

Production Transcript for REWIND_25AMEX_STRAKA.mp3

[00:00:29] >> The PGA Tour is proud to bring you the season-long race for the FedExCup. Nowm coverage of the 2025American Express.

[00:00:38] >> Bob Hope dreamed of this event becoming a staple in the sport at the highest level. Now, at its 66th year. The famed comedian, who was a huge part of making this community a destination, would be so proud of what the American Express has become. In 1960, Arnold Palmer won the Inaugural. Ever since, stars in the entertainment world and business leaders from around the globe have joined the best golfers here in the California desert, which once again is being played in ideal conditions. Low 70s, zero wind. We should see some low numbers.

[00:01:10] >> Back over to the Stadium Course. You talked about missing it in those little swales, Billy Ray. That's what Tom Kim has done.

[00:01:18] >> Yeah. And this collection area in which this ball is found here is a really tight lie. So I would expect him. He's going to have to carry through that little valley on the top side of that ridge and let it run back down. It will move a little left right once it gets onto the putting surface.

[00:01:35] >> I haven't seen any players find the green in two yet today here at this par 5.

[00:01:55][Applause]

[00:01:57] >> Really nicely done.

[00:02:00] >> Good young player here, Johnson, at 17, Matt McCarty.

[00:02:04] >> Yeah. Lefty got his first in the PGA Tour at the Black Desert Championship in the fall after getting the battlefield promotion off the Korn Ferry Tour.

[00:02:17] >> He would settle for par.

[00:02:18] >> To La Quinta.

[00:02:19] >> Justin Thomas, he's putting for birdie.

[00:02:22] >> Well, that right hole location certainly favors his high fade. Just a touch of left to right in this one.

[00:02:29][Applause]

[00:02:41] >> Back over to Nick Taylor working on this birdie putt.

[00:02:46] >> In the meeting yesterday, we were talking to the rules staff, Tom. They've done a really good job of controlling the speeds on all three courses, trying to match them up right at 12 on the Stimpmeter. Now, this putt for Nick's going to come across the slope, going to move ever so slightly back to the right once it loses a bit of speed.

[00:03:06] >> It's a good point, Billy Ray. And focus on the amount of work that goes on behind the scenes to get these golf courses looking the way they do week in, week out.

[00:03:17] >> Over to Tony Finau for a birdie at the 9th.

[00:03:25] >> Yes. Nicely done.

[00:03:29][Applause]

[00:03:38] >> And the man who finished 13th in the FedExCup standings last year, Zalatoris, for a birdie finishing his day. Yup.

[00:03:53] >> Now at the 12th, Mackenzie Hughes trying to add another birdie to his card.

[00:03:57][Applause]

[00:04:09] >> At the 16th, Kevin Yu, who was a winner last year in a playoff at the Sanderson Farms in Jackson. He rolls that one in.

[00:04:22] >> For the 13th, Smylie, putting from off the green and knocking it in. Nicely done. It gets him to a couple under par here in the opening round.

[00:04:41] >> Jason Day for birdie at the 16. Oh, he races that one in. OK. Jason Day suddenly just two back. Back to La Quinta. Justin Thomas, can he get to 5-under?

[00:04:57] >> This is the club that's really held him back the last couple years. Still striking it. Short game is perfect.

[00:05:03][Cheering and Applause]

[00:05:12] >> At the Stadium on the fourth hole, Jesper Svensson. Eighty-ninth in the Official World Golf Ranking.

[00:05:23] >> Yeah. One of those guys Top 10 on the DP World Tour to earn his card on the PGA Tour. Had a nice week last week. It's good to see. That's another initiative of the PGA Tour that's really paying off.

[00:05:33] >> To 9.

[00:05:34] >> Yeah. How about trying to get it up and down or maybe chip it in? That's going to be for a round of 65.

[00:05:47] >> Back at the 16th, the par 5.

[00:05:49] >> Well, he's been judging these shots really well. That first bounce is going to be very firm.

[00:05:57][Cheering and Applause]

[00:06:04] >> Over at La Quinta, you can see half of Justin Thomas at the 18th.

[00:06:11] >> Shouldn't have much of a lip issue there. Just a wedge in hand.

[00:06:16][Applause]

[00:06:27] >> We go out to Mackenzie Hughes, Jim.

[00:06:29] >> Yeah. He laid it up to here. Pretty basic chip shot. Depends how it kicks when it first hits.

