**2024 PGA TOUR CHAMPIONS LEARNING CENTER #16**

VO > PGA Tour Champions Learning Center.

VO > PGA Tour Champions return to America's heartland for the fourth major of the 2024 season. The Kaulig Companies Championship. Once again historic Firestone Country Club in Akron, Ohio, played host, as the South Course was again a stern test.

VO > Ernie Els knows this better than most. Competing here for over three decades, Els found the formula for winning clutch putting over the final nine on Sunday, as well as a bounce back from his bogey on 16. Ernie captures his third win of the 24 season and his first senior major title, a weekend 64, 68 and ten under total for the Big Easy. Our Bob Papa called it and has a wrap.

VO > Thanks, Vince. The 42nd edition of the Kaulig Companies Championship goes to Ernie Els. Els started the final round a shot behind Steve Stricker. Stricker birdied the opening hole, so Els is now two shots back and Lanny at the par five second plays a brilliant bunker shot.

VO > Yeah, not a good second but an incredible bunker shot from a long way up to a foot. Just a tap in birdie.

VO > Yeah. So that would get Els to just one back. Then rolls in this birdie putt at the fifth.

VO > Yeah. Beautiful shot in here to the fence and dead center on the putt. Right about this time is when Ernie started hitting extraordinary iron shots like here at the 8th. Huge driving wedge to here t0 five feet to here at the 8th.

VO > Yeah, he takes the outright lead at 11 under par. Now gives one back at ten. And then he makes a big par save at the 12th.

VO > hole design off the left edge of the grain. Stuck the chip in the ground. But look at this roll right here. So beautiful save.

VO > He and Stricker tied at ten under. Stricker bogeyed 13. Els made par. And then Ernie Els with this beautiful putt for birdie at 14. As Stricker is going on to make a triple.

VO > Yeah Bobby longest but we've seen already make all week right there. He and he was due to make the long run. Bobby had hit so many good shots in this putt here at 17 was world class. He needed a two-putt pace. Had to be wonderful. Look at this roll.

VO > And he made bogey at the par 5 16th. You could easily putt this off the green. And he cozies it up for a tapping par to maintain a one-shot lead over why Yang and Ernie Els needed two putts for the victory. And Ernie Els wins for the third time this season and picks up his first major on the PGA Tour Champions with a one-shot victory over Y.E. Yang and three clear of Jerry Kelly. Let's hear from our colleagues. Top three champion, a major winner.

OC VO > This has been a long time coming. You know, on this golf course, 32 years ago, I started playing here. I remember your father looked after me so well. Yeah, back in the day. And I know everybody in the locker room in the clubhouse lot. It's most of the members, but I never got to win yet. So, this was really the really great.

VO > With the victory. His sixth on this tour in 94 starts. Els is the new leader in the Charles Schwab Cup standings, followed by the Stephen Steve Crew two through four, Richard Green rounding out the top five and with a runner up finish, Y.E. Yang assumes the number six position. Jerry Kelly's solo third boosts him six spots into the top ten.

VO > Thursday of the event, the Kaulig Companies Championship announced its 2024 Ambassador of Golf recipient this year. PGA Tour Champions and Northern Ohio Golf Charities Foundation, recognizing Pro Football Hall of Famer Peyton Manning with the award. It honors a person who has fostered the ideals of the game on an international level, and whose concerns for others extends beyond the golf course.

OC VO > I'm very honored. You know, when you look at the previous winners and just the past couple, Steph Curry and, President Bush and obviously the numerous golfers, but golf's been a been a part of my, sports journey. It was a great way to get away, with some teammates. but people kind of laughed at me, but I actually felt like some of my Colts and Broncos teammates sort of bonded on the golf course, and it actually helped us win a game in November. Now people laugh at that, but I believe it's true because in the offseason, you're only allowed to be over the facility for a certain amount of time. You go over there and lift weights, watch some film and then you're free. A lot of times we went and played golf and, it was a great bonding thing. Obviously playing with my dad a lot growing up, great memories there. And people ask me kind of, what's my favorite foursome? I would say my dad, my two brothers, we don't get together as much, being spread out all over the country. And so, golf kind of brings us together. So, I'm very honored to receive this award. I like the game. Had great respect for the game. And it's a tremendous honor.

VO > Now, is this all positive or are the responsibilities that come with being the golf and basketball? Sounds like a pretty heavy of title.

