**2024 PGA TOUR CHAMPIONS LEARNING CENTER SHOW ROAD TO SCHWAB CUP**

VO > What a week in Phoenix to close down the PGA Tour Champions season.

VO > The Charles Schwab Cup championship isn't just another event. It's the one you dream about all year long.

VO > Hello, Steven Alker.

VO > Winning the Charles Schwab Cup means you've come up with the best of the best. It's the ultimate prize on our tour.

VO > It's what we play for, right?

VO > List of names on that trophies. Just about everybody that's done anything in the game of golf.

VO > If I have a chance, I'll certainly be anxious to take my chance.

VO > I can tell you firsthand, there's nothing like being named the season long champion.

VO > How does he do it?

VO > The stakes couldn't be higher.

VO > Hey, dad, we did it!
VO > Prepare for something very special.

VO > Bernhard Langer has won his sixth Charles Schwab Cup.

VO > The emotion pouring out of Alker.

OC > This week the final chapter is written. Are you ready for it?

VO > PGA Tour Champions Learning Center.

VO > It is more than just a trophy. It is a symbol of a season long journey of a second act in golf that might just turn into first time acclaim. A desert where stands the champion of champions?

OC > Hello, everyone, and welcome to road to the Charles Schwab Cup. I'm Vince Cellini. 28 events and the final pieces taking place in Phoenix, Arizona at the Charles Schwab Cup championship, where this unpredictable and entertaining campaign will conclude. Coming up, you'll hear from some of the favorites. But first, how we arrived here.

VO > Tim O'Neill has survived. And he is a winner for the first time on the PGA Tour Champions here in Richmond, Virginia.

VO > Tim O'Neill, a career grinder, broke through with a magnificent Sunday finish in Richmond, a seven under par 65 and winning in his 50th tour starts. It was a career changer securing his status for the 2025 season.

OC VO > I don't know what the thinking is. It's been a long season and, for me to get it done when I had to. That means a lot.

VO > In the second leg of the playoffs, the new Simmons Bank Championship in Little Rock. World Golf Hall of Famer Padraig Harrington did it again for the third consecutive year, winning a Charles Schwab the Playoffs event, posting at 17 under two better than the field. Overall, his third victory of the season and ninth career on PGA Tour Champions. Again, boosted his contender status.

OC VO > You've got to do good things like, you know, to win a tournament. It's just not as simple as I just, you know, I like the golf course. It should be good for me. You got to play well. You got to hole the putts.

VO > Harrington has placed himself squarely in the mix among contenders for the Charles Schwab Cup. The final step, as always, this week, is Phoenix Country Club and the four-day Charles Schwab Cup championship. 36 men in the field, one will emerge as the overall season champion. It is one of the tightest races in recent memory and should provide high drama in the desert.

VO > Ernie Els has held the top spot since winning the Kaulig Championship in July, staving off contenders like past champion Steven Alker and number three Stephen Ames. Padraig Harrington now fully prepared to pounce. And Y.E. Yang moving into the top five for the finale with over a million points awarded to the winner. The top six players can guarantee winning the cup by winning the tournament. Others outside the first six must win and hope the top contender’s falter. The scenarios are many, adding to the intrigue. We spoke to some of the frontrunners on what it would mean to win it all.

VO OC > I had a glimpse. Look at it and on that list, the names on that trophy is just about everybody has done anything in the game of golf

VO OC > I've been huge. I mean, you know, two and three years, you know, second last year. It's Yeah, it's it's what we play for, right?

VO OC > I'm getting a little older, I so I, I'm aware of stuff, you know, it's not going to get easier to win this Schwab Cup. There's more players coming on new players. So yeah, if I have a chance, I'll certainly be anxious to take my chance.

VO OC > Personally, the man made a lot. You know, it's, to be plans to. The quality of golf at this stage of my career is very lucky.

VO > Placing your name on the beautiful Charles Schwab Cup is a prestigious honor. It is reserved for the best of the best. Among legends, the great Bernhard Langer is a six-time winner of the cup, which perhaps may someday feature his name. Scott McCarron broke up Langer's run in 2019. Steven Alker capped a brilliant coming of age campaign in 2022, and Steve Stricker rode a six-win season to the Charles Schwab Cup a year ago.