[00:06:36] >> Excellent.

[00:06:38][Applause]

[00:06:46] >> Now, Taylor for the birdie.

[00:06:51][Cheering and Applause]

[00:06:53] >> He's going very well. To shoot this sort of score on the more difficult of the golf courses puts him in a great position.

[00:07:09] >> Reavie needs to step out of the way so we can see Jason Day putting for birdie in front of Justin Thomas. OK. We got the end result, though.

[00:07:18] >> Solid day, 8-under par. I mean, I know La Quinta is playing easy, but 8-under par anywhere is a nice start.

[00:07:25] >> Germany's Matti Schmid post an 8-under 64, tying him with Aussie, Jason Day. Both sit two shots off the lead of J.T. Poston. The second round is next.

[00:07:40] >> This tournament has a storied history, and history was made a year ago when Nick Dunlap became the first amateur to win it. Over the years, things have evolved, but the one constant is the backdrop. The gorgeous Santa Rosa Mountains surround the Coachella Valley, and the three courses that are being used this week. Nineteen twenty-five is when the first course was built in the area. Now, there are more than 100 courses for locals and tourists to enjoy. PGA West alone has nine, and is known as the western home of golf in America. Justin Lower.

[00:08:15] >> Should just work a hair from his left to right at the very end.

[00:08:19] >> Yup, just get him on line.

[00:08:28] >> Zalatoris for birdie at 9. Back down towards the water.

[00:08:35] >> Oh, yes, nicely done. Need to make plenty of those.

[00:08:48] >> Go out to the action once again at the 9th.

[00:08:50] >> It's Straka for a birdie. Yeah. Good positive stroke there. Justin Thomas playing alongside Jason Day. This for birdie at 5. Much better look there than Jason. So J.T. gets the 9-under par.

[00:09:17] >> At the 14th, Danny Willett is just off the green.

[00:09:24] >> Not a bad spot to putt from.

[00:09:26] >> A little bit quick right in this area.

[00:09:29][Applause]

[00:09:36] >> Now, Hubbard standing on the tee at the par-3 17th.

[00:09:41] >> You think they could move the tee back, Jim, with the way that it's playing, or do you think this is the right thing to do for the --

[00:09:46] >> Well --

[00:09:47] >> Maybe on Sunday.

[00:09:48] >> When you have 3 days, you don't want to take any chances. But I mean, they could move it back Sunday. I think it'd be fine. I'd like to see him even go that far left. He would be a different angle. But they're doing the best they can.

[00:10:04] >> Yeah.

[00:10:09] >> Justin Thomas at the 6, hitting his second.

[00:10:15] >> Long par 4, second shot, playing down the hill. Real skinny, narrow green.

[00:10:24] >> That's why they put the slopes there, Steve, to use them.

[00:10:35] >> As you said, the best shot, even the marshal said in the last two days, obviously, and you verified it, and back to that with some facts.

[00:10:45] >> Yeah, good two.

[00:10:49] >> Underneath that Ben Hogan hat is Harry Hall.

[00:10:53] >> Yup. This continues to play well.

[00:11:02] >> Jason Day putting for birdie.

[00:11:04] >> This is going to be lightning fast, coming down the steep slope. Thought that ball may collect closer to the hole.

[00:11:15] >> Yup. So Jason Day suddenly moves within one of the lead.

[00:11:24] >> Let's go to 6.

[00:11:25] >> What a second shot for Justin Thomas.

[00:11:27] >> He just looks a little stiff over these short putts to me. Really keeping his head down nicely.

[00:11:35] >> Gorgeous look across the water. That is left of 18. There's the Santa Rosa Mountains. La Quinta in all its glory on this Friday afternoon. What an afternoon we have in store. Down there on the green, Mark Hubbard has a birdie putt.

[00:11:55] >> Yeah. On a very similar line as Daniel Berger's. And this putt -- from Daniel's, it went left early but went hard right at the end. So that's the tricky part of this read. Be a new greens, these guys usually know pretty much where it goes. But it could go right at the end, which is towards the valley, the low spot away from those mountains you spoke of. But I don't know if there's a lot in it, if he has the right speed. But this has been quite the round bogey-free. On this golf course, solid 2 days so far. Be a nice way to cap it off.

