**2024 PGA TOUR CHAMPIONS LEARNING CENTER SHOW #18**

VO > PGA Tour Champions Learning Center.

VO > PGA Tour Champions venture through the Pacific Northwest over the weekend. The Club at Snoqualmie Ridge near Seattle, Washington, hosting the Boeing Classic for a 19th time. A venue that has produced a variety of past winners, including a record setting champion a year ago. That player Steven Ames took a very different path at this year's Boeing Classic. Starting the day seven shots off the lead, he played methodical golf. Birdies on 1214 and here on 16 for a share of the lead at 18. The par five with Ernie Els and Steven Alker already in at ten under Ames with his sixth birdie of the day, a Sunday 6711 under total and back-to-back victories in Washington. With more our Bob Papa.

VO > Thanks Vince. A lot of drama at the Boeing Classic. Robert Karlsson had the lead going into the final round at 13 under par. Stephen Ames started the day seven shots back, the defending champ a birdie at one. Then he rolls in his birdie putt at the seventh. This would get Stephen Ames to eight under par suddenly giving himself a chance. He big bogey at the par five eighth. Made pars at 9, 10, and 11. But then really got things going at the short par four 12th hits this gorgeous wedge in and judges the slope perfectly. The ball almost comes to a stop, then catches the ridge, picks up speed, feeds down to the hole. How does it not go in? But it's a stress-free birdie which got Ames to eight under par. Then at the 14th drivable, but Ames decided to lay up. Played his second shot to here. Roll that in for birdie. And suddenly Ames was it nine under par. After Steven Alker along a similar line missed his birdie putt. Ames rolled this in for birdie at 16. This got him the ten under matching Ernie Els. Els would miss a short birdie putt at 17. And then Ames left his eagle putt short after Els missed his birdie putt, Ames rolled that in for birdie to post 11 under par, forcing Robert Karlsson to make eagle at 18. He did not. Ames shoots five under 67 becomes the first man to win the Boeing Classic in back-to-back years, only the third multiple winner here at the Boeing Classic. And Stephen Ames has now won for a third time here in 2024 as he wins by a shot here in Seattle. Let's hear from the champion Stephen Ames

OC > I'm enjoying the winning. Let's put it that way.

OC > Winning is fun.

OC > It is fun. And there's no doubt about that. You know, I've had this have been very consistent more than I was last year, which was actually one of my goals, but adding the wins in there as well. So, I've had I think this is my 12 13th top ten going into this week. And then with three wins overall for the year, this is all icing on my cake. So, I'm just enjoying this ride and I'm going to take it as long as it goes.

VO > Well done. Stephen Ames third win of the year matches Ernie Els for most on tour this season and tightens up the Charles Schwab Cup point standings. Ernie and Stephen Alker Part of that T2 group in Washington. Richard Green and K.J. Choi remain fourth and fifth in this wild season.

VO > With the Boeing Classic in the books, we can take stock of player performance not only through the standings, but also from a health standpoint among competitors. 18 events into the 2024 season, there is a physical wear and tear factor with the over 50 crew, and as we push toward the Charles Schwab Cup playoffs, players update us on how their bodies are holding up.

OC > I thought I'd be a little further. Tell you the truth, it's still a struggle. with, mobility and strength and, so hopefully nothing else will happen to it. And then I will, you know, move on, as they say. But I'm probably halfway there. 60%, again, likely to be playing golf and not some other sport because I can do anything else.

VO OC > You know, I just it was tough finding my feet, you know? You know, and I had an injury, you know, it comes every now and again when I get that tight in the lower back and I just play it up, you know, it was a little cooler, you know, very different conditions. And I did hit it into some awkward, positions in the, in the first day. So, I just tweaked it, and I just couldn't shake it. So, I just felt I needed a break. I actually feel a lot better now. And I'm very fresh.