VO OC > I tell you. I, like I said, you know, the game's important to me. I live in Denver now. I was kind of the honorary chair of the U.S. amateur last year at Cherry Hills. And Tiger and I played against Mickelson and Brady a couple years ago in a golf match. Big give back to kind of food hunger and whatnot. So, you know, it's a great way to raise money, obviously. it's a great way, like I said, to bond with your teammates and friends. And so, yeah, I don't take it lightly. you know, I don't, you know, certainly don't play football anymore. So, golf is kind of the one sport that I still, play in and enjoy it. So, I will hopefully, make the, the committee proud of, of who they voted for this year.

VO > In Global Golf News, last Tuesday, Keegan Bradley was announced as the U.S. Ryder Cup captain for 2025 at Bethpage Black. This picks surprising the golf world and shaking up the traditional selection patterns for Captain Keegan himself, saying, quote, I don't think I'll ever be more surprised with anything in my life. End quote. Bradley played in two Ryder Cups but has never even been an assistant captain to men who live the high-profile position offered these thoughts on the task ahead.

OC VO > Biggest advice I could say you have to be yourself. I mean, you can't try to change or be a different person. We all know that his heart's in the event that he has, a love for it. I think probably, you should reach out. He's got a lot of friends that have been captains, vice captains, been involved with these events. I think maybe seeking some advice from CEOs. What you find in this event is you go from, you know, as a player, worrying about yourself, worrying about your teammates a little bit, too. It's a different look as a captain, and I'm sure he's very aware of that. But you're a leader of not only the 12 individuals playing, but probably a group of 50. And so, you kind of have to kind of flip into more of a CEO mindset. And so, folks that are very successful in business, you know what we see them each and every week in pro-ams. Guys that and women that are extremely successful and getting everyone focused and centered in one direction, I think, you know, just seeking some help and, and and doing things in his own way, in his own manner. Keegan's, very energetic, a very excited type person. And I think kind of reminds me a little bit of Paul Azinger in that way, where you have, just such an upbeat look and energy and hopefully, you know, that rubs off on everyone else around him and his team.

OC VO > I think it's a great pick. very passionate guy. Grew up out East. He breeds and thinks about the Ryder Cup a lot. I know he does. And he's going to be a great captain. He's going to, get the guys fired up and, like I said, very passionate about it. I think it's a great choice.

VO > To give him a message. What would you say to him?

VO OC > You know, stay true to, his beliefs and what he thinks. You know, deep down, he's got a lot of people in his ear. He's going to have a lot of people in his ear. Players, statisticians, PGA of America, other players. and I think it's just following his gut instincts and staying true to himself and what he believes in.

VO > Clearly, the Ryder Cup committee has stepped away from previous formulas on captain selection when a player was an assistant before stepping into the captain role. Bradley is more of an off the board choice, as he is ten years removed from a last Ryder Cup appearance. One of several strong candidates going in was Stewart Cink, a five-time Ryder Cup player and vice-captain last year in Rome. Cink shared his thoughts on Bradley's selection as captain.

OC VO > Well, I'm, you know, disappointed that I wasn't chosen to be the captain. Of course, I was really hoping to to be in that role. But I love the United States and I love the players. I just have so much respect for the players and for the Ryder Cup. And Keegan's got great energy. He's still playing great. And, you know, he'll he'll do a really good job. I know he wants a team win. And being, from New England and his roots there around New York, I think he'll, it'll be a great captain up there.

VO > In 1963, just a year after his final open victory, Arnold Palmer became the youngest U.S. Ryder Cup captain at age 34. Keegan Bradley joins this list as he will be 39 when he captains the US team at Bethpage Black in 2025. Bradley's experience may be in question, but not his passion for the event. An all-important home game for the U.S.

VO > Harrison Frazier was poised for a breakout year in 2024, a winner at last year's Dominion Energy Charity classic playoff event, he finished 19th on the 2023 Charles Schwab Cup money list. Things were rolling with a second-place finish in the season opening Mitsubishi Electric Championship at Hualalai. But then in the second event of the season, the Chubb Classic in Naples, everything changed.