[00:12:22] >> See all those numbers, Johnson, on the right of your screen with Mark Hubbard. He's been out there a long time. Still grinding. I know you love the guys who grind. Still grinding for that first win.

[00:12:31] >> And the longer it takes to get that first win, I think, the harder it becomes because it gets in your mind, am I the best player that hasn't won yet? And just it's going to get more difficult.

[00:12:41][Cheering and Applause]

[00:12:49] >> This is Justin Thomas for a birdie at the 7th. We saw that bogey a little earlier from Jason Day. Yeah.

[00:13:03] >> He pushed it all the way up the fairway. So he's got a clear view of the flag. Just 89 yards, but dangerous. Behind this flag, it drops off so sharply.

[00:13:21] >> I think that --

[00:13:21] >> Danced around the cup. Yes, it will.

[00:13:24] >> Yeah.

[00:13:25] >> What a shot.

[00:13:29] >> Now, Blade, 17 years of age. A lot of people talk about should kids play multiple sports? Are they better athletes growing up when they do different things? He played basketball, just like his mother did who starred at Vanderbilt. And he will tell you that basketball helped him develop as a golfer.

[00:13:45] >> And I think he and his mom now play a lot of competitive pickleball with each other. I mean, she's a legend, you know, that you can't teach competitiveness.

[00:13:56] >> This is Victor Perez at the 16th. Remember back in Paris, Tom, we were there, he made a run at the podium. Oh, he made a run there as well, the Frenchman.

[00:14:12] >> Joel Dahmen, little one here at 12 after that incredible second shot. Justin Thomas. Can he get a little bit closer? Oh, yeah. At the 4th of par 3, this is 22-year-old Ryo Hisatsune. Hey, hang on a second. Hang on. Man, almost an ace.

[00:14:54] >> Now, Blades Brown, new professional, and having a terrific day today. He was struggling after the opening round. Shot 72 at La Quinta, which is considered the easier the golf course of golf courses. And he was a long way outside the cut line really. And he's just changed his fortunes this week with a round of 80-under par so far. And it could better.

[00:15:19] >> Justin Thomas, final hole of the day. This for a birdie at 9.

[00:15:24] >> Should be for six in a row to close out his round, Tom.

[00:15:31] >> Yes, what a way to finish. And Justin Thomas with a round of 64. And Rickie Fowler, who's had a wonderful day today. This on his final hole for another birdie. Rickie Fowler playing himself into contention here with a round of 62.

[00:16:07] >> This is Tosti for birdie.

[00:16:14] >> Yeah, this a two.

[00:16:20] >> From where the drama will conclude most likely on Sunday, back to 17.

[00:16:27] >> Straka on the tee.

[00:16:35] >> Just right that American Express, what's left of it.

[00:16:38] >> Say again?

[00:16:38] >> Right that American Express?

[00:16:39] >> Yes, American Express. Yeah, perfect. Thirty-five right there.

[00:16:43] >> Well, that American Express sign is about 10 feet left of the hole. So that's where he's trying to start it. One-forty-six downhill, about a half a club. It's a really easy shot. This should be just a pitching wedge.

[00:16:58] >> Could be a gap though. I got to get the signal here.

[00:17:16][Cheering and Applause]

[00:17:22] >> We stay with Straka.

[00:17:23] >> Looking to get it to 14-under par.

[00:17:30] >> Not seeing much in this. Good news for him, he's putting through all the sun. Sometimes, this take time of day, those shadows play in. But right here, it's a clear view. Shouldn't be a lot in this one.

[00:17:49] >> Yeah. Nicely done.

[00:18:03] >> Rico Hoey cards a 63 at the Nicklaus Tournament Course, moving him into a share of the lead with 48-year-old Charley Hoffman. The third round is next.

[00:18:20] >> Back in beautiful La Quinta, California for the third round of the American Express. Different than normal tour events. Cut day is Round 3, and it's shaping up to be a tough one to make. Now, out to the action.

[00:18:32] >> Go to 16.

[00:18:34] >> Is it a driver off the deck birdie for Charley?

[00:18:37] >> Really tough putt to read here.

[00:18:42] >> Oh, yes, it is. Look out for the elder statesman.

[00:18:46] >> We'll stay with Hoffman.