OC > I'm not as strong, and I don't have a pop that I once had, but I'm feeling a little bit better. I'm not in pain buying golf, which is nice. I'm working on my game. It's starting to get a little better. but I've got a lot of work to do. Still, and and, I've been busy.

OC VO > I feel fine, but I cannot swing a club. And I've had so many people tell me this and that. And, you know, it just gets frustrating because I went to one of my buddy's baseball games, and there was a foul ball, and I went and got it, and I threw it to him in the same spot. So, it's the motion from here. Going back actually feels okay, but as soon as I get here, something is popping in there and no one can really find out what it is, but it just goes from one spot to the next. Here, they're everywhere and it's becoming a huge problem.

VO > Speaking of help, seven-time PGA Tour Champions winner Colin Montgomerie revealed he's been battling issues of his own. Speaking at a Legends Tour event earlier this month in Scotland, Monty said he hasn't been well for the last six months. While he didn't elaborate, only saying his problems were, quote, internal, he did hint at shutting down for the remainder of the season. Since then, we have learned the World Golf Hall of Fame member, who's played in 13 events this year on PGA Tour Champions, is pointing to a return in early October at The Constellation Furyk and Friends in Jacksonville. We wish Monty well.

VO > Rarely does a player combine outstanding performance with unmatched showmanship. But such was the case for Juan “Chi-Chi” Rodriguez We lost this legend who passed away last week. But the routine of waving his putter as a sword remains an indelible image. A sickly child who grew up helping his father work the sugar cane fields in Puerto Rico, Rodriguez took a familiar path to golf from that era, teaching himself the game while caddying for affluent tourists. And by the time he joined the PGA tour in 1960, the five foot seven Rodriguez cast the giant shadow in style and substance. In more than three decades of golf. Chi-Chi won eight times on the PGA tour and captured 22 events, including two senior majors on PGA Tour Champions. A powerful ball striker, Rodriguez was Must-See golf. An entertainer who always delivered. Gigi took his place in the World Golf Hall of Fame in 1992. The completion of an amazing life journey in the game.

VO > Chi-Chi Rodriguez was one of a kind, inspiring in play and in flair. No cause of death was given. We tip our hat, as he often did. Rodriguez was 88 years old.

VO > Olympic golf was a thriller for the American contingent, as Scottie Scheffler stormed from four shots back on the final day to capture gold. Scheffler continued his amazing year with a final round 62, including a Sunday back 9 29. An emotional day for the world number one on the women's side, as it turns out. In her final Olympics, 27-year-old Lydia Ko completed her medal collection, already a silver and bronze winner, Ko captured gold with a two-shot victory, which also qualified her five points for the LPGA Hall of Fame. A brilliant subplot to this Paris performance. In that spirit, we asked players in which Olympic sport would they compete, not including golf.

OC > The only other sport I've played half decent is in the tennis, but there's no way I would have been contending for a medal.

OC > If they have the skeet and then they have like a rifle competition, something to do with the gun.

OC > Probably a soccer, just because I grew up playing soccer and I love the game and it's a great team sport.

OC > The beer drinking, I'd be probably pretty good at that one.

OC > I figured if I trained for that enough, I'd be good at, I'd be good at my waterfowl hunting. I'd love even better shot. I'd be the envy of the duck.

OC > I think if I could do anything with this body, I could could become a good rower. But I enjoy watching, you know, the thrill of going that far and having someone win by the front of the boat, it's amazing.

OC > Oh, hockey Winter Olympics. It'd be hockey for sure.

OC > It wouldn't be swimming. It wouldn't be dang sure be no running. Maybe the leapfrog. I do the leapfrog.

OC > I think the synchronized swimming. I want to be upside down in the water with my legs. Going all over like.

OC > Archery is cool. And what a spot just outside The Versailles. I mean, this Paris Olympics is going to go down in history as one of the all-time great ones.

