

Production Transcript for **26INTCUTCH - KAULIG CC – MASTER**

[00:00:43.490]>>PGA TOUR Champions, 4th major of the year. Kaulig Companies Championship. The senior players fame Firestone, 16 holes east and west, 2 north and south, par 70 playing just around 7300 yards.

[00:01:01.080]>>In pristine condition. Jerry Kelly has won here twice. He's at 4-under through his opening 11, so is Darren Clarke. Mike Weir, whose best finish this year was a tie for 14th.

[00:01:13.199]>>is at 4 under par. Stephen Ames, who's having a down year in that group at 3-under. Stewart Cink, who won the first two majors of the year, has yet to win this Kaulig Companies Championship. He's at 2-under. Retief Goosen a past champion right in the mix. The defending champ Miguel Angel Jiménez, he's at 1-under. Zach Johnson playing for the first time here at the Senior PLAYERS is also at 1 under par.

[00:01:41.699]>>Bob Papa, Paul Azinger, so glad you can join us. John Cook, John Maginnes out on the golf course.

[00:01:50.870]>>Warm conditions in Akron.

[00:01:54.360]>>On this 1st round Thursday over at the 8th, Zach Johnson has this putt for birdie.

[00:02:01.980]>>Zach Johnson has played here at Firestone.

[00:02:06.309]>>Uh, 15 times on the regular tour.

[00:02:11.330]>>Let's go over to the 3rd. This is the 2nd 9 for this group. Jerry Kelly.

[00:02:17.990]>>As a share of the lead, John Maginnes is with this group. They had a wedge in here from 120, now putting right back up the hill.

[00:02:27.250]>>Go ahead and give this one a wrap.

[00:02:32.130]>>So Jerry Kelly buries another one. Jerry.

[00:02:37.190]>>Has really played well here at Firestone since the Kaulig Companies Championship moved here.

[00:02:44.580]>>Over at the 9th.

[00:02:46.740]>>Zach Johnson.

[00:02:48.740]>>Playing his 2nd, he finished.

[00:02:51.279]>>Back in 2017.

[00:02:54.470]>>He finished 2nd

[00:02:57.369]>>To Hideki Matsuyama. Matsuyama shot 61 here at Firestorm. Well, it takes a lot of confidence to hit that ball online there at 9.

[00:03:12.529]>>Zach Johnson.

[00:03:14.720]>>For his birdie at the 9th.

[00:03:18.679]>>That's the way to finish it off, a no doubter.

[00:03:23.490]>>Ryan Armor has a putt for birdie.

[00:03:27.039]>>Armor currently even.

[00:03:39.699]>>Everybody's excited about Ryan Armour being in the tournament. He's got some local roots here. That's for sure. Yeah, he grew up here. He sure did.

[00:03:51.979]>>Oh hello.

[00:04:03.839]>>Cabrera trying to.

[00:04:06.580]>>Make a birdie here at 18.

[00:04:10.740]>>So, Cabrera shoots one under.

[00:04:19.309]>>Darren Clarke playing out of the rough. Cookie. You gotta watch for flyers right here. It cannot go directly at the flag stick. 164, but gives a 148 to the front, but still gotta get it about 155 to get it up.

[00:04:33.420]>>Well, he did take on the flag. Oh, that was a pretty bold play going out of that rough. And you know, he's left himself, uh, probably the straightest putt on the green. Might go a little right, but what a good leave. What a shot, John Cook. We hit a lot of putts on this green this morning. None of us hit it from here because no one thought someone would put a shot here. You're right. About as easy a putt as you can have go slightly from left to right and uphill and.

[00:05:01.209]>>Well, we just previewed it. It's about as easy a putt as you can have.

[00:05:06.190]>>So, Darren Clarke shoots a 4 under 66.

[00:05:11.869]>>Laurie Sabbatini

[00:05:13.809]>>His 3rd at 14.

[00:05:17.489]>>Oh.

[00:05:19.549]>>How'd you like that? Want it to go right, it listened, it listened.

[00:05:26.809]>>Zach Johnson lives in a great big house because of wedge shots. He has been fabulous inside 100 yards for.

[00:05:33.390]>>More than 2.5 decades now.

[00:05:36.029]>>He does it a little differently than most. He's got a, a real angle, the shaft in his arms, the way they hang.

[00:05:46.420]>>Now, that was smart and safe and well executed.

[00:05:52.049]>>Final hole of the day for George McNeill.

[00:05:55.799]>>At the 9th as this for birdie.

[00:05:58.529]>>So a good battle back for George. You see that he was 2 over through his 1st 8, but ripped off 3 in a row and then finishes with 2 in a row.

[00:06:14.339]>>Zach Johnson for birdie at 16.

[00:06:17.989]>>There may be just a little right to left in this.

[00:06:25.049]>>Certainly feels that way with the ball slightly above your feet.