[00:18:51] >> And we'll go to the Stadium Course to the very famous 17th hole, par 3. Charley Hoffman should be first to go. You can see they're using that tee, which is one tee box forward. They do have the chance to move it back tomorrow. They may keep it on this forward tee. We'll just have to see. The plan, Johnson, was to move it forward because the greens were a bit firmer, and it was a case of not quite knowing how the ball was going to react.

[00:19:20] >> Maybe some pace of play issues to getting this field around. If they had been on that back tee, it would have been much slower.

[00:19:25][Applause]

[00:19:30] >> Nicely done.

[00:19:32] >> Adam Hadwin, he's in that 59 club that happened at this event. Over at La Quinta.

[00:19:45] >> Quick this last 5 feet.

[00:19:48] >> And the Canadian curls that one in.

[00:19:54] >> So he's got good and bad memories from here in the desert. We saw his victory, but also traumatized by having to come here in the Q School early days in his career.

[00:20:06] >> Tough place to play that final round of Q School with your card on the line.

[00:20:17] >> Rickie Fowler putting for birdie at the 14th.

[00:20:21] >> To get to 14 under, and he does.

[00:20:27][Applause]

[00:20:35] >> At the 12th, Max Greyserman. Saw him make a deuce at the 10th. Man, Max is rolling along right now. At the 16th, the third for Jason Day. Wonderful touch from the Aussie. Sam Burns, one of the great putting strokes on the PGA Tour.

[00:21:17] >> See just how fast these greens are. Barely look like he even hit that. He tied for six a year ago when Nick Dunlap was the winner.

[00:21:39] >> Well, Patrick Cantlay trusts himself as much as anybody out here on the PGA Tour for good reason. Fabulous player. Nicely done there at the 10th.

[00:21:55] >> Straka for 30 at the 5th.

[00:21:59][Cheering and Applause]

[00:22:12] >> We see Keith Mitchell now. Perfect cashmere weather. Little cool winter day in the California desert. Yeah. Cashmere Keith getting it done.

[00:22:36] >> Sepp Straka looking to extend his lead at the par-5 6th. And he does. He doesn't miss that short one.

[00:22:43] >> He's had a look on every single hole.

[00:22:48] >> Big gallery there to the side and behind that 18 holes green. Nice to see the fans come out on a Saturday afternoon for Jason Day and Justin Thomas and the rest of the guys, Jim.

[00:22:57] >> Yeah. They've been out here the whole back nine. This is the biggest crowd I've seen all week.

[00:23:06][Applause]

[00:23:23] >> Go. Cantlay playing his second shot at the 12. He'll move to 15-under.

[00:23:41] >> Jim Gallagher Jr. is watching Jason Day. See if he can make another birdie.

[00:23:45] >> I bet there haven't been many putts for birdie from this side of the green.

[00:23:49] >> No chance. Oh, there you go. Ring around the rosies for Jason Day.

[00:23:57] >> Pocket full of posies.

[00:23:58] >> Man, that ball was moving.

[00:24:09] >> No lead is safe over here at the Stadium, though.

[00:24:11] >> No.

[00:24:11] >> I mean, they can get evaporated on many different holes quickly.

[00:24:15] >> I think people think of the American Express, you know, 25, 28, 30-under par. That is true, but this golf course is certainly a challenge, and with these firm greens, more of a challenge this year than most of the times it's been played here.

[00:24:33] >> Twelve.

[00:24:35] >> Patrick Cantlay lining up a birdie putt.

[00:24:42] >> Not a whole lot in this one.

[00:24:45] >> What rhythm he has in that stroke.

[00:24:48][Applause]

[00:24:58] >> And over at the 9th, final hole of the day for the man at the top of the leaderboard, Sepp Straka. Trying to get it up and down for a par himself.

[00:25:11] >> Now, Sepp to finish off the round.

[00:25:23] >> Yeah. Great chance tomorrow to add a third PGA Tour victory.

[00:25:28] >> Back to the task at hand with Cantlay.

[00:25:35] >> Yeah, he told me he was -- it was a 4-iron on the layup. He was not going anywhere past the front of this green. Everything just falls off on both sides. But a little bit on the upslope, pretty easy chip shot. Going to land it just over the slope, let it release towards the hole.

[00:25:59] >> Just incredible.

[00:26:01] >> It's not fair, these guys, that have this good a short game.

[00:26:10] >> Yeah. Not an easy putt to read from what we've seen, this green. You got it. Spot on.

[00:26:16] >> Back to 20-under par.

