

[00:45:13] >> And he does.

[00:45:16] >> So Jerry back to even for the day now. Now, Ernie Els for birdie at 14.

[00:45:22] >> Hasn't really made a long putt today. Maybe he's due.

[00:45:29] >> No. Then very makeable putt. Didn't have a whole lot of break.

[00:45:32] >> How about that?

[00:45:33] >> How about the timing of that?

[00:45:34] >> Yeah, that was pretty good. I mean, that's sitting here thinking, you know, he's made all short putts for birdies and then he was due for a big one and --

[00:45:42] >> That gives Ernie Els the outright lead.

[00:45:45] >> It'd be interesting, I mean, with the tees back at 16 today, Bob, they supposedly aren't even goable. But they're not so far back that with it down wind, compared to where Ernie drove it yesterday, it'll be interesting to see what -- if he takes a real aggressive swing with the tee ball at 16.

[00:46:04] >> Well, as Phil said, you know, Y.E. Yang was only a couple of yards away from catching a proper slope and getting it down. And Els is significantly longer.

[00:46:14] >> Stricker for birdie.

[00:46:17] >> Much needed birdie. Very makeable. Goes slightly to the left, but not much.

[00:46:26] >> Steve birdied the 11th. He moved back into a tie with Els at 10-unnder.

[00:46:30] >> And there you go, Steve. Nice bounce back after the disaster at 13 and 14. So Stricker moves to 7-under, four off the lead with three to play.

[00:46:51] >> Does Ernie really let this one go or not? This is the big challenge right here. Does he out for the fairway, the cutter to hold the fairway, or just set it down that right side and let it go?

[00:47:03] >> He's been swinging this driver so well. Tee shot at 13. Tee shot at 14. I don't know why he wouldn't just go ahead and full treatment here.

[00:47:12] >> Well, he's aimed right down the right side. So this tells me he's going to be going after this thing.

[00:47:17] >> He's birdied each of the first four days.

[00:47:21] >> This was absolutely hammered up the right-hand side.

[00:47:25] >> Oh, my.

[00:47:26] >> That got a chance --

[00:47:28] >> Yeah, that's --

[00:47:28] >> -- to catch the proper slope.

[00:47:30] >> Yes.

[00:47:33] >> Y.E. Yang's second into 17.

[00:47:36] >> Tee shot got all the way up on top. Just 92 yards into a little breeze here. Don't spin it back too much. Great looking line here.

[00:47:43] >> Almost holed it. And he did. He stuck in there about 2 feet.

[00:47:49] >> Defending champ Steve Stricker playing his third at 18.

[00:47:53] >> Eighty-four yards all the way in. He can pretty much send it all the way back there. He flatted it. Absolutely laid the sod over it.

[00:48:04] >> Done some very un-Stricker-like things here in the second nine, Cookie.

[00:48:09] >> Yeah, you can see the frustration on his face. No doubt.

[00:48:14] >> Now, Ernie Els has participated at the Players 24 times. Missed the cut in 2017. His best finish was a tie for 6th in '08. And Ernie Els is two putt par away from getting an opportunity to play at the Players for the 25th time in his career. That's part of what winning the Kaulig Companies Championship brings you.

[00:48:44] >> John, any outstanding speed issues here?

[00:48:47] >> A little bit, Lanny. A little bit.

[00:48:48] >> Got to be a little careful, right?

[00:48:50] >> You have to be careful. The last half of this putt does go downhill. There's not a lot of break to it.

[00:48:57] >> You certainly judged the 17th perfectly.

[00:49:00] >> Perfectly.

[00:49:02] >> Two putts for the win for Ernie Els.

[00:49:12] >> Needs to go a little. OK, that's inside the friendship zone. He's going to just go ahead and get it over with.

[00:49:19] >> Ernie's going to tap it in. And Ernie Els has won his first major on the PGA Tour Champions. He wins the Kaulig Companies Championship, and he's punched his ticket to next year's Players.

[00:49:33][ Cheering and Applause ]

[00:49:41] >> And Ernie becomes the first player this season to win three times on the PGA Tour Champions.

[00:49:47] >> Outstanding stuff. And, you know, it's taken him a while to settle in, but, boy, this is kind of what we've expected from Ernie with so much talent since he's been out here. Just great stuff. And winning on a venue like Firestone, I mean, this place just produces one great champion after another.

[00:50:10] >> Robert Karlsson for his bogey. Karlsson shot a bogey free 66, but the errant tee shots cost Karlsson a chance today.

[00:50:20] >> You just can't keep playing from out of the trees here at Firestone. It will catch up to you at some point in time.

[00:50:28] >> Final round 75.

[00:50:32] >> Thank you. Thank you.

[00:50:33][ Cheering and Applause ]

[00:50:43] >> With the win, Ernie Els earns $525,000. And Ernie Els now moves to the top of the Charles Schwab Cup standings, a $338,000 lead over Stephen Ames. Ernie Els is the only man to win three times this season. Congratulations to Ernie Els. There's his son Ben checking out dad coming up with the victory, and wife Liezl.

[00:51:12][ Cheering and Applause ] Certainly a popular win amongst the fans, the world of golf, PGA Tour Champions Players, as likable as they come, Ernie Els. And a World Golf Hall of Famer comes up with his first major championship. And he did it in style.

[00:51:35] >> Yeah, he did. And he made the shots he had to make when he came down the stretch, Bob. I think to the putt at 17 and the two swings at 18, absolutely world class stuff. They were all three tougher than they looked, and he just played them flawlessly. It just shows what Ernie Els can do when he's got his confidence going. And I look for many more wins from Ernie going forward. He's exciting to watch.

[00:52:00] >> Only 54, this is his 6th PGA Tour Championship win, his first major. He's got three wins now so far on the season, leads in the Charles Schwab Cup standings, and the future looks bright for Ernie Els.