VO > Break time on road to the Charles Schwab Cup. When we return, Ernie Els looks to add to a spectacular golf career. He's number one with an eye on the Cup. The Big Easy shares his perspective on finishing the job in Phoenix.

VO > Ernie Els doubled his PGA Tour Champions career wins in 2024, three of them coming during a hot summer stretch. Els captured the Principal Charity Classic in Des Moines, Iowa, at the start of June. He followed that up with a fifth career victory the following week at the American Family Insurance Championship in Madison, Wisconsin. Then yet another win at a major, the Kaulig Companies Championship at historic Firestone Country Club in July. At age 55, he remains an elite performer.

OC > He is a World Golf Hall of Famer and for much of the season, the Charles Schwab Cup points leader. The Big Easy Ernie Els. Always good to spend time with you Ernie.

OC > Thank you, Vince.

OC > So I want to go back to a conversation we had in January at Hualalai. We said this could be a big year for you. So why? What made that happen?

OC > Well, I think it was just our conversation. I, I've been.

OC > Encouragement.

OC VO > Yeah, exactly. I needed a bit of a boost. I, I've, I've enjoyed my time out here on the Champions Tour. Ever since I came out here. I think I've played just over 100 tournaments now. You know, there were always a couple of question marks in my game, you know, after, not playing that well in my 40s, late 40s. So, I just kind of find myself again on this tour and, and getting reminded that you are actually a good player, you know, and actually scoring good, rounds. But then, you know, there's some really great players on this tour. You know, I mean, Steve obviously comes to mind Steve Stricker and Bernhard Langer and Steven Alker and then, you know, guys really performing very, very well. And I wasn't quite there. And I felt, you know, this year could have been my head, but I, you know, it just needed to be and get more consistent in more areas of my game. Which I kind of did. You know, I started driving it a little bit better. You have to be in the fairway a little bit more often, to score really well, especially over the weekends and obviously putting and, my iron plays always been quite good. Short game has been pretty good. So, I had to just kind of, get some of my disciplines, more up to scratch with, with some of the other players.

VO OC > Right. But one of the things that's remained consistent is, of course, your swing and the beautiful tempo that you've always had, and you've been able to maintain that as several players have as they age, like BJ and so on.

OC VO > Yeah, yeah. Thank you. Yeah, I mean I've been blessed with a, a nice motion. You know the man upstairs gave that talent to to me. And it's it's it's held up throughout my career. Saying that I just turned 55. So, there's a couple of little niggles that that's going on in the body, like everybody on the Champions Tour. It's not too serious, thank goodness. But you know, keeping the lower back and just keeping yourself and overall physical shape is a good thing. And that's helped me, you know, be able to swing the way I want to. There are times when, when things aren't going as well as it as they should, though.

OC > Well, you hide them very well in those moments, but you you doubled your career win total this particular season did. What did winning more mean to you this year?

OC VO > Well, thanks. Yeah, I ran closer, but, again, it's a start. It here and close it. In Naples. It was a tournament cut short, but I got something going in, in Des Moines I really had three really nice rounds of golf. And I had Stephen Ames. Really pushed me to the end, you know? So, I had to keep being aggressive, and I try and, I, you know, so to speak. So, I needed to keep making birdies so that was, that was really a confidence boost for me. And then the week off to, you know, at the American Family Insurance, tournament, you know, winning in a playoff, you know, with Steve, you know, kind of gave me the tournament for once. But, you know, that the Des Moines won really gave me some confidence that I really kept the foot down and got some really good momentum going. And and obviously, the, the one at Firestone was really it was really sweet.

OC > So now we're in a very close points race. Does that mean for you more focus or more stress?

OC VO > A bit of both. You know, I mean, I, I haven't played well the last couple of weeks. Simple as that. You know, I, went to the Presidents Cup and, you know, I really wanted to play at Jim Furyk’s tournament. They run such a great event him and Tabitha. And, and didn't play my best in a really nice golf course. And then I've been working on a couple of things in my swing in my game, and it feels like last week this stuff started clicking a bit, so I need to step it up.

VO OC > I can remember finally, your debut when we talked in Seattle when made your debut. Now you're 55. You settled into this tour. What would winning it all mean to?