[00:26:31] >> To 17.

[00:26:35] >> This is Patrick Cantlay from long range. Oh, there you go. Didn't look like he was going to make it too, but he walks away with the birdie.

[00:26:53] >> Sepp Straka, 64, catapults him to a four shot lead. Straka, the first Austrian to win on tour, is looking for victory number 3. The final round is next.

[00:27:38] >> When this event began in 1960, no one could have dreamed what it has become today. Then again, the American Express has followed the progress and growth right here in the Coachella Valley. The cut was made after yesterday's third round. The three course rotation has now been trimmed to just one. All 71 players who made it to Sunday are on the Pete Dye Stadium Course at PGA West. And as Billy Ray alluded to earlier, it is a gorgeous day. Low 70s, very little wind. Ideal. The par-3 13th, And Kris Ventura.

[00:28:11] >> Well, with the back left hole location today, you can land it in the middle and work it over there with the slope.

[00:28:18] >> And this is how you do it. Big bounce forward. Looks like a putt. And it goes in for an ace. His second ever on the PGA Tour. Twenty-twenty-one back at bay Hill was the other.

[00:28:30] >> Ace Ventura maybe?

[00:28:34] >> Sure, why not? Now, the leader on the tee at the par-3 4th.

[00:28:40] >> Made a nice putt for birdie on 1. Starting his day. This was absolutely beautiful into the 4th.

[00:28:46][Applause]

[00:28:51] >> Straka just seems like he's in complete control of his game right now. Now, Charley Hoffman, 48 years of age. It's been 18 years since he last won here at the American Express.

[00:29:04] >> He also started with the birdie, and then, right after watching Sepp hit that shot, Charley answered even better.

[00:29:12] >> He would go on to make that birdie as well. We saw Justin Thomas a little bit earlier. How about way earlier? His third at the 5th.

[00:29:21] >> He birdied 1 and 2, had a good look on 4, missed it, and then, had to lay up on the par-5 5th, and answered with this wedge shot.

[00:29:33] >> Boy, when his game is sharp, he is tough to beat. Justin Lower, a birdie putt at the 6th.

[00:29:38] >> This guy is not going to go away today. He's been in the hunt a lot here lately, especially in the fall.

[00:29:43] >> Gets that one to fall. And Lower trying to hang in there, making a run at the title.

[00:29:49] >> Sepp Straka, another birdie at 7 to get to 26-under.

[00:29:53] >> And as you've mentioned, he's bogey-free all week, and keeps hitting great wedge shots.

[00:29:57] >> It's the first event of the season on the continental United States. Let's find out together who's going to win it. At the 9th, Justin Thomas in the fairway. Steve Sands, so pleased to be alongside Johnson Wagner once again.

[00:30:15] >> Well, he told me on the range this morning that he needed to get out to a hot start, 4-under through eight holes. I would say that qualifies.

[00:30:22][Applause]

[00:30:28] >> A year ago, Nick Dunlap was an amateur. No one had really heard of him coming out of the University of Alabama. He went on to win the event, turn professional, and then, won again later in the year. Johnson, what a 2024 campaign it was for this young man.

[00:30:44] >> And to be on a list with only Tiger Woods as players to win both the U.S. Junior and U.S. Amateur. This kid has a ton of talent.

[00:30:50] >> And Straka is in full control right now. Drove it in the bunker, off the tee, laid up to this position. That's his third from 99 yards.

[00:31:03] >> A lot of action on that one.

[00:31:08] >> Haven't seen balls spin back quite that much.

[00:31:11] >> It's a tall task in front of him here on this tough Stadium. Greens are firm. Recently renovated over the summer.

[00:31:21] >> Jason Day from the bunker, hitting his third at the par 5.

[00:31:24] >> You can see just how much speed he had to put on that to get some spin.

[00:31:33] >> Forty-eight years of age, Charley Hoffman.

[00:31:40] >> Really nice chip in action. Not much wrist hinge.

[00:31:53] >> This man is certainly in chase mode.

[00:31:55] >> Got to start cutting into that lead.

[00:31:57] >> And he does right there. So now, Jason Day is within five.

[00:32:06] >> Let's go to the 10th.

[00:32:07] >> Here's where Justin Thomas's drive ended up at 10.

[00:32:10] >> Yeah, 101. It was a perfect angle. Just trying to skip it up.