OC VO > You know, I went to I was feeling pretty good at the start of the week, playing well, obviously, you know, Thursday during the pro-am, I kind of felt a little something, something in the top of my shoulder right here, kind of at the, you know, that AC kind of area. But wasn’t too bad Saturday, Friday kind of stayed about the same. Saturday was bugging me more. It was hard to get the club to the top. got some treatment in the in the van, you know, stretched it out, did a little soft tissue work, went to bed Saturday night, woke up at 1:30 and it felt like six knives were on my shoulder and this arm was totally paralyzed. Something happened in that you know, I think I think I had it bulging, the disc was bulging and c6, c7 and something I did that Saturday ruptured it and it just filled up the disc canal. The nerve canal and, total rupture on the back side. So, we had to go in and clean it out and put in a new disc. You know, the only thing I've got left really is some numbness and some tingling in my left hand. A little bit of pain on my shoulder every once in a while. They told me as long as that stays where it is and doesn't get worse, then I'm okay to try and it's just going to get better the more and more I do it.

VO > It turns out more time will be needed. Harrison intended to make his return to competition in the Colleague Companies Championship. However, he withdrew before Thursday's opening round. We wish him the very best.

VO > Straight ahead on Learning Center, here come the lessons. Darren Clarke makes a putting adjustment. Find out what and why and how it might improve his game. Plus, Rocco Mediate just showing off how to hit a saucy pitch shot that will dazzle your playing pals. It's all next. Stay with us.

VO > Darren Clark's last win came two years ago in the 2022 Senior Open Championship. His drive to get back on top is never ending. DC is prone to use any or all gadgets and gizmos to help him gain an advantage or improve his technique. So ahead of the Kaulig Companies Championship, Clarke, who was ranked 51st in putting average, made an adjustment as suggested by his putting coach, and he hopes it will improve his performance on the greens.

OC VO > So, we've been working with Darren for a few weeks now on putting and on the left here since before the U.S. open. You can see that his head rotated a lot more to the left. You could start seeing his left ear, but you can't see his right ear is missing. As a result, his spine is tilted very much to the trail side. And as a result, as he putts his putt was tilting his spine a lot more than having to twist his head to find the ball. As a result, his eyeline was way to the right. So, he was pushing a lot of putts as a result. So today we had we addressed this and now the neck tilt is a lot more to the left. You can start seeing is his trail ear popping around the corner there. His eyes are now on the left side of the socket. And it's going to require him now to utilize his left elbow to participate more in the rise of the putter, keeping his head more still on the tracks in the arc. A little bit better this way. His push pops. We're now going to be more pully, which is less push. So, you've got to be straighter and more on the plane.

OC VO > So, instead of me looking at it that way and then trying to have to fish it back again, I'm trying to get a much lower my eyes are, here, here. So, my visor is more square, so my eyes are more square. So as opposed to having to tilt this left ear higher than this one and that, pushing my eyes right, and then have to save it a bit more this way. Which feels extraordinarily strange, but it's a little bit more on the being the numbers are all matched up, plus more being more geometric and stuff than I want my eyes having to do that. So, that's how I get in with a little forward…And turn in then forward, so my eyes are much more lower level like that. Did you see that? That went in maybe the longest putt I’ve holed all year, 22ft.

VO > No question. Golf's magic is in the short game. Case in point Collin Morikawa, seen last month at the Travelers Championship. Easy to see why he's ranked in the top 15 in strokes gained around the green. Impressive. For more are Rocco Mediate, who saw Morikawa hit this work of art and explains how to hit a similar shot. Having it one hop and check. Good luck everyone.

OC > You saw that one there, but I would do this a little differently from here. I would try to keep it along the ground and just blade it with my sand wedge. Oh my God, look at this. So, you just blade it up there to, I don't know, 10, 12ft. Now you can blade it if you want or. I can't believe I got out of the car and did that. Now you want that one, skipper. But the greens. If the greens are not soft. But here we go. So, it's a down. First of all, I'm explaining you're not going up with this. You don't have to. You want to use the green. Let it get back in there and grab. And that’s all I would be thinking of trapping it down somewhere in that area like that. And it should stop pretty good. Not back. You didn't tell me they were bricks. I like the first one better. So, I'm still going to zip, and it's a pretty good juice. Let's see what that does. That wasn't bad. I had some juice, but these greens are firm to where I'm loving that it's not going to one hop and stop, especially with use a little more loft. But that's all you can really do.

VO > Speaking of all time shots, here's one from the Tiger Woods collection. It happened at Firestone. The famous shot in the dark due to a storm delay at the 2000 NEC Invitational. Woods and Hal Sutton finished around 8:30 p.m. eastern. With an eight iron from 168 and into the shadows. Amazing. Fast forward now to Boo Weekly and Heath Slocum looking to recreate the shot in broad daylight right next to the Tiger plaque on 18. Umm no.