OC VO > You know, I've seen that trophy. You know you gone but not miss seeing the trophy. That's also a trophy in a lot of the tournaments. They have it on the first tee, and I have a little peek of the names on that trophy. And it's the who's who of golf. It's all the way through guys who have done well throughout their career, you know, PGA tour, everywhere else. And you know, to capitalize here on the Champions Tour would be really sweet. So, yeah, it's quite, quite a trophy. Everybody's really looking to to win one day.

OC > Thank you, Ernie. Best of luck.

OC > Thanks my friend. Appreciate it.

VO > The swing, the tempo and the results. The World Golf Hall of Famer has top ten performances in nearly half his events in 2024, ranking second on tour in scoring average, fourth and final round scoring average. The Big Easy remains a huge presence and seems quite comfortable as the Phoenix front runner.

VO > Much more ahead on the road to the Charles Schwab Cup, he is no longer a dark horse. Steven Alker is a proven winner and a threat to again win the Charles Schwab Cup. Alker's evolution from outsider to contender is next.

VO > Steven Alker joined PGA Tour Champions in 2021. In just a few short years, he has racked up eight wins on the over 50 tour in 74 events and 41 top five finishes in that span a year ago. Off year followed up winning the Charles Schwab Cup with a win at the Charles Schwab Cup championship, and currently sits in the two spot in the standings.

OC > Steven Anker has been to the mountaintop on PGA Tour Champions, the Charles Schwab Cup champion, in 2022. And he wants another. And he joins us now. So, what a race Steven. It has been this year. What what gives me a perspective on the inside. What's it like being in the mix for this.

OC VO > Well you know, week to week events. We're just playing our game. We're doing our thing. I'm not a guy that kind of looks at points and tables and leaderboards and things like that. So, you know, for me, it's just, you know, doing, doing my job, getting out there. And try to enjoy it. And I'm trying to win a golf tournament. And I'm sure the other guys, you know, trying to win as well. So, but we got to the point now where it's, you know, there's a bunch of guys that can win and it's exciting. We've actually got a chance to win this year rather than the last year was Stricker was had it all sewn up.

OC > That darn Stricker.

OC > Yeah. Yeah, exactly.

OC > Is it better to be the hunted or the hunter in this pursuit?

OC VO > Well, you know, if you're out front there and you're leading, I did that, you know, in 2022, I was leading most of the year. And yeah, that kind of weighs on you a little bit. But at the same time, it's kind of nice to know that you're there. You're the leader. And then at the same time, you know, you know, you get a chance to, to catch up and you've got time, and you got points there to catch up and get him and and maybe be a little more aggressive. You can afford to be more aggressive.

OC > By any measure, this has been really an outstanding season for you think thinking three quarters of your events are top ten. So how have you been able to to maintain that consistency out here?

OC VO > Yeah, that's what I've been proud of this year is consistency. Getting those top tens. You know game wise maybe being in a kind of a B B minus for for a little while, but still still getting top fives and top tens and hanging around, you know, having a chance to win the Schwab Cup. So so I've been proud of that. Early in the season I played really nice and and didn't take some opportunities. So yeah, I see this year is just being more consistent and more consistent when I'm not playing well. And that's what I've been proud of.

OC > That's that's very important for sure. You're a known quantity now. So, this bursting onto the scene Monday qualifier parlay that into championships. But was there a moment during that run when you were establishing yourself when there was a, you know, I really belong here moment? Can you remember?

OC VO > Yeah, I think so. You know, when you hit that first win for me felt like, yeah, that kind of felt like, this is this is that I kind of. I got the game, you know? I can mix it with these guys. I think that felt like. Yeah, there was the point. You know, all those top tens it was kind of like I was just running on fumes and adrenaline and all that stuff and just just trying to get it done from week to week. But that first win, kind of like, yeah, that's good. And then I started the year nicely and won again. So that kind of that felt good.

OC > I think we've talked about this before, but one of the things that you don't have any battle scars from a lot of these guys and over the years, or maybe you do I don't know, maybe there are some wounds along the way, but.

OC > Not too many.

OC > Yeah, but you've been able to not be any have any psychological damage along the way to get to this point.

OC VO > Yeah. Yeah, I think so. If you can compare, you know, careers to other guys and going head-to-head with other guys. Yeah. Definitely not what, what, what some guys have had so. But battle scars and in other areas more so just the grinding and, yeah, the Q schools and the just the week-to-week stuff, that that's, that's been, that's been, that's my battle scars if you like. But I think all that has been, you know, put to good use coming out here and those experiences brought forward and to, to put it into play out here.