[00:32:16][Applause]

[00:32:30] >> Not good at all. The ball came to rest in an old divot here in that overseed rye. So he's really going to have a steep approach coming into this ball. It's going to be off this up slope as well.

[00:33:25] >> You know, given the slide, given the hole location on the right-hand side, from 164, he's going to have to be looking left of this flagstick just a bit. Wants to fly at 160, but he's going to have to dig this one out of this old divot here. Watch how he uses this leading edge here. This is going to be really steep. Just pounds right down on it. Sends it straight up here.

[00:34:03] >> Was talking to Nick Dunlap, Johnson, yesterday about what it was like for him on Thursday here for the first time in his career, being announced as defending champion. There he is on 18. He said he was filled with pride. He smiled inside, but not outwardly. He loved it.

[00:34:24] >> Jason Day at the 9th. He chipped in three times on Thursday. Going to try and chip in here on Sunday, Billy Ray.

[00:34:31] >> Yeah, coming out of the heavy rough there. Downhill all the way to the hole.

[00:34:34] >> Oh, this looks very tiny.

[00:34:38] >> Look like three all the way with a two shot.

[00:34:47] >> How about this technique, Johnson?

[00:34:49] >> No wrist hinge. Able to put so much speed on it and control that landing spot.

[00:34:58] >> Sepp Straka now for a birdie. Kind of quiet things down with Jason Day making that three. Steady.

[00:35:10] >> Straka would make par. Now, Nick Taylor for birdie at 16. He moves to 17-under.

[00:35:29] >> Go to the 11th. And Justin Thomas should be back there ready to play next, Jim.

[00:35:48] >> Two-seventy-three for Justin Thomas.

[00:35:50] >> This hole actually, right now, playing as one of the more difficult par 5s on the PGA Tour, believe it or not. Playing a lot more difficult today than it has done the first three days. The little club twirl there, you could see that he liked it.

[00:36:06] >> What an aggressive line. Just hugging it right on that water's edge. Really hitting his spots today. Bit unfortunate landed as soft as it did.

[00:36:15] >> Only three players prior to him have found the green in two. Two of them are three putted. So not guaranteed a birdie yet, but a chance for an eagle, an outside chance for Thomas.

[00:36:29] >> Max Greyserman is the other member of this group.

[00:36:33] >> Oh, yeah. If it stayed down in that oversee, there'd be a much easier shot. It's always hard to predict what it'll do coming out of this dormant, I guess, you'd call it rough. Most likely going to try to bump this. Try to carries it all the way through. Really has to accelerate through, though, if he tries that option.

[00:36:50] >> Is that way above his feet, Jim?

[00:36:52] >> It is.

[00:36:57][Applause]

[00:37:04] >> So this has not been an easy putt today, Jim. Certainly not a guaranteed two putt from the front of this green.

[00:37:12] >> Now, just inside 100 feet, there's so much movement. It really slings hard left to right at the end. But as we mentioned, all the slopes and bumps and humps in there. And this will settle eventually. But there's four or five greens they put a lot more. I guess they're a little bit more severe, especially on the edges. But this has always been a tough green. But this year, it's even tougher.

[00:37:30] >> He gets us within 3 or 4 feet. He's hit a really good putt.

[00:37:44] >> Feel like he needs to two putt this, walk away with a birdie.

[00:37:49] >> If he's going to have a chance here, needs to be within striking distance coming down the last couple of holes. Four shots back is too much.

[00:38:06] >> Looks pretty good there, Jim.

[00:38:09][Applause]

[00:38:16] >> Greyserman now for a birdie.

[00:38:23][Cheering and Applause] Good up and down in the end.

[00:38:33] >> Over on the 11th green. Most wins in the field, Justin Thomas tops that category with 15. Jason Day also in contention with 13 PGA Tour victories. J.T. trying to make it 16. Jim, this would help.

[00:38:49] >> Yeah. And I tell you one thing we talked about. Johnson talked about him keeping his eyes focused and steady. I always like to find a spot, either the front of the ball or in front of the ball. Let the putter go through there. Hold your finish. Kind of keeps your eyes steady, and that will keep your head steady. But on these putts of this length, that's what you really have to focus, the front of that ball and hold your finish.

[00:39:11] >> He missed one on 7 from just over 5 feet. This is a little bit closer. Tends to peek with his eyes a little bit on these short putts.