VO > Talk about flashy golf wear around the course. On Wednesday. Notah Begay The third and Tim O'Neil hosted a clinic for a group of junior golfers, adding to the fun. The Seattle Mariners, Mariners, Moose Boy from the Seattle Kraken and Blitz, the Seattle Seahawks mascot all in attendance. So much of what the players do surrounding the tournament is supporting charitable causes and promoting the game. And no different here.

OC > Well, this is the big part I think of a player's career where you just have so many opportunities to give back. You have a whole wealth of experience in not only sports, but life. I mean, and I've got kids that are sort of the same age as many of these kids.

OC > There you go.

VO > I enjoy it. I love it, I like when they have fun. You know, having the mascots here is just an absolute huge addition to the energy and the vibe, and it just makes it, so engaging for them. And I really probably get more out of it than they do.

VO > Still to come on Learning center. A little heat from the hub. Red Sox Nation is represented by Kevin Miller and Terry Francona, teaming up again. A conversation straight from the heart is next.

VO > 2004 is a forever year for Boston Red Sox fans. That was the season the Sox broke the curse of the Bambino, rallying to beat the hated Yankees in the American League Championship Series and then going on to win their first World Series in 86 years. Scrappy Kevin Miller was a clubhouse leader and Boston believer, while manager Terry Francona steered the ship to historic greatness. The two were reunited a few months ago at a PGA Tour Champions event in Dallas. And it was as though no time had passed.

OC > Well, these two gentlemen share a special bond, back in 2004 and only rallied with the Boston Red Sox down oh three to the Yankees but went on to break the curse of the Bambino. I guess a very special bond.

OC > Yeah, very close.

OC > You know, we're really not. I don’t even like him.

OC > Kevin Millar and Terry Francona. But when you guys get together, I mean, there has to be some talk about what took place in oh four and that and that whole deal or or has it been has it been talked out at this point to you?

OC VO > You know what? I don't know that. We talk about everything and and nothing. I mean, like, you know, like you're right, there's a bond. I mean, the guys, man, you get you get pretty close, and you get pretty fond of guys. but it's not the first thing we bring up. We lived through it. but there's so much other stuff that's that's these are funny or, you know, that we certainly laugh about. I mean, like, I'll text him out of the blue sometimes just if I see him on, you know, intentional talking or something makes me laugh, I'll text him. But that's the kind of stuff.

OC > Yeah, yeah. Yeah. It's something that, like, you can't take for granted when you're going through it. Like you said, we lived it. We were down oh three. There was stress walking up there in the ninth. And he's got stress. But you understand the passion that that city and everybody had you know living it. Now as players we play it like our jobs go out there and play baseball and try to beat that team. And the Yankees were a good team. I mean, you know, you look at who they had. It was A-Rod and Jeter. They're all good looking and rich. And we had like Tito as our man idiot behind the eight ball. We got him. And you should see him with his shirt off. He looks just as good as us, which is not very good. But no, the point of it is we were just we care about each other. We love each other. We laugh with each other; we rag on each other. And I think that's what made it special was that we weren't the best players. I mean, he had Bill Miller at third and Cabrera short and Bill Miller, Mark Bellhorn, you know, which he said nine words a month at second. He had Miller at first, which is terrible, you know, and he's behind the eight ball as a manager. But the group we had were dudes. And I think that's the thing that gets lost. Like they were just we're just ballplayers. You know.

OC > I think the interesting thing is you're such a positive guy and you were very positive there. And in Cleveland, you were that way in the clubhouse. Attitude, I think, takes you a long way, certainly in baseball and out here. And I guess maybe the the proof that you could turn things around or if you start off bad, you can turn things around and golf.

OC > I'm going to say this in front of them and I know I'm going to regret it. We don't get where we go without him. And I.

OC > That is the nicest thing he has ever said to me.

OC > I hope that this isn't seen by very many people.

OC > Probably not.