OC > He's walking after it.

OC > Oh, you know, it's good.

OC > Oh, yeah.

OC > That club was hit to 2 foot.

OC > Yeah.

OC > So, we got to do the high five after.

OC > Yeah, sure. Yeah.

OC > I don't believe it. Yeah, he that's pretty good.

OC > It’s light out now so we I can.

OC > I got to hit it well enough to walk after it Hang on. Oh.

OC > Well, one thing about a Tiger would have got you. (Indiscernible)

OC > Hey, hey. I'm going to place mine. Tiger didn’t do that all that. So, I'm just gonna place mine.

OC > Well, that was my problem.

OC VO > I do the same thing. Yeah, he got us wiped. Mines up there squirrel hunting.

VO > Oh. Yeah.

OC > Well. Oh, well. Well, guess what we try, Tiger just better than we was.

OC > Oh, no. I mean, and he did his in the dark.

OC > Yeah. No that might be too. That might be the difference. We might. We did a lot of good work in dark. I have anyways.

OC > Yeah, I hope we get to recreate that.

OC > Yeah. Come on down the stretch. Either one of us do. That’s right.

VO > Next on Learning Center, we hear from Justin Leonard, who will be walking down memory lane in Scotland the next two weeks, a return to Royal Troon, where he won the 1997 open and a chance at redemption after losing in the 1999 Open at Carnoustie, where he competes there in the Senior Open in two weeks’ time.

VO > Royal Troon is the site of this week's 152nd Open Championship. 27 years ago, a then 25-year-old Justin Leonard came from five strokes behind on the final day to earn the title of Champion Golfer and the Claret Jug. Justin shared his thoughts on going back to compete as a past champion.

OC > Going to play The Open Championship first time since 2016. I've been over there with NBC the last few years. I have a little experience at Troon. One really good experience back in 97. So, it'll be it'll be a lot of fun to be back and and trying to remember and relive some of those moments. But it'll be fun having the family there as well.

VO > The next event on the PGA Tour Champions schedule is the Senior Open, presented by Rolex, which will take place at legendary Carnoustie Golf Links for the first time in eight years. Another gem in the Rota. It was there in 1999, that Jean van de Velde famously lost the open on the 72nd hole. This wasn't just golf; this was sports in tragic theater form. The three shot lead he held on the 18th, now gone on to a four-hole aggregate playoff and more failure. Yet he has spent the ensuing years giving himself and others perspective.

VO OC > We all play to win. Of course, I was highly disappointed. but at the end of the day, you know who can predict you hit. You're going to hit a piece of metal on the side of a grandstand that is the size of a golf ball, and then, you know, go back and hit the water, go back another 30 yards. Things happen, you know, without using another word. And, but look, I'm still here. I'm still standing and I've, and I've done, I've played golf after that on the PGA tour. I mean, I've, I've had amazing experiences and I've been very, very fortunate and very lucky. So no, it's never haunted me. And and it's not about to start.

VO > As for the four-hole aggregate playoff in the 1999 open, can de Velde joined Paul Lawrie and Justin Leonard. Lawrie eventually winning. Leonard witnessed the van de Velde epic meltdown and triple bogey from the scoring area, trying to make sense of what was happening around him.

VO OC > It was a little chaotic to be honest. Nobody expected for there to be a playoff. I was in the next. The last group made bogey at 18, got it up and down for bogey, but thought that I just finished second with Paul Lawrie. And so, in the scoring trailer and watching on Vanderbilt play 18 and so trying to figure out like everybody else was. Okay, what what's he going to make on this hole. And then I kind of figured out, okay, he's I'm going to be in a playoff having to change the mindset and really kind of get back in the competitive mode. I didn't play great that day. It was a tough day. So, I went over the range. Paul Lawrie was there because he'd been done for a couple of hours, and they drove us out to 15 tee, and I felt like we waited another, you know, 5 to 8 minutes for for Jean to get there. But yeah, I don't think anybody was prepared for the playoff, including ourselves. I think Paul Lawrie was the only one ready for a playoff.

VO > And that is our time for golf past, present and future. I’m Vince Cellini, as always, we thank you for watching and we'll see you next time on PGA Tour Champions Learning Center. So long.