[00:39:24] >> Okay. Good two putt in the end.

[00:39:35] >> Cantlay playing his four from just off the green at 11.

[00:39:45] >> Oh, yes. We talked about being really good around the greens, Johnson, redeeming himself with that one.

[00:39:55] >> Now, Jason Day.

[00:40:00] >> You know, sits on top of this crest. He also has a good view of the green.

[00:40:04] >> Two-fifty-three with a little helping breeze now here at the second shot of the par-5 11th.

[00:40:11] >> Asking for it to kick towards the green. It's going to go the other way.

[00:40:22] >> Except not taking much time at all over this shot. Well, we've seen two terrific shots. That's running away from the player, just talking about that crown. But that was still two very good shots. And making it look very easy. It's a difficult little pitch around this green.

[00:40:47] >> We go to the tee at the 13th, and Justin Thomas.

[00:40:50] >> Yeah, that was two, eight. That was a 6-iron. Trying to turn it right to left. Trying to get it back there.

[00:40:56] >> Asking for it to be right now.

[00:41:01][Applause]

[00:41:08] >> Now, Jason Day back over on the 11th.

[00:41:13] >> A little different situation. The ball has come to rest on the downslope for Jason here. It's going to be interesting, Johnson, to see if he tries to drive it into that slope just short of the flag and take some of this pace off, and that's what he did.

[00:41:26] >> Able to get that little check right at the end.

[00:41:31] >> Yeah, that was well executed there by Jason.

[00:41:33][Applause]

[00:41:39] >> Straka now for birdie.

[00:41:41] >> A pretty simple look here. Coming up the slope. Can be aggressive with it.

[00:41:50] >> Over at the 13th, this is Justin Thomas for birdie.

[00:41:55] >> You don't get many opportunities on this hole. Might go a little left. He had it out on the right edge. That's where he picked.

[00:42:01] >> It did not go left. Needed to make it.

[00:42:07] >> Trying to cut that lead. Right now, it's three shots, Straka ahead, in the final round here of the American Express. Coachella Valley, beautiful part of the world. Gorgeous day here. See how it unfolds.

[00:42:32] >> I can promise you, Sepp Straka's eye line is well right of the flag.

[00:42:46] >> Drew it in there. This is going to be really good.

[00:42:48] >> That was special.

[00:42:50] >> One shot.

[00:42:52] >> And he started this ball right in the green. Knew he could hit something hard and get it turning. That little release pattern was just a touch higher than his normal fade release. I mean, you can't execute it any better than that. That ball was never in any danger.

[00:43:07] >> Justin Thomas. It's the first green in regulation he has missed today. Only one man is at all of them. It's the leader, Sepp Straka now.

[00:43:16] >> Shocking to see him not pull the wedge out, as confident as he is with his chipping.

[00:43:23] >> Thomas and Day are going to be the closest challengers. Lower is trying to get in there, but Straka fending them off. And this would go a long way if he knocks this in.

[00:43:33] >> Yeah, what an aggressive tee shot he played here. I mean, I think this is all important right here for Sepp to hit a quality putt. We've seen the last couple putts kind of come in kind of weak up to the hole. This one's back down the slope.

[00:43:53] >> It's been tough to read around this hole today. See if he gets it right. Yeah, he does. Good birdie. Very difficult hole. Hardest hole on the golf course. And the leader makes

two, 27-under par. Justin Thomas for the birdie. He's starting to run out of holes, so you got to think he needs to make this one.

[00:44:33] >> It's about as comfortable of a look as you can have on this green, Billy Ray.

[00:44:38] >> No doubt.

[00:44:41] >> Made five straight pars before birdying the 13th. Now, for back to back.

[00:44:51] >> Yeah, a lot more than what he wanted. Left to save his part here, but pretty simple inside right.

[00:45:10] >> Yeah, Justin's had plenty of chances. It hadn't been bad strokes. It's more about the reads. Shouldn't be much in this one. Keep it in the hole.

[00:45:31] >> As we go back over to 50, man at the top of the leaderboard, Sepp Straka for a birdie. Trying to put this one to bed.

[00:45:42] >> You know, it kind of seeps in there. But I think, you know, once he does win again, he's going to continue because he's playing with more confidence than I've seen in the last several months.

[00:45:56] >> This to get within three. Could do with a birdie, birdie finish.