OC > As we reach the end. You've been there. Phoenix Country Club, four rounds. What is that week going to be like? And even day to day to try to actually get to the finish line?

OC > Yeah. You know, conserve as much energy as you can. It's a home game for me, which is kind of nice. Sleeping in my own bed. That's that's always good. But I think I'm going to have some good fans support out there, too. I know some I got some fans coming in from Texas and and all the home, home crowd and family and friends coming out. I like that, that that week's been special has been like that for the last three years. So that's, that's going to feel good. And I think that kind of helps me a little bit. And I like the golf course too, so it always helps.

OC > And you'd always have a nice place for the the other trophy. Sure, you can.

OC > Yeah, yeah, we'll find a place for it.

OC > Thanks, Steven.

OC > Okay, Vince.

OC > Best of luck.

VO > When we return on road to the Charles Schwab Cup, another Stephen hot on the trail. Stephen Ames would love to cap a multi win season with a breakthrough victory in Phoenix. A word with this strong contender is coming up.

VO > After just two victories in almost six seasons on PGA Tour Champions, Stephen Ames has seven victories over his last two campaigns, winning the Chubb Classic in Naples in February, then repeat wins at both the Mitsubishi Electric Classic near Atlanta back in April and the Boeing Classic near Seattle at the beginning of August. Ames has spent nearly a decade on PGA Tour Champions and maybe just right in mind, body, and game to finish the job this weekend.

OC > There he is. Stephen Ames still turning back the clock at age 60.

OC > Thank you.

OC > Barely. And putting together another big season. What, what does this year been like for you from from the inside. How do you how would you describe the whole season, the chase winning, etc.?

OC VO > I think I think the winning part is obviously very good. I had for last year, this year has been three, which is great, but I think the, the, the main goal starting this year was to be a little bit more consistent than I was last year. Last year I was in and out, in and out, but for wins, still having a great year. But I think overall this year it's been a little bit more consistent, knocking on the door more often. And that was my goal. And three wins kind of popped in there as well, which is nice. So, I think overall I last year I think I gave myself a B-plus. This year I'll give myself an A.

VO > Nice.

OC > Si, I moved up the ladder a bit.

OC > Yeah, a better grade.

OC > Exactly.

OC > Squarely in the hunt for the Charles Schwab Cup, which is exciting. And you've been, you know, you've been in this sort of this position before was the.

OC VO > I was there last year. Yeah. You know, last year I learned a lot from last year realizing that we were chasing the rabbit. I took some more time off this year, coming into this, into the playoffs and realizing that it's double points. So, it's like if you played well in the playoffs, then you can move yourself up very quickly, as in the case of Tim O'Neill, where he popped into his move himself well up in there right now. So, it's a big jump. So, I looked at that and I went great okay. So, I kind of saved myself that way where I've been home relaxing a little bit more or as my wife was saying, come out relaxing a little bit more.

OC > How about the game? Tell me about your game.

OC VO > The game is in good spirits. This is in a good spot right now. I'm very happy with the way things have come into, I fell off the wagon a little bit because I did take time off and, you know, it's. You keep thinking. I keep thinking that it's the golf swing. It's never the golf swing. It's always the mental part. So that's the part that was lacking the most over the last couple weeks that I've played.

OC > So, what, ten years basically on this tour, right?

OC > I mean, a couple of years off. Yeah. In between. But yeah, that.

OC > I mean that's that's a decade. And what what do you think you've discovered about yourself as a player on this tour?

OC VO > I think overall that part is probably the fact that I've actually learned to take charge, of me a little bit better. I've rededicated myself in the gym doing that kind of stuff more often. More consistent. That's benefited me, for sure. I think I'm stronger now than now then I was 20 years ago. Easily. And I think just the fact that I've taken charge, and I know when I'm tired, I need to take time off. And when I'm not feeling it, I need to kind of amp up certain things that do help me. And those are the things more than anything else that's made the difference to me.

OC > How do even experienced players like yourself not put too much pressure on yourself for these last, you know, last events?

OC VO > My coach asked me that question. I said, why aren't you into this? And like, you know, you've been doing it for so long, it's like, you know when not to apply pressure and when not to or when to apply pressure. I think when you get into the the moments of the heated battle, as in the case Boeing as an example, when it was Ernie and Steve the last day, the three of us are coming down there and I believe it was Robert Karlsson and a couple of guys, Charlie Wi who faulted at the end the last Sunday. And I realize, oh, wait, I have a chance here. I notice how my focus and beauty changed. So those things happen naturally for us. And over the years, it's like trying to put yourself or push yourself into that frame. It's hard. It's much harder. You got to let it naturally come to you.

OC > So, so bear with me on this. Just play along with me. So how would you finish this statement? I, Stephen Ames, can win this whole thing if.

OC > Just be me. Yeah. If it happens. It happens. If it doesn't, it doesn’t. I'm not going to cry over the spilled milk. Let’s put it that way.

OC > But you've taken a peek at that cup. It would be nice.

OC > It would. Obviously. Yeah, without a doubt. Yeah. Nice little bonus of that as well.

OC > A little bit. Yeah, a little bit.

OC > Yeah. I mean, all those things are all pluses. Everything's a plus at this stage right now. We've had our careers. Everything right now playing out here in the Championship is just adding icing to our cake. And I look at. I look at playing the champion still exactly that way.

OC > Your relaxation is making me nervous.

OC > Haha. Nice. Good finish. Thank you.

OC > Wow.

VO > Stephen Ames is not only one. He has posted top tens in 13 of 23 events on PGA Tour Champions in 2020 for clutch, putting a big part of his victories this season, an overall fourth in scoring average. He has hovered near the top of the Schwab Cup standings for much of the season. We'll see if he finally feels some pressure this week trying to close the deal.

VO > Speaking of closures, he is one of the best. Coming up, we chat with Padraig Harrington, who is right where he belongs, squarely in the Charles Schwab Cup championship mix. He's a record setter in Phoenix and has plenty of momentum coming in.

VO > Padraig Harrington has three wins this season, including winning the second playoff event, the Simmons Bank Championship, and one of nine career Champions Tour wins comes at Phoenix Country Club. There in 2022, Harrington broke the PGA tour champion 72-hole scoring record at 27 under par. He knows how to go low in big events, making him ever so dangerous as a top contender. We spoke with Patty on his season and the idea of competing at this level at this time in his career.

OC > He is a World Golf Hall of Fame member, his third full season on PGA Tour Champions. Perennial contender Padraig Harrington is kind enough to join us here and, I want to talk about the fact that you've been a multiple winner every year. And how important is that to to stack up those wins for you? What is I mean, even even for somebody at this point in his career?

OC VO > Well, I am a multiple winner. I love coming out here and winning, but I still can't get my head around. Bernhard Langer 47 47 now 46 47. How would you get to that number? It still is just not going to get there. That's an incredible record. But look, we're all about getting in contention, giving ourselves the chance on Sunday afternoon, getting a few wins every year. And that brings the excitement. I always say it about the Champions Tour. This really gives us a chance to relive our past glories. So, every time we play, and we hit a good shot in front of the crowds, and they cheer for that moment, it's great because we're doing it. But it's also kind of saying, yeah, I used to be able to play too, and kind of it doesn't validate your past, but it helps you relive your past and helps you enjoy, in my case, my three major wins, I get to enjoy them all the more because I'm out here, because I'm a Hall of Fame player, because I the crowds come out and watch and they wave and say hello. And that helps me enjoy those three wins. Even though they're, you know, 20 years.

VO OC > You know, it's interesting as a major champion that you are Ryder Cups, etc., you're built for the pressure of big events. Can you tell when guys aren't and what's the difference?

OC VO > Yeah, you can definitely tell. I not as much out here now because the guys out here are seasoned pros and they've got this far because they they want to be here. But you see a throughout your career there's players who just don't want to lose. And the only way not to miss a putt on the 18th green to win a tournament like I missed two weeks ago. Beautiful shot in the last for Mayfield to get in the playoff. And it sounds really bad. And there's one guaranteed way that I'll never miss that putt. And that's not happening. And there's plenty of guys who do that. They sabotage themselves. They just don't want to be put out there, put under that pressure, put up in front of everybody and judged. Whereas, you know, to get this far for these guys out here for winners, you don't mind being judged. You know, I'm not saying that I feel pain when I lose and you know, I look at it in retrospect and all that. But the strange thing is I get up the next morning and all I want is to go through it again. I just want to put myself out there. So, yeah, you're 100% there's players you want to play against in playoffs. I've gone into playoffs. And I love this when you go into a playoff and the other guys happy to be there, I'm not happy to be there. I want to win the tournament. You know, you know, sometimes people settle and then again you come to the Champions Tour. You've seen the best of guys of long careers and very few guys out here are settlers. Even the guys, you know who have had long careers but not household names. There's a hardness in them, you know, and again, to sustain yourself out here, there's only such a few people keep their cards out here. There's a hardness in the way they play golf. And if they get a chance of winning, you know, they take it.

OC > I love that perspective. That's great. You made serious runs at the Charles Schwab Cup in the past. Amazing record performance in Phoenix. What's what's your game plan? What is it going to take for for Patty Harrington to get this done.

OC VO > I think yeah, yeah, I would like to win the Charles Schwab Cup, I really would, I would regret if I go through my championship career and don't win it. I had I need to put a bit more. I need to sort out who I am in order to go and do that. As in, I still think I'm a young guy going out there and I'm, you know, I've only played a dozen events this year on the champions Tour. And it doesn't matter who you are, you're not good enough to spot the other guys, you know, 6 or 7 events or ten events or whatever it is. You know, if you're going to win the Charles Schwab, you've got to be committed. You've got to get out there and you got to you got to focus on it as you see what Ernie this year, like, Ernie has a chance of winning and you can see there's a he's got a different step. He's he's there. He's thinking he's trying he's he's playing more often. He's paying more weeks. You know he knows he has it. And he's trying to get across the line which is great because it's Ernie Els and he's he you know he's still trying at his age and at this level. He's trying to get that extra bit just because he knows it's it's within reach.

OC > I want to finish with a personal question. And I don't know if anyone's talked to you about this, but you lost a friend this year. Wilson.

OC > My dog. Yeah, yeah. You know.

OC > He's a he's a Bernese Mountain?

OC VO > Bernese Mountain dog. If you don't have a dog, you know this means nothing to you. But people who have dogs, you know, they've become part of the family to become part of your life and, er. Yeah, it's it's it. Wilson. It was only five, so he was, it was too early, but I think he had the best five years he possibly could have. And I know we had the best five years. So, you know, you know it's just happy memories. It's not not it's not, it's not real in the sense of, of real life. But it is personal to us. And, what's. Yeah, what's interesting is we weren't. We have another, young dog. He's 18 months, and we weren't going to get a partner for him sort of thing. And then all of a sudden, we start taking about it, and then overnight we are. And we have another puppy on the way. So, yeah. So, there will be two again.

OC > All right. Well, thank you for sharing that I appreciate that and best of luck.

OC > Thanks, Vince.

OC > Down the stretch. I love I love that softer side of you I do thank you.

VO > When Road to the Schwab Cup returns, we'll speed things up a bit. Actually, a lot. Green means go for this player who's inside the top ten in points. Richard Green as a fast-moving hobby, putting the pedal down on the famous track and you are along for the ride.

VO > Well, what a year for Australian Richard Green in just his second full season on PGA Tour Champions, he has done everything but win. Four times a runner up and sixth in the Schwab standings, Green is certainly one to watch in Phoenix and, as it turns out, one to watch behind the wheel. The 53-year-old lefty also enjoys racing cars and put his passion on display back in September at the famous Laguna Seca Raceway, where Learning Center Road along.

OC VO > All right, let's go and WeatherTech Raceway Laguna Seca. That's, one of my dreams to come here and drive this circuit. You seen it on TV a lot over the years and and through those years of me learning to to drive a race car and and understand the sport, you know, it's like, I guess for the racing fans, like out at the Nürburgring in Germany, you know, Laguna Seca in America is a famous track. Would learn to drive at a young age. You know, on a farm, because I've grown up and got older and, and been able to, to drive a car, you know, just gotten interested in watching motorsport and followed it pretty heavily in Australia. Followed the V8 supercar series in Australia and just some good quality driving lessons and racing lessons of some pretty famous drivers in Australia. Cameron McConville been a Porsche racer in Australia, and that supercar driver, following the sport and getting to know a few of the guys and eventually, evolving into me owning my own race car and doing it myself. I haven't done a whole lot of racing with other cars, but I did race to the Australian Grand Prix and the Australian GT Championship in 2009 and 2010. It was a support category to the Formula One Grand Prix, which was an unbelievable experience to race in front of, you know, 100,000 people watching the formula one. And then I've done a bit of production sports car racing in Australia the last couple of years before starting on the Champions Tour. And so, you know, we've got a really good, good camaraderie around amongst the guys that are race with and all similar cars and and it's a lot of fun and it's something for me to really escape from golf.

VO OC > The way they look, the way they perform, you know, Porsche makes such amazing product. Incredibly reliable car. Great engine to go racing with in their factory racing throughout the years. Their experience is second to none. And I think that's part of my process over the years of owning, getting to own a Porsche, you know, is the reliability to go racing on a weekend and turn up to the track and unload it and drive it and put it back in the shed at the end of the day, with a fairly, you know, nice maintenance schedule, you can enjoy some racing in these cars.

VO OC > Coming here when there's nobody here is really nice and quiet normally come in here in the world of battle, as you know, it's like. It's like practicing on an empty golf course.

OC > Yeah, that right.

OC > With nobody around, no crowds, no galleries. Yeah.

OC VO > It's like a golf again on a pebble beach or a golfer going to St. Andrew’s to play. It's for me. It's, it’s my chance to drive at Laguna Seca is very exciting.

OC > With the only kind of stuff that's blind is turn six to dip after the bridge.

OC > Yeah.

OC > And then obviously the corkscrew

OC > Yes.

OC > Is one of those monumental corners everybody's talking about for the end of time. But once you go through it a dozen times, you'll be like, oh, it's just another corner. And you're like, okay, I got to figure out how to get to this point as possible.

VO OC > Yeah. You know, there's been times of knots where I've sit down and studied some in the car footage of race cars around the circuit to learn the circuit as much as possible. And golf's been so busy the last month, the size that it's hard to spend all your time thinking about this. But, you know, I've certainly given it a fair bit of mental energy ready for today.

OC > And it's a lot more undulating than, please. Oh, it's a lot of elevation changes here. Yeah. It's what makes it interesting. It's only a 2.2-mile circuits.

OC VO > Pretty short courts for me through there. And and yes, to stand on the track and, and then also feel it in the car is certainly going to be an experience. That's for sure.

OC > Think very precise track. Laguna Seca is one of those tracks where a lap really comes together when you use every square inch.

OC > Yes.

OC > Of the track, it's a very precise, technical track. Yeah, yeah, it's just one of those tracks that rewards using literally every sort of entry and exit. And.

VO OC > You know, we were trying to liken it to a, a golf hole, if you like, and I can really only relate it to, you know, say the seventh hole at Pebble Beach, you know, it's a short little hole and, you know, a certain part of that course you've got to get through. And, you know, the corkscrews certainly looks like a challenge, but, you know, a lot of fun as well.

OC > If you end up dropping a wheel on the exit, you just keep it straight.

OC > Yeah. You know, the red mist comes down. It's kind of the same with, it's the same with golf, you know, we're, you know, highly competitive and want to win. Obviously, I do golf a whole lot more than I do this. And it gives you a level of belief that you can perform at that level when you're doing it a lot, but I, I don't do this near enough to compete with pro pro drivers. And that's where I've got to remember that, you know, it's been a while since I've been in the car, so I've got to get a feel for it again and and go from there.

VO > For a while, what I learned is it sounds a lot slower than it actually feels to me in the car.

OC > When I watch the footage on a camera, you know, I feel like, you know, there's so much more to to put out.

VO > It just sounds that way for some reason, but, yeah, it's. We got to go out there and do what you can do, and and, you know, I was watching my lines and listening to what Paul had to say about, the opposition of the car on the track to, to do a better and what he can hear out of my throttle input and break it, you know, application and, and see where I can save time. You know usually out here and racing, it's not like driving on the road where you, you know, you're creeping up on the brake pedal to the stop on this, this situation. You're using the brake to wash off speed, but not too much speed. And then you want to get back on the throttle straight away. So, it's a matter of feeding the right amount.

VO OC > Going up the hill over down into corkscrew, and coming down in this last little section here, it's just really exhilarating. You know, there's such a elevation change from the top of the hill where and, you know, the cars behaving in a way, and then it rolls over a crest of another way and, you know, the car so hooked up with grip. It’s amazing. You know, they they're such a good car. You know. I’ve loved owning one and, we'll continue to enjoy it, you know, into the future. But, yeah, they're just made for it. You know, they grip well, they have plenty of power. Handle like on rails. It's amazing.

VO OC > They're just a wonderful experience just to to come around out here and feel the corners at race speed. You know, it's really cool. I've. I've had a great time.

OC > The line looks great. I mean, where are first time out. Yeah. Fabulous quickstep.

VO OC > Just an amazing experience. And what I'll, you know, I'll never forget for me to come out and do this, this is a special, really special day. And thanks to you guys for being a part of it. And, you know, and allowing me to come out here and, you know, live out, live at my hobby and my dream, you know, it's, so very appreciative.

VO > Whether it's golf or racing, a finish line is a finish line. And for green, perhaps this week is his shot at victory green could win in Phoenix and win the season long race but needs at least a two-way tie for third or better to have a mathematical shot. Last chance to put it in gear.

VO > We put the wraps on our road to the Charles Schwab Cup with a feel-good story of Jason Caron and Out of nowhere, journey to the top 36 and beyond. Why Caron calls his performance ridiculous

VO > We expect the likes of Ernie Els, Padraig Harrington and others to reach the top 36, but every now and then a Jason Caron comes along. This PGA club professional at Mill River Country Club out of Long Island started the week in Arkansas 53rd but birdied three of his final six holes to tie for third and not only get inside the top 36 but secure his card for 2025. In nine events, he has four top four finishes and a brand-new golf life.

OC VO > Top 36 like this is ridiculous. It really is. Yeah. Full exemptions. I mean, listen, at work it's going to be a lot easier for me now to sit down with them. And I can actually tell them like, listen, I can play any event, so it doesn't, you know, you tell me when you're going to have your events and we'll we'll make it happen. But no, I'm still going to be working. I'm not going to be full time and, you know, every single week. But I'll definitely play. I mean, I don't see why not that we couldn't work things out. I know Mill River is going to be super excited for this.

VO > Caron isn't the only great story this week. First time participants in Phoenix include Ricardo Gonzalez of Argentina, fellow first-time winner Tim O'Neal, Aussie Greg Chalmers, who parlayed Monday qualifying into season success, and Q-School medalist Cameron Percy. We asked players to grade their season with one exam to go. It was clearly not done on a curve.

OC VO > Because I've played some good golf, but I got one win at a challenge. I was proud of that. I had a couple more chances to win though, so I could never give myself like a full A grade, but I tend to be kind of hard on myself. And so, because of that, I'm going to probably bump my grade up from a b minus to b.

OC > A b max. Maybe C. But yeah, I got some work to do in the off season. I spent a lot of time last year doing a bit. So, this one I'll try and chill myself a little bit more, but better than the last two. Years.

OC VO > I won. So, I'm very thankful that I won. But I've played very inconsistently this year. So, I mean, the number one objective is to make it to Phoenix. So, I'm very thankful that I'll be in Phoenix. But it could have been better. I could have been more consistent.

OC VO > Yeah. Won twice. But perhaps I had a few too many weeks where, you know, I've been outside the top 30. You know, last year was a lot steady a year. This year's been a little bit of a roller coaster, you know, featured in quite a lot of tournament, but then disappeared in the next year. So, I guess that's the way to do it a little bit up and down. But that's probably what's stopping me from giving myself an A-.

VO OC > B maybe plus very slow start, just no reasoning why everything was okay, but just never put any scores together early on was just kind of floating around at 30 to 40th. But thankfully the last two months have been solid. Back to where I feel like I should be.

OC > Put myself in the positions to win tournaments. And, you know, yes, it doesn't go the way, when it's mattered. But, you know, I think if I keep doing that stuff at all, that will eventually guy that that way. So, it's going to keep keep playing nicely and make sure I'm fit for next year.

VO > And that brings to a close a magnificent season on PGA Tour Champions, full of fantastic stories and sensational golf legends. Indeed, I'm Vince Cellini, leaving you with a salute to some of the great winners in 2024.