[00:06:36.420]>>Like

[00:06:38.750]>>We couldn't see it go in. The player stepped in the way. I was waiting to see Zach give it the early walk, but he didn't at all. He waited to hear it drop before he moved.

[00:06:49.690]>> Boo Weekley, who won the Insperity earlier this year, his 3rd at 16, hard fought win for Boo, that's a true grind, terrific shot. He ought to be sky high with confidence, you know, especially a course like this.

[00:07:07.119]>>Let's go over to 18. Ryan armor for par.

[00:07:11.260]>>Solid round of golf for the local. He had to be feeling it this morning. Expectations.

[00:07:17.519]>>Pretty high.

[00:07:21.170]>>What's Justin Leonard have in here?

[00:07:24.010]>>He has

[00:07:25.660]>>156 end.

[00:07:28.510]>>Wind down to the left.

[00:07:30.649]>>Oh, he pulled that and he's lucky it didn't get tangled up in that tree that stands sentinel over there on the left-hand side.

[00:07:38.440]>>This is inside 130, 128.

[00:07:43.209]>>Well, if Alker could get out of here with a birdie, he'd feel like he stole something.

[00:07:50.320]>>He's gonna give himself a chance. He sure is. This is just, oh, that's a perfect lead. Even par is a really good solid round on this course.

[00:08:00.660]>>All right, John, uh, Justin Leonard for his birdie.

[00:08:05.809]>>Well, this putt gets fast at the hole. He's coming down a ridge and it'll move from left to right, but.

[00:08:12.660]>>At the hole, it starts to really go away.

[00:08:17.260]>>Oh.

[00:08:21.540]>>How about that? Justin Leonard. What a finish for Justin Leonard after the bogey at 16. Emotional finish.

[00:08:31.540]>>Quick putt for Els here at 18 that it is Bob and breaks a little bit to the left, starts picking up speed right there. How about one?

[00:08:40.109]>>OK.

[00:08:45.340]>>Looked like Birdie the whole way.

[00:08:53.119]>>He could be a real bully. Ernie plays great golf on these big, challenging golf courses. Got away with a tee shot on the, on the left side. Well, that's not scary anymore here at 18, not like it once was.

[00:09:06.940]>>Tremendous start.

[00:09:26.049]>>Good shot.

[00:09:27.510]>>That should be a gimme birdie. I might have a little break left, but he putts well.

[00:09:34.330]>>Y.E. Yang

[00:09:36.530]>>For birdie at the 9th, watch this thing Barty at 4 under. It's all right, watch this thing break.

[00:09:42.440]>>Yeah, that is not the first guy to do it.

[00:09:48.599]>>So Y.E. Yang is.

[00:09:51.549]>>Gonna finish in that group at 30 and.

[00:09:56.869]>>Why he has played well here at Firestone at the Kaulig Companies Championship. He's under par in his previous 4 starts. Zach Johnson signing some autographs here in Akron, Ohio. 73 straight years of professional golf being played here at Firestone. Two-time champion Jerry Kelly shoots a 65. He's got a one-shot lead over Mike Weir and Darren Clarke. Ernie Els is a past champion.

[00:10:26.940]>>In that group at 3 under.

[00:10:54.700]>>Round 2 in Full Swing in Akron, Ohio. 44th playing of the Kaulig Companies Championship from famed Firestone, 73 consecutive years of professional golf being played on the property.

[00:11:11.469]>>Zach Johnson, 2-under on his round today, playing here for the first time in the PGA TOUR Champions, did play 15 times here on the regular tour. Retief Goosen, the 2019 winner here at Firestone, the first year of the tournament moved here. He's 4-under today. Jerry Kelly, a two-time winner, even today, he's at 5-under. Bob Papa, Paul Azinger, so glad you can join us. Proud Ohio native John Cook out on the golf course along with John Maginnes.

[00:11:41.760]>>Let's go over to the 3rd. Stephen Ames, who's had a very quiet year, has this putt for birdie to get to 2 under.

[00:11:51.539]>>And Steven pours that in. Ames, 22nd in the Schwab Cup standings, only two top 10 finishes in 13 starts this year for Ames. Let's go over to the 10th, and Jerry Kelly, his tee shot wound up in the right fairway bunker. John Maginnes with this group. It was not a good li, Bob, and he just laid it up. I was sitting down very close to the lip, 154 yards.

[00:12:18.809]>>He just pushed it forward about halfway.

[00:12:25.219]>>Let's go over to the 5th. Zach Johnson for birdie to get to 6 under.

[00:12:32.299]>>Zach started his day on the 10th.

[00:12:36.469]>>2 under on his round today playing with Steven Alker and Justin Leonard. He's made some nice putts and.

[00:12:54.950]>>Langer's a month shy of his sixty-ninth birthday.

[00:13:00.000]>>He still prepares like he did when he was in his 30s or 40s, from our perspective.

[00:13:07.880]>>And agonizes, as we all do.

[00:13:16.109]>>So a missed chance there for Langer.

[00:13:22.280]>>All right, John, nice, uh, big part putt here for Jerry Kelly to stay at 5, yeah, and I think that.

[00:13:28.840]>>Langer's putt would have confused him. His putt broke a lot more than it looked like it should have.

[00:13:35.159]>>Jerry has this set up outside the hole.

[00:13:37.890]>>And that's gonna go right in the center.

[00:13:44.820]>>Over at 5, this is the 2nd for Boo Weekley.

[00:13:51.599]>>He loved his lie, or he wouldn't have chipped it. He would have tried to sweep under it. Go on in there, but I had a way to play it. Yeah.

[00:14:02.450]>>Go over to the par 3 7th, Zach Johnson's tee shot.

[00:14:12.950]>>Ooh.

[00:14:15.119]>>Jerry's right on a little ridge.

[00:14:18.479]>>At the end it's gonna want to go to the right.

[00:14:21.809]>>But as he stands over it, the ball's gonna feel like it's above his feet.

[00:14:26.570]>>That would make it feel like it wants to go to the left.

[00:14:33.710]>>He put it amazingly well yesterday to Jerry Kelly, his fondness for the golf course.

[00:14:41.400]>>It's off the chart like everybody else.

[00:14:46.500]>>And, uh, we just wondered, you know, after the lead yesterday, could he extend his advantage today?

[00:14:52.969]>>It's got some.

[00:14:55.640]>>Good players at the top of this board.

[00:15:00.859]>>Looked like he had to set up on the left lip and just poured it right in.

[00:15:05.460]>>That looked just like yesterday. So now 1 under on is around and back to being solo leader. Well, Zach Johnson, after making a bogey at the 6th, has a good look for birdie here at 7th.

[00:15:25.659]>>So he gets back to 6-under.

[00:15:29.020]>>And to share the lead with Jerry Kelly.

[00:15:34.630]>>True. Boo Weekley for birdie.

[00:15:45.940]>>That's a confident player.

[00:15:52.549]>>Let's go over to the 8th, 2nd for Zach Johnson, Zach.

[00:15:57.710]>>Playing the hardest hole in the golf course, only 4 birdies.

[00:16:02.229]>>At 8 today and he's gonna have a chance there.

[00:16:07.729]>>Well, Jared Kelly's got a lengthy par putt here, John.

[00:16:11.330]>>Yeah, he certainly does.

[00:16:13.679]>>But

[00:16:15.239]>>Where the tee shot ended up in that bunker.

[00:16:18.599]>>You did a pretty good shot to here.

[00:16:21.820]>>Been hitting these putts with a lot of pace.

[00:16:27.450]>>Speaking of confident player.

[00:16:34.549]>>Now Cink for birdie at 12, Cookie. Good look here for Stewart Cink, about 15 ft and moves slightly to his left.

[00:16:46.609]>>Go over to the 9th and Zach Johnson with.

[00:16:51.229]>>Well, let's just say Birdie Putt in name only.

[00:16:56.880]>>This is one you definitely want to leave the flag stick in on. The grass is shiny.

[00:17:02.859]>>It can get away, but that, that's not getting away.

[00:17:09.828]>>Very nice

[00:17:12.880]>>Let's go over to the 8th, 17th hole of the day for Boo Weekley.

[00:17:20.828]>>Function you have to

[00:17:31.189]>>I wonder how old those trees are back there behind Boo.

[00:17:35.619]>>That a 100 year old tree or is that more than that?

[00:17:39.160]>>Couple 100 years.

[00:17:41.359]>>I would have no idea. That's a big old tree though. Yeah, it is.

[00:17:45.920]>>So I'm going at least 100.

[00:17:48.569]>>Oh God, no, it went past this one. Put that get past it. It started up there riding that beautiful shot, boo.

[00:17:56.199]>>PGA TOUR Champions rookie Zach Johnson.

[00:18:03.219]>>Nice 2 putt par and Zach.

[00:18:06.050]>>Shoots a 3 under 67 for the second consecutive day and he's in at 6-under.

[00:18:15.359]>>Jerry Kelly fighting as well.

[00:18:19.589]>>Group has been in.

[00:18:21.729]>>Defensive battle mode this entire 9.

[00:18:26.189]>>I was I was gonna ask you, John, when was the last time Goosen hit a fairway? I mean, or.

[00:18:31.800]>>Anybody had a really decent look at Birdie.

[00:18:39.930]>>Ernie Els, who won here in 2024 for birdie.

[00:18:47.369]>>To end things, a rough day for the Hall of Famer.

[00:18:51.839]>>Who shoots a 4 over par 74.

[00:18:57.790]>>Now Goosen.

[00:19:02.209]>>Well, every bit of 60 ft and.

[00:19:04.780]>>It's gotten a little dark out here, and the wind's picking up and the temperature's dropping.

[00:19:09.770]>>The radar says that we're OK.

[00:19:14.430]>>How are you liking that temperature drop? The temperature drop I'm digging, a little concerned about the darkening skies.

[