Production Transcript for 24INTCUTCH - ASCENSION - MASTER.mp3

[00:00:45] >> The PGA Tour Champions proudly present the year-long race for the Charles Schwab Cup. And today, from St. Louis, Missouri, it's live first round coverage of the Ascension Charity Classic, the gateway to the West, perhaps offering a roadmap to the Charles Schwab Cup playoffs this week. Only five events remain in the regular season, a critical late season opportunity to make inroads here at Norwood Hills Country Club. More than a century of tradition here, including the 1948 PGA Championship captured by Ben Hogan, and the fourth time the PGA Tour Champions have competed here. David Thomas, Padrick Harrington won the first two editions of this event, and Steve Flesch last year with a sizzling 62 on the final day. Kevin Sutherland just made birdie, and he has got his nose in front here through 11 holes at 6-under. Rod Pampling, Y.E. Yang, currently one shot off the pace.

[00:01:52] >> To the 10th. And this is Tim O'Neal for birdie to get it to 5-under here.

[00:01:56] >> Yeah, one of the few birdies here at the 10th.

[00:02:01] >> And defending champion playing his third here at 8.

[00:02:05] >> Steve Flesch, with two birdies and a double bogey, hit his second in that left greenside bunker. Long bunker shot. Pretty well done. It didn't come to the right, but good pacing.

[00:02:21] >> Back at 8. And Cookie, Stewart Cink told you last week, and you chatted with him after he won. He said, I belong out here. It took me a while to figure that out, but I am committed to this tour. And I think everyone associated with the Champions Tour was glad to hear that.

[00:02:35] >> No, absolutely. And it does take a while to get it figured out, especially if you're exempt on the big tour into your 50s. Peter, you can attest to this. It's not an easy transition. But once you come to that conclusion, you have to stick with it. And it's good to see Stewart make that putt, but also, you know, commit to the PGA Tour Champions. It's really -- You know, do you struggle out their side on the, you know, on the big tour, Peter, or do you come out where you're comfortable and you can play golf? It's not like you're going to make a ton of money or, you know, do some other things that you haven't done, but it gives you a chance to compete.

[00:03:12] >> Yeah. I went through that, John. I won my last tour event in the Travelers when I was 49, and it gave me a false sense of belonging on the PGA Tour, and I stayed out there. I played a little out here, but I knew real quick after about a year that I belonged on the Champions Tour, and that's when I committed full time. But it's hard to let go of the PGA Tour when you've had a decent career, you've won tournaments and you want to stay with the young kids, you want to stay on the big stage. But I think Stewart realized with that win at Warwick Hills, I can dominate out here and that's what he's going to do.

[00:03:54] >> Yeah. He had one last taste of glory winning at Harpertown, winning at Napa, you know, in your late 40s. That's something to be said for that. And then to come out here and win when you're supposed to that's, you know, that's another sense of accomplishment.

[00:04:09] >> Justin Leonard, chance to get it to 4-under here at 11.

[00:04:15] >> I'm sticking with my prediction that Justin Leonard is going to win in the year 2024. Sticking with it.

[00:04:27] >> Bernhard has three straight Top 10s coming into the week, including a fifth place finish last week at Warwick Hills. And he's got a birdie here at the 8th to get him minus-4.

[00:04:37] >> It's just incredible what he's done coming off that Achilles tear last fall. And here he is just 4-under today and just playing some great golf.

[00:04:47] >> To 11. Tim O'Neal looking to add to the five birdies already on the card.

[00:04:52] >> They are makeable. Yeah. Anything over this green is a good place to because you're chipping back up the hill into the wind. We saw Darren Clarke almost chip in for eagle and Tim O'Neal does. Whenever you're playing it around with a group like this, John, you know you want to watch these guys hit putts because they've all cut such great strokes. You know the ball's going to be rolling properly. Some guys with weird strokes, you don't ever want to watch the roll of their putt.

[00:05:29] >> No, you don't. You don't ever watch the putter head. You might watch the ball and how it reacts. There's no doubt about that. And also to that point, Peter, they're all winners. They all understand, you know, this is an important day that they're going to bring their game out today. So you can pay attention to what these great players are doing.

[00:05:52] >> It's all about the roll. A lot of guys like to put that black line on the top of the ball and make sure that black line rolls end over end. Get a good look at that here.

[00:06:01] >> Yeah. Steve Stricker does a great job of doing that. So nice up and in.

[00:06:09] >> Let's get you to 12. Jerry Kelly with a rangy birdie attempt here.

[00:06:13] >> This is a hard putt. Way up the hill. Did he get it there?

[00:06:17] >> Oh, yeah.

[00:06:18] >> He did. Easier than I thought.

[00:06:24] >> Ticklish little one for Langer here for his birdie at 11. No problem. Bounce back after the drop shot at 10, gets Bernhard back to minus-4.