OC VO > Okay. But I mean, because what you're saying, there's something to be said for that. I mean, I remember coming in that after that third game, man. And, you know, as all I hear is this voice, don't let us all in one. Well, remember thinking, okay, you know what I mean? These guys are maybe just dumb enough to think we can do this. And they're like, he said, they're baseball players and they get them out on the field, man. And they knew what they're doing.

OC VO > You're a product of your manager and I, and I don't like to brag on him. And people ask me a lot like who is your greatest manager you played for? And he's at the bottom of the totem pole. It was everybody else, but I don't know. I'll tell you the truth. Terry Francona, his gift, baseballs, baseball like the pitchers got those strikes execute his pitches, we have a chance to win. So starting pitcher really does that. Obviously offensively hit some home runs and whatever. But the gift he had was not to get down on guys. It's hard not to be a front runner as we all are in society, but those one for 25 and he never strayed. He knew his dudes. He was able to make a joke. He never front run you. And that's a very hard thing to do because there's not a lot of managers, you know, you're hitting Buck 40, and he knows he had but 40 a lot of his career. And it's the head down. You going to put toast in. And you know they don't want my guy contact with you because you're 5050 if they want to get rid of you. He has a gift to make you laugh in big situations. The mound visits bases loaded. We have Derek Lowe here and he had the ability come out there, bases loaded, you know, and hey, D Lowe? So anyways, people think we're talking stuff, and I got a second row. We got, a nice-looking broad back there. Let's ask, you know, play. But those were the things that like. Yeah, you know, it's okay. It's a failure, sport. But he has a great gift to make us laugh. And that's big. And we are a product of him.

OC > But you both kept pressure off. And I don't think you can play baseball. And you can't play golf when you feel pressure, right? You can't. You can't perform.

OC > Well. I don't care what's going on out there, I can't perform. I mean.

OC > It’s a left and right five-footer.

OC > If there's ten people out there tomorrow, I won't be able to pull it.

OC > Is this scary for you?

OC > Hell yeah it is. I mean, you can be in a baseball stadium and there could be 35,000 people, and I. I'm comfortable because that's home.

VO > Right,

VO > If there's if they announce my name on the first tee box, I'll I'll clamp shut. It'll be very hard.

OC > We all get we all get this little, like sweat in our palms.

OC > Yeah. Like right now I'm starting to.

OC VO > Right. But everybody because we're out of our element. So, the whole thing is every athlete in here has done something great, right? No matter who you are, if you've been a weight surfer, a football player, that first shot on a tee box, we have shank left right pull nervous down. So, we don't know what's going to happen, at least on the baseball field. He kind of knows. I kind of know. But it's scary. But that first shot.

OC > You guys tease each other in. And the fact of the matter is you're champions. You guys. How do I say this delicately? You weren't superstar players, right? But you bring that kind of an attitude and fun to whatever you do. You did that in baseball and I'm sure you're doing it out here, isn't it? Isn't everything fun? Isn't this a bonus playing golf?

OC > 100 percent. I love to learn. I love to watch and talk to these guys like I'm a relationship guy. And when you're playing with the senior guys, you see how easy they are or what are they looking at? I just got taught how to read the book. They give you this book I don't even know. Like there's so many numbers.

OC > I threw mine away, I thought it was addition. I threw it away.

OC > It looks like geometry Oh at Lake City Junior College. Mike, what are the red numbers? What are these circles? But honest to God, how do you get the ball in the hole? Like a lot of us can hit the ball. And. And Terry's a good golfer. Like, we we get around, we're on the fairway. But getting up there and figuring out numbers that you're comfortable, we all have a favorite club. Why not get up there to the nine and be like that? Instead of getting 48 yards and you can't chip over the bunker, lay back 125 yards and get a full shot. So, learning this game has been fun.

OC VO > I'll tell you what. You know, you were talking about the memories and everybody I saw just ran to John Lester. I just saw him a little bit ago. The hugs aren't fake. I mean, you go through stuff with guys, and you go through some tough times too, but God, man it one it's just it all comes flooding back like like I, you know I'm, I'm trying to hit on the on the yesterday and he's screaming at me. You know it's like for left. Yeah. It's like but it's like it man. It makes you smile.

OC > It does. And I, I hate to to bring up a sad moment, but you know, last year we were sitting here with, with Wake. Wake was with us. And, now he's, he's not. And I was just wondering if you could, share some of your your thoughts.

OC VO > Boy, you talk about feeling like you got kicked in the stomach. you know, we went back last week for a reunion, and lot of guys were there. And to hear them talk about not only Wake, but Stacy, it's just as much fun as we're having all of a sudden. Real life sets in and and wake was the ultimate team guy. It's why you hear so many people saying so many things about him so, so fondly. Because that's how they felt.

OC VO > You didn't realize how much he did off the field till lately. Like, but being around Tim Wakefield like, this was a guy that came up as a position player. So, there was always that insecurity of it. Now I got to learn to throw a knuckleball and pitch at the highest level in the world. Dom. It gives me chills. Dominate the Yankees for his whole entire career with a knuckleball, wonderful human being, wonderful wife Stacy, great kids, Brianna, and Trevor. And you know, Trevor's autistic. And Brianna is a senior in high school, loses both parents within five months. You know, a lot of it our hugs, but not now what? Now they live with that. And the greatest thing ever was Trot Nixon said we were all in a meeting at nine in the morning, last week, and he asked us all to stand up. He goes if you played in 14 stand up. So, we're all like, it's all of us in here. And we all stood up and Brianna was there, and Trevor and he goes, she I want you guys look around. And Brianna and Trevor looked at all of us and we're all standing. He goes, I was going, you know, you got 17 uncles in here and we're here for life. And he goes, you call me if I don't answer, you call Timlin. If you don't answer, you call Millar, you call Francona. Some way is going to answer. But we're here for life, for you and to have a group of guys. And that's not fake. Every single dude in that room for life till we pass. It's a family and this is part of it. But Tim Wakefield, it was a it was a gut punch, like Terry said, because we all were there with him a few months later and then you find out about the brain cancer, and then you look up and Stacy was already battling pancreatic cancer. So, you were anticipating her? Yeah. Death first. And it happened out of nowhere. And it just was a terrible thing.

OC > Yeah. Well, for both of you and I want to bring this full circle, you know, when things seem most dire. And they did, you know, for there's always there's always hope. Right. And I and I think you both and that team sort of, represent that, that kind of hope that it could. It's going to be okay. You got to you got to keep battling. What would be the message you'd send for folks whether they're struggling in work, they're struggling in their golf game which they love just anywhere.

OC > It's something I live with in baseball. But tough times don't last. Tough people do. We make a lot of right hand turns and baseballs hitters. 500 at bats. You're going to make 350 right hand turns. You better know how to fail. Those hundred and 50 are easy, but it's coming back to the dugout. And I think just understanding the grind of life. But you have to surround yourself with people that care about you, that have love for you, and that truly do care about you. And I think that's the big message.

OC > You know what I would say? You don't wait till the end to say, oh my goodness, I was great. I've never been accused of being the smartest person in the room, nor will I ever be, but I was smart enough to enjoy the heck out of that. I mean, those last four games, you know, one mistake and we go home. And I had the time of my life.

OC > Guys, thank you so much.

OC > Appreciate you having us.

OC > Thank you so much.

VO > Our thanks to Tito and Kevin. And as we say goodbye, another Seattle moment. Dicky Pride throwing out the first pitch at a Mariners game prior to the Boeing Classic, a low and away effort and a lifelong memory for Dicky, who called it woke living a dream. But he also said he'll be more lenient on his pro-am partners, who also deal with some nerves. With that. I'm Vince Cellini and we will see you next time on Learning Center.