[00:46:08] >> No matter what, it is just a narrow area. Trying to run this ball up on the green. He's got to be looking out to the right and maybe playing for a little bounce.

[00:46:30] >> Begging for it to kick left.

[00:46:33] >> Wow. We've only seen five balls on the green here. This is not now the 6th in 4 days on the Stadium. And ball in the green in two.

[00:46:42] >> This wouldn't surprise me. Gets this really close here. Oh, man.

[00:46:59] >> Jason Day, huge spot here for a three.

[00:47:03] >> A good look too. Going to turn a little bit to his left here.

[00:47:11] >> He's burned some edges on this back nine. Would have been the second eagle of the day at 18. And now, we're at 18 with Justin Thomas putting for birdie.

[00:47:29] >> Yeah. Going back up the hill. Shouldn't be allowed in this one. And he's got the speed. He's been a little bit slow on the speed, a little weak on it.

[00:47:42] >> Now, back at 16, Sepp Straka to remain bogey-free for the week.

[00:47:49] >> Got a really good read from Jason Day. And if this goes in, I think it would be on just the last couple rolls.

[00:47:58] >> All right. So the first hiccup of the week for Sepp Straka with Jason Day making a birdie. That should be a two shot swing at the par-5 16th with a couple of holes to play.

[00:48:14] >> Now, Day on the tee at 17.

[00:48:17] >> All important shot. He's first to play here at 17. He could apply some pressure to Sepp Straka.

[00:48:23] >> How aggressive do you get, Billy Ray?

[00:48:26] >> You got to take it on.

[00:48:29] >> Only one player has knocked it past the flag today. That was Eric Cole, who made a birdie. Very few players have gone all the way to the back of this green. And Jason Day challenging it, giving himself a chance for the birdie to get it to 24-under par. Applying some pressure to the leader, Straka.

[00:48:58] >> Also a 9-iron.

[00:49:10] >> Yeah, that's what he was trying to do. Yeah.

[00:49:19] >> Up to the green with the leader Straka putting for birdie.

[00:49:24] >> Overall, not a lot of break in this putt. Move a little bit to his right. But he is more concerned about the pace.

[00:49:37] >> Oh, yeah. Cozying it up there nicely. So that's going to be a three for Straka. Different story. So this an opportunity for Jason Day. Get it to 24-under par within two. Moved right across the hole. You think about the putts he missed there at 16 and 17. And here for his three and take a three shot lead to the 72nd tee.

[00:50:16] >> Sepp Straka, Billy Ray, has chosen a fairway metal on the tee here at 18. You and I were standing right there on Wednesday talking to Chesson Hadley. If you had a one shot lead, what would you do here? And he said, definitely less than driver.

[00:50:29] >> I love this play. Two-eighty-nine to that second cluster of bunkers up the right. That's your aiming point.

[00:50:41] >> Absolutely fine.

[00:50:43] >> OK. Takes a hop to the right, but that's OK.

[00:50:46] >> He can afford to make a bogey on the 18th right now.

[00:50:52] >> He's going to take a line at the flag. One-seventy-two to the front. You know, the lie's not that bad. It's going to be slightly above his feet, but not too bad from this position here.

[00:51:03] >> Front part of this green kicks hard right to left.

[00:51:07] >> Just came out kind of spinny.

[00:51:11] >> And that catches that greenside bunker.

[00:51:15] >> That's absolutely fine right there, Billy Ray.

[00:51:17] >> Day needs to chip in for birdie, for even a sliver of hope.

[00:51:23] >> That was so nice, the technique and everything. It just had just a hair too much check on it, Billy Ray.

[00:51:34] >> It's downhill all the way toward the flag. So he doesn't have to land this ball very far on the putting surface. And just like that.

[00:51:46] >> The luxury of coming into the last few holes with a four shot lead.

[00:51:56] >> And that means Justin Thomas will finish alone in second.

[00:52:11] >> Trying to close it out in style.

[00:52:20] >> I like that he went for it, though.

[00:52:21] >> Yeah.

[00:52:21] >> He's still got a little work coming back, but has the luxury of a lot of putts.

[00:52:24] >> That was a par save.

[00:52:26] >> Sepp Straka is back in the winner's circle on the PGA Tour for the third time.

[00:52:36] >> This concludes the PGA Tour's coverage of the American Express from La Quinta, California.