[00:06:37] >> Back to 15. And we mentioned earlier, Jay Haas is trying to shoot his age or better it for the 20th time in his career. And a birdie pickup at 15 is going to help with that.

[00:06:50] >> Of course he does. My fellow 70-year-old.

[00:06:53] >> Let's go to 18. And Duffy Waldorf trying to close his Friday with a birdie from long range.

[00:07:02] >> Yeah, he does. The UCLA Bruin. Wonder what kind of football season they're going to have this year.

[00:07:09] >> Tim O'Neal looking dislodged from that co-lead and pour one in here at 14.

[00:07:13] >> This is straight downhill. You can see the slope of the green. This may work. A little to the right. Did he hit it? Perfect.

[00:07:25] >> Good comeback for O'Neal.

[00:07:29] >> Scott Parel. Got to put this one at 16.

[00:07:31] >> I think this is a pretty good choice here. Doesn't have -- Well, now, obviously, it is. But again, there's so many creative shots you can hit around these greens depending on the slope and the cut.

[00:07:47] >> Jerry Kelly even par round going, but hit a beautiful shot into the 14th here.

[00:07:59] >> We saw Tim O'Neal make one a little bit earlier from a different angle. This might turn a little to the left. Yup. Perfectly red.

[00:08:19] >> Yang trying to save his par here at 9. He has finished third and second of the last couple of years here in St. Louis. Loves this place. How about that finish?

[00:08:31] >> Because of putts like that.

[00:08:32] >> He's in position to win a year ago until Flesch went bananas on Sunday and sent everybody home packing. So Yang in with 65 and the clubhouse lead. Back at 18, we saw the sparkling approach shot from Andrade earlier. Stuffed one in there to about 4.5 feet. What a birdie.

[00:08:52][ Applause ]

[00:09:00] >> Leonard in good shape for birdie here at 16.

[00:09:04] >> Yeah. Here we go, here we go. Justin going to win in '24, I keep saying it.

[00:09:13] >> To 15, Flesch patrolling this one for birdie.

[00:09:19] >> And he has to run that little bit of a ridge that's just left of this whole location. So this is kind of a rough little 30-footer up that slope. If he misses that ridge, it could wander to the left pretty far away. So you got to pay attention to this one. Straight up the hill, too. And it got left.

[00:09:50] >> Oh, yeah. This is Steve Flesch --

[00:09:52] >> Any questions?

[00:09:52] >> -- 2023.

[00:09:54] >> Don't apologize, Steve. Don't apologize. Don't ever --

[00:09:57] >> Yeah.

[00:09:58] >> -- ever apologize for making putts.

[00:09:59] >> You'd never throw those back, right?

[00:10:01] >> No.

[00:10:01] >> It's a good fish, keep it.

[00:10:03] >> Birdie putt here at 17 for Steve Allan. That's four in a row to get the Aussie to minus-4.

[00:10:15] >> Wow. Just the seventh birdie of the day here.

[00:10:18] >> We're at the 9th here. Final hole of the day for Gene Sauers.

[00:10:24] >> Get there. Come on, Gino. How does it stop?

[00:10:32] >> It was worth the wait.

[00:10:33] >> How about that?

[00:10:35] >> Birdie at the last for the 62-year-old winner of the US Senior Open back in 2016. Y.E. Yang's round of 65, the best of the day. You got five players there at minus-5. You've got Stewart Cink, who won two weeks ago. Ken Tanigawa, who won three weeks ago in Calgary. Steve Allan, the Aussie who came through the qualifying school in his rookie season out here. They are stacked up on page one. Norwood Hills Country Club has been around more than 100 years in this golfing rich community of St. Louis. PGA Championship was held here in the late 1940s. The PGA Tour stopped here in the early '70s. And for the fourth year, it is the backdrop for the PGA Tour Champions, the 21st event of the season in the race for the Charles Schwab Cup. And what a race it is. Seven players at 6-under par, including a couple of former Texas Longhorns roommates during their days in Austin, Justin Leonard and Harrison Frazar, Veteran Marco Dawson, Cameron Percy also up top. Everybody feeling like they are in the hunt. Got more than two dozen players within three shots of the lead. Get right out here to the 8th, John Cook. And just a short one for Justin Leonard's birdie here.

[00:12:00] >> Good to be with you all. Beautiful afternoon. Comfortable temperatures. And Justin Leonard hit this par 5 and two. That little eagle putt just short. Tap in birdie.

[00:12:09] >> Different wind today, John. North, a little bit different direction, but it is really gusting almost 25 miles an hour out there.

[00:12:17] >> Yeah, it's cooled down. Wind out of the north for sure.

[00:12:21] >> So it's Leonard at 7-under par. And Cameron Percy looking to join him, 70.

[00:12:29] >> Yeah, out early. Got his second round going quickly. As you can see, maybe eagle at 6. Just one drop shot at the 5th. Heck of a day for Cameron.

[00:12:42] >> Harrison Frazar's breakthrough came at the Dominion Energy Classic in the Schwab Cup playoffs a year ago.

[00:12:49] >> Harrison was asking me on the range what the score was between Texas and Michigan, and I gave him a thumbs up. So he's a happy man.

[00:12:59] >> All good news for Longhorn fans. Out to the 8th, and Angel Cabrera looking to join Leonard and Percy at the top with an eagle.

[00:13:08] >> He had an incredible warm up this morning. He was smashing drivers. That's really what he focused on, his tee shots.

[00:13:16] >> Drop back to the 8th. And Kevin Sutherland for birdie. You will not have a fourth player at 7-under.

[00:13:27] >> Well, you just kick yourself when you have a great look uphill and you leave it short.

[00:13:36] >> Back to 10. And birdie chance here for Cink.

[00:13:39] >> Now, he knows what it's going to do after watching Triplett and Duke. Look at the claw he's got. It's kind of interesting is he's got his fingers straight down the shaft in his -- with his right hand. That claw grip has helped so many players. Like that.

[00:14:04] >> He's paying attention to the Triplett putt. Stewart Cink used the information and rolled in his third birdie of the afternoon. Get within two.

[00:14:17] >> Frazar has been scrambling the entire trip up the 11th and did well to save par there.

[00:14:24] >> Yeah. With his length, I would think that he would consider this to be a long par 3.

[00:14:29] >> Par saving attempt for Bernhard Langer here at 15.

[00:14:32] >> Guess who's back up on the first page of the leaderboard. Yeah, Langer again. Just an incredible story.

[00:14:41] >> A little bit more to deal with here for Yang's birdie than he had intended. Mentioned he was second and third here at St. Louis the last couple of years, trying to win out here for the first time in his 72nd start this week.

[00:15:03] >> It's amazing. He didn't start playing golf until the age of 19.

[00:15:07] >> Incredible.

[00:15:07] >> Yeah. He's taken to it pretty quickly.

[00:15:17] >> About a 6-footer for Kevin Sutherland's par here at the 9th. One of the early leaders yesterday in 32, 4-under through his opening nine. A tie for 66 at day's end. Nice work. Sutherland holds it steady at 6-under. Cink working from off the green at 11. It's quick.

[00:15:50] >> We go in. Oh, yeah. How about it?

[00:15:54] >> That'll help scrub some of the speed off of it. Yeah. Wow, says Stewart. Holes out at 10, birdie number three of the day. Unexpected, but he will take it. Snatch that one out of the hole.

[00:16:14] >> Sutherland back at 11, ready to play his third shot now.

[00:16:18] >> That was available to him.

[00:16:26] >> Well, it's always an option. It's a way you can do it, but you need to leave the flag in for that.

[00:16:34] >> Unexpected. But a three at 11 for Sutherland and he's back into a share of the lead at 7-under.

[00:16:41] >> Drop back to 12. Justin's been doing a little work with Mike Thomas, Justin Thomas's dad, and in conjunction with his longstanding relationship with Randy Smith, who he's been working with since he was a kid, just an 8-year-old.

[00:16:57] >> Randy Smith's done some really good work lately with Scottie Scheffler. Wow.

[00:17:03] >> To 17 we go. Overhead look at Jerry Kelly's birdie putt.

[00:17:07] >> Do it. It did it.

[00:17:11] >> It's about time.

[00:17:14] >> Good look here now for Ken Tanigawa. Bogeys at 10 and 11. Nice up and down for par at 12. Love to bag this one and maybe steal a couple more. Go. OK.

[00:17:29] >> Yeah. That's just the sixth birdie here at the tough 13th today.

[00:17:37] >> Let's go to 17. Rod Pampling, winner of the SAS Championship outside of Raleigh last year. That'll be the final regular season stop in mid-October before the Schwab Cup playoffs begin. Five birdies on the day for Pamps. Four of them came in the opening nine.

[00:18:05] >> How good was that?

[00:18:06] >> Hammered it in there.

[00:18:08] >> Magnificent. Second shot into the 16th for Stewart Cink. Can he pay it off?

[00:18:18] >> Well, I called one earlier that he was going to make, and he didn't do it. But something tells me here that he's got that figured out. What a shot. What a birdie after that errant tee shot to the right. That's a special. That's a special birdie right there.

[00:18:36] >> Joins Y.E. Yang at 8-under. Trying to win two consecutive starts out here on the Champions Tour.

[00:18:45] >> Rod Pampling birdied the 17th and looking to hole this one for par at the last, and a round of 68.

[00:18:53] >> Yes. Well, this 18th is so difficult today. Just one birdie here at 18. Second most difficult hole on the golf course today.

[00:19:05] >> So this would get Sutherland in the house at minus-6 and keep them in touch within two. Now, there's 16 players within four shots of the lead as the final couple of groups wind it down here on this Saturday, Norwood Hills.

[00:19:39] >> Great work.

[00:19:41] >> Good up and down there for -- after that tee shot. That's a shot in the arm.

[00:19:47] >> In the hunt to win for the first time in four years out here. Sutherland will sign for 70 and start the final round two off the lead. The man from Cordoba, Argentina, started caddying in his homeland when he was just 10 years old. Angel Cabrera dropped out of school as a sixth grader. Learned how to play the game, playing money games against other caddies. You talk about hard knocks, Peter, and toughening your roots in the game. That's how you do it.

[00:20:24] >> Used to walk 3 miles to and from the course every day.

[00:20:30] >> Level par 71 for El Pato.

[00:20:33] >> Well, Yang could get it to 9 and be alone at the top if this goes down.

[00:20:39] >> I can't imagine. There's been a lot of birdies on this hole today.

[00:20:42] >> John, there's been one.

[00:20:43] >> Yeah. I can't --

[00:20:44] >> One.

[00:20:44] >> Can't imagine.

[00:20:45] >> Yeah.

[00:20:46] >> Playing as long as it's going to play into the wind out of the left.

[00:20:50] >> His putted average is a little better because there have been a lot of pars here, 4.3 to a field average.

[00:20:59] >> Couple under par there for Y.E. Finishes second and third here in St. Louis the last two years. And he will play in the final group on Sunday with a chance to win yet again.

[00:21:14] >> Y.E. Yang in his 72nd start, trying to win for the first time on the Champions Tour. Stewart Cink in his 11th start trying to win for the second consecutive time after taking down the Ally Challenge a couple of weeks ago.

[00:21:33] >> We've reached the final round of the Ascension Charity Classic, the 21st event of the season on the Champions Tour and Golf Channel's live coverage. I'm John Swantek. Peter Jacobsen is alongside. And we've seen some torrid scoring already. Y.E. Yang trying to break through and win for the first time.

[00:21:48] >> He sure is playing well. All week long, he's never been out of position.

[00:21:54] >> Birdie there at the second. Got Yang to minus 10. Bernhard Langer trying to win for the 47th time out here.

[00:22:00] >> I enjoyed watching him. He had balls this morning, warming up on the range. He's just very meticulous with his preparation.

[00:22:08] >> Birdied the third to move to minus-8. Richard Green torched the opening nine. Twenty-nine through the first half of the day.

[00:22:15] >> He's had a wonderful year, a lot of second place finishes. The only thing that's missing from his resume is a victory.

[00:22:23] >> That got green within one. Stewart Cink has a victory. It was just 14 days ago at the Ally Challenge.

[00:22:29] >> Big green here at 5. They tried to tuck that pin right over that rise there, but they weren't fooling Stewart.

[00:22:38] >> Well, he gave one back, but he's within two as Y.E. Yang leads by one here at Norwood Hills on the final day of the Ascension. Justin Leonard battled an ice cold putter on Saturday, looking for a birdie at the 8th.

[00:22:51] >> There we go. Knowing Justin, we talked about it yesterday, he was going to go to the practice, just putting green and figure things out. And take a look at that card, four birdies through eight holes.

[00:23:02] >> And we're back at 7 with Stewart Cink here.

[00:23:05] >> Yeah, just off the right edge of the green. Actually hit a pretty good shot, but it kept kind of wandering to the right and just got off that edge of the green. It's an OK lie and choose to pitch the ball. Goes slightly uphill. That call came out hot.

[00:23:22] >> And it went down.

[00:23:23] >> Saved.

[00:23:23] >> Even hotter.

[00:23:24] >> He's done that a couple times --

[00:23:25] >> Saved.

[00:23:25] >> -- now this week.

[00:23:28] >> That ball is going a good 10 feet by.

[00:23:30] >> Plank.

[00:23:31] >> Remember, he did that at 11 first day --

[00:23:34] >> In there now.

[00:23:35] >> -- for eagle.

[00:23:37] >> It's in there now is what Stewart said. We had a good look at his cross-handed chipping technique that he utilizes. And he's been really effective with it this week, Peter.

[00:23:45] >> Anything to keep you from flinching at the ball.

[00:23:48] >> Back to 17. Saw the approach shot of Stricker earlier. Left it in a good spot underneath the hole here.

[00:23:55] >> It's been one of those slow weeks for Stricker.

[00:24:03] >> Leonard looking for birdie number five of the opening nine.

[00:24:08] >> This is the length that he struggled with yesterday. Not today. Could this be the day for Justin Leonard to get his first win out here on this tour?

[00:24:18] >> He's got his nose in front at 10-under par. We're back at the 8th. Yang looking to carve one around the trees.

[00:24:25] >> Two hundred and eleven yards. This is one of his hybrids. He's got a bunch of them in the bag and he uses them well. And this is a good looking shot.

[00:24:34] >> Oh, wow.

[00:24:35] >> Whoa. How do you put it right in that pin? It almost looks like they missed the green with that hole location from where Yang was hitting from.

[00:24:47] >> Cink for an eagle now.

[00:24:48] >> Yeah, from right at hole high. So this has got some pretty significant left to right break. Once it starts breaking, it should pick up some speed. That one, a little too much respect as well. A little bit of work to do for Bernhard and Stewart.

[00:25:08] >> John, I doubt there's any player this week that has not three putted as big. As these greens are --

[00:25:14] >> These greens are --

[00:25:15] >> -- it's difficult as they are to read.

[00:25:17] >> They are so big and they are difficult to read. I found, you know, putting the last couple days, not a lot of break around the hole. It's kind of subtle here and there. A lot of pitch in these greens. Not big undulations, but just wonderful pitch to these greens. You kind of have to know which way that pitch is going. How about this here for Y.E. Yang? Right of the hole, about 12 feet.

[00:25:47] >> Wow.

[00:25:48] >> Just --

[00:25:49] >> Great comeback.

[00:25:50] >> Poured it in. That's how you bounce back from the first bogey of the day with an eagle on the next hole.

[00:25:54] >> Beautiful stroke.

[00:25:57] >> This is the fourth lead or co-lead Y.E. has taken into the final round of the Champions Tour. He is over three, converting those leads into victory. Making his 72nd start this week. Looking for the breakthrough. Stewart trying to win for the second time in 14 days. This would get him to 10-under.

[00:26:15] >> Yeah, there's a little bit of work left here. Shouldn't do a whole lot. Maybe left center if that. Two putt birdie, but loses a shot.

[00:26:39] >> So four birdies across the opening eight. Couple get backs along the way for Cink. Finds himself one back of Yang.

[00:26:52] >> That's the one thing. This golf course was designed and built in 1922, over 100 years ago, but it stands the test of time. I've talked to a lot of members all week long and they're very proud of the golf course here, both 18s as they should, because this is a really fun golf course to play. Good combination of easy holes, hard holes.

[00:27:18] >> OK. Couple of birdies and an eagle. So, high production at the 8th, the shortest of the par 5s out here. And Langer stays within one. Up to 11, second at the short par 4 for Darren Clarke.

[00:27:35] >> We saw his tee shot just a little bit left of the green. And look at the slope here at the 11th. It pitches from the front to the back.

[00:27:50] >> Nice birdie pickup for Darren Clarke at 11, getting him to 6-under par. Bernhard talked about his career long pursuit of Hale Irwin's historic mark of 45 wins. He didn't think it was feasible when he first came out here and even through his first decade out here. But then, as the wind started piling up, he felt like it was attainable to do it at the US Senior Open on a big golf course, Peter, was a surprise.

[00:28:17] >> Well, I know when I turned 50 and came out here, John, I don't know about you, but I thought that Hale's 45 victories was completely out of touch for everybody.

[00:28:27] >> Absolutely. That was a lot of -- That's a lot of wins in a short amount of time. Remember, your window really is only, you know, five to eight years, maybe 10, but not 17 like --

[00:28:40] >> Yeah.

[00:28:41] >> -- Bernhard 18. Not much to that putt, though. Just a beautiful iron shot, proper.

[00:28:53] >> We go to 13. Darren Clarke looking for birdie.

[00:28:58] >> Just four birdies here at 13 today. That would have been number five.

[00:29:06] >> So the first bogey of the round just earlier from Justin Leonard drops him back to minus 9, two off the lead, shared by Yang and Langer.

[00:29:17] >> Co-leader Bernhard Langer left us in a good spot here at 11, Cookie.

[00:29:22] >> Yeah, no doubt. It's right towards the end of the fairway. So he -- Good lie, complain any type of shot he wants, has to get way out to the right, let it kind of check and then release down that slope. That's going to wander off to the left.

[00:29:36] >> Sounded like a little bit of a mishit.

[00:29:39] >> Maybe a little clunky.

[00:29:40] >> Yeah, a little clunky.

[00:29:41] >> It didn't have that first -- kind of first bounce check. It's kind of over spun it.

[00:29:52] >> Yang will work from the up slope of the bunker. That'll be to his benefit.

[00:29:56] >> Yeah. And it's not a great lie. Kind of sitting down. Looked like the ball kind of tried to get through the bunker, then came back down and kind of in its own little track mark. But he's got plenty of green to work with. Also has to get it way out to the right.

[00:30:12] >> Takes a big swing. That needs to have some spin.

[00:30:16] >> Yeah, that lie wasn't that great.

[00:30:19] >> Yeah. He's got to hit a different kind of shot here, John. A little softer, maybe a little bit more loft off the club.

[00:30:33] >> I would think so, Peter. He's got a pretty good lie. Better lie than I thought that he was going to have in the rough. So this isn't extremely difficult. Although we'll pitch on a down slope going away from you. Definitely has some speed. Just wants to get it just under that fringe cut.

[00:30:51] >> Oh, yeah.

[00:30:52] >> Something like that.

[00:30:53] >> How about --

[00:30:53] >> How about it?

[00:30:54] >> Easy, easy. Take that.

[00:30:57] >> You could tell the minute he hit it, that was clean contact. It jumped straight up in the air and landed so softly.

[00:31:10] >> Stewart Cink has just gobbled up the 11th. How about 4-under across three days here at the short par 4.

[00:31:21] >> That is the seven birdie of the day for Bertsch, who started this final round tied for 23rd. And now, he's got a share of fourth place. And Yang trying to join Langer, 12-under.

[00:31:34] >> Should move slightly to his right. Also going uphill a little bit.

[00:31:39] >> Keep the speed up here and lose it on the right.

[00:31:43] >> Creeps it in.

[00:31:44] >> He's glad he lost it on the right. It fell in from the left.

[00:31:52] >> Langer looking for one more here.

[00:32:02] >> A little bit of right to left movement in it, but there's not much to it.

[00:32:09] >> He made one from this length at 11 for birdie. Can he do it again?

[00:32:17] >> Forgot one piece of the puzzle.

[00:32:22] >> He's aggravated with it.

[00:32:25] >> Never had the proper pace. Had it on line.

[00:32:33] >> Yeah. This is all kinds of problems here for Y.E. Yang right of 14. Stewart Cink is going to play first.

[00:32:41] >> Looking an eight more than a seven.

[00:32:42] >> Seven for -- I do, especially if it hops at all.

[00:32:48] >> This one doesn't feel like I can do that little shot. Plus, I got a treat it.

[00:32:52] >> I think we need --

[00:32:52] >> Hit a nice four. Take what we get.

[00:32:54] >> Yeah. And I think it might jump a little.

[00:32:56] >> That's what I'm kind of thinking.

[00:32:57] >> I mean, I think --

[00:32:57] >> If it doesn't, we end up 5, 6 yards short of the green. If it does, we end up in the middle of the green.

[00:33:01] >> If it doesn't jump, we're still probably almost front edge.

[00:33:04] >> Yeah.

[00:33:05] >> Conservative on this line here, right?

[00:33:07] >> Yeah. I got the tripod.

[00:33:10] >> Yeah. Go ahead and swing this.

[00:33:14] >> OK.

[00:33:16] >> John, that's just part of their pre-shot routine.

[00:33:18] >> Yeah, 188 yards. They play into his zone is what they said. I feel like it's going to jump a little bit well below his feet on a downhill lie as well. So this is 8-iron. He's 188 all in, 174 to the front. Downhill. That ball does have a little bit of heat to it. It's not a nice line, though.

[00:33:42] >> Nice shot.

[00:33:44] >> Really well done.

[00:33:45] >> How soft did that land? Wow.

[00:33:52] >> Langer is ready.

[00:33:54] >> We talked about Bernhard Langer loving to hit proper shots from 174 downhill. Right middle hole location. Trying to bring it in a little bit from left to right. And here's another one. Right on line.

[00:34:10] >> I think he's responding well to the pressure. What do you think?

[00:34:13] >> Yeah, it's not his first time.

[00:34:16] >> Yeah.

[00:34:20] >> Here's Langer for birdie.

[00:34:22] >> Straight up the hill. Not much to it.

[00:34:27] >> Great bounce back.

[00:34:28] >> That was amazing.

[00:34:30][ Applause ]

[00:34:40] >> Birdie number seven. And you can hear the energy in the crowd and feel it and can sense something special is happening here with that man in the hunt yet again. Yang, he's got some work to do. So there could be a little two shot swing here. But we'll see the Cink birdie putt next.

[00:35:03] >> Big putt here for Stewart.

[00:35:04] >> Let one go at the last with golden opportunity. This is very similar to the putt he just had. Goes uphill slightly. Moving to his left, if it loses speed.

[00:35:33] >> You see that line on top just roll end over. And that was a beautiful strike.

[00:35:41] >> Another missed fairway, no big deal. Another circle on the scorecard for Cink, who's got a share of the lead.

[00:35:46] >> A great answer by Cink.

[00:35:50] >> Let's get you up to 17. A birdie look here for Darren Clarke. He's had a couple on the back nine already.

[00:35:55] >> Yeah. Excellent approach to that back ride hole location up on that little teeny shelf.

[00:36:02] >> And we move to 16 here. Justin Leonard has not made a birdie on the back nine this weekend.

[00:36:10] >> How about right now?

[00:36:16] >> Till now.

[00:36:18] >> Oh, unexpected.

[00:36:19] >> Get that reaction. He's like, yeah. Now, they go in?

[00:36:33] >> Now, this one right here has your attention a little bit. Four feet, has to work on little to his left.

[00:36:51] >> To be the first player to reach 13-under today.

[00:37:08] >> How good was that?

[00:37:10] >> That was confident. All produced by his massive length.

[00:37:16] >> Crunched his tee shot high, cutting 4-iron to the green and two putts from there. Two birdies in a row for Stewart Cink, the leader by one.

[00:37:32] >> Pretty much the same putt that Stewart Cink just had. Just have to keep the speed up. Will fall off to the right.

[00:37:45] >> He has handled the shortest to midrange putts effectively today. None bigger than this one.

[00:37:52] >> I think his last couple of years, he's been probably one of the best from this length.

[00:38:02] >> Oh, that was money.

[00:38:06] >> Money is right.

[00:38:10] >> What an up and in from Bernhard to hold it steady at 12-under.

[00:38:20] >> You have to assume that your competitor is going to make a putt at this length, right? So if Langer doesn't cash that one in, Lang birdies all of a sudden, you're two down as you head for 18. So that was massive. And so is this one.

[00:38:34] >> Yeah, that's why he's in the Hall of Fame. Won all those tournaments. But this one right here, that's where we get your attention. That's downhill a little bit, maybe just right of center.

[00:38:52] >> Well, it was worth the wait. They tried to freeze Y.E. Yang out, but he birdies the 17 to get to 13-under and take the lead to the 54th hole.

[00:39:09] >> Looking for the best swing of the day. Positive confirmation before the strike here.

[00:39:12] >> Yeah. This is 6-iron right here for Stewart.

[00:39:17] >> That flies to the hole location. That'll get all the way over the green. So he's looking for something. Just a couple of steps on the front edge of the green.

[00:39:33] >> Headed way to the right.

[00:39:38] >> Finds the bunker.

[00:39:40] >> In the flat portion of the bunker, an available green to work with. But that is a look of dejection right now for Stewart Cink. Sees his chances perhaps slipping away with Yang in the center of the fairway. First Langer approach.

[00:39:57] >> From 175, decent lie. Not great, but decent. Not a great angle, but he feels like he needs to make birdie.

[00:40:23] >> Trying to take that kick up there.

[00:40:26] >> Oh, yeah.

[00:40:27] >> Yeah.

[00:40:27] >> What a shot.

[00:40:28] >> Yeah. That rough lie helped him.

[00:40:32] >> Still alive, still with a chance. Now, the reply from the leader.

[00:40:39] >> One-sixty-five. He's hit some beautiful iron shots today.

[00:40:43] >> Just need one more.

[00:40:50] >> Safety first out to the right.

[00:40:52] >> All right. It's very safe. He's got a clean lie in that bunker, John. It's just got a long ways to go.

[00:41:08] >> Yeah, no issues, really. Green does slope from back to front, so this has some significant right to left in it. But other than that, it's plenty green, good lie, flat. Sounded really good.

[00:41:56] >> Checked up on him. Almost caught it too clean.

[00:42:01] >> Yeah, I think so. That had --

[00:42:02] >> Wow.

[00:42:02] >> -- some serious spin to it.

[00:42:05] >> And he knew it. What a way to win your first Champions Tour event. Make a 40-footer on the last hole.

[00:42:13] >> Got a runner up a couple times, including right here in St. Louis in 2022, earlier this year at Firestone, and his 72nd start. This for victory number 1 if it goes down.

[00:42:26] >> Good breaker from right to left.

[00:42:37] >> Things are getting interesting here at the last.

[00:42:41] >> Let's bring your coin right there.

[00:42:44] >> We always talk about it, John, lag putting, how important it is.

[00:42:51] >> So a few different scenarios unfolding here, one of which would Bernhard Langer winning if he could hole this, putting the pressure on Yang to have to make his for four.

[00:43:08] >> I don't know how many birdies have been made on this hole today, but I bet if there's a few, they've been made from right here. This is about as easy a putt you can have on this green. Uphill with a little bit of right to left break.

[00:43:21] >> John, there have only been five birdies here today. And this is probably the most accessible hole location on the green.

[00:43:29] >> Certainly. Absolutely. Bernhard has been so great for so many years out here. There's only been 12 events on the Champions Tour that he hasn't won. Think about that. One of them right here in St. Louis. So this could be his chance right here.

[00:44:18] >> For three at the last.

[00:44:20] >> Come on, three at the last. How about this guy? What a competitor. I don't know what else you can say about the great Bernard Langer.

[00:44:38] >> So it has come down to this. We had a playoff in the first edition of this event a few years back when David Toms turned away Dicky Pride in extra holes. Y.E. Yang looking to hole this to force a playoff here.

[00:44:55] >> Yeah, he saw what Bernhard Langer's putt in the last half. So he knows what it does. Now, it's just trust and commit.

[00:45:19] >> Yes. Let's go back to 18 again.

[00:45:21] >> That's pretty clutch right there, those two. Langer for birdie, Yang for par.

[00:45:31] >> Something special. Y.E. Yang with the PGA Championship back in '09, Langer with two Masters, green jackets.

[00:45:41] >> Are you going to give me the go ahead to start?

[00:45:45] >> We will play 18 as many times as necessary to decide the outcome and determine the champion.

[00:45:58] >> We're going to play 18 repeated. Just over and over if we need to, all right? We do it by the way you teed off. So, Y.E., you will have the honor. OK? Yes.

[00:46:08] >> OK.

[00:46:09] >> Good luck. Play well.

[00:46:10] >> Good luck. Play well.

[00:46:15] >> OK. Players have the marching orders here. And Yang will be first to peg it here.

[00:46:21] >> Just repeat of about 15 minutes ago, the tee shot that he hit.

[00:46:54] >> Well, he picked that tee up pretty darn quick.

[00:46:57] >> Another laser. Boy, he's driving the ball well.

[00:47:01] >> And that's past where he drove it earlier.

[00:47:05] >> Now, John, you mentioned on the 54th hole, he put it on the right because he was going to hit a little bit of a cut. Looks like he's going to do the same thing here.

[00:47:21] >> Yeah, he likes to play golf properly. He sees shapes. Move it left to right or right to left.

[00:47:33] >> Kind of the same.

[00:47:34] >> And that catches the bunker.

[00:47:36] >> Yeah.

[00:47:38] >> It's far enough back in the bunker, though. Shouldn't be any issues.

[00:47:42] >> Quite a setting for this final round, final hole of the Ascension Charity Classic. Such a great community. They support all their sports. They love golf. So many great major championships have been contested here in the St. Louis area. When you go first, you know, you just got the pressure of trying to make it. But if you're going second, you know the guy already made it, you got the added pressure of having to make it.

[00:48:25] >> Tour official Todd Satterfield is going to give the nod to Bernard Langer.

[00:48:30] >> Just a quick eyeball test there he took.

[00:48:33] >> Yeah, quick one. You don't call him eagle eye coach for nothing.

[00:48:36] >> I was getting ready to see the flagstick get laid down.

[00:48:41] >> That's about the length of these putts. How about those two shots, guys?

[00:48:46] >> Wow.

[00:48:46] >> How much fun is this?

[00:48:53] >> So the second playoff in the brief four-year tournament history of the Ascension. It's the first playoff we've had on the Champions Tour, by the way, since early June when Ernie Els took down Steve Stricker in sudden death at the American Family Insurance Championship at Madison.

[00:49:13] >> This is a little different putt than Bernhard had earlier. He was more underneath the hole. This is more across, almost hole high. So this has got a little more break than the putt that he had in regulation.

[00:49:25] >> Yeah. If I had to have a putt, I wouldn't want the same putt because it could -- this could confuse him. As you said, John, this is a little more hole high and it's going to be a little bit of a different break.

[00:49:42] >> It doesn't really have to worry about any speed of issues here. It's still a little uphill. Y.E. Yang's putting from right underneath the hole. Straight up the hill. Bernhard first. Y.E. Yang's putting from right underneath the hole. Straight up the hill. Bernhard first. What a setting, what a backdrop. Looking for yet something more this man could possibly achieve.

[00:50:25] >> Just clipped the top edge, carrying a fraction too much pace.

[00:50:29] >> Yeah, that was a beautiful stroke. Really freed that up and rolled it nicely.

[00:50:34] >> So that will open the door, clear the stage here for Y.E. Yang to try and step through, birdie the first hole of sudden death, and win for the first time as a champions to remember.

[00:50:48] >> He and his caddie, Chris Brown, they've been a great team all week. He really hasn't made many mistakes at all. He's been very consistent.

[00:51:02] >> He's driven the ball just beautifully.

[00:51:06] >> Yeah. He's putted beautifully, too.

[00:51:08] >> It is out of Langer's control and in the hands of Y.E. Yang for career victory number 1.

[00:51:22] >> Yes for Yang. Birdie on the first hole of sudden death and a winner for the first time on the PGA Tour Champions. What a day. What a moment. What a performance from a former major champion who came on strong down the stretch with a birdie at 17 and another on the first hole of sudden death to turn away Hall of Famer Bernhard Langer and taste victory for the first time on the Champions Tour.

[00:52:08] >> And Y.E. Yang, 72nd start as a winner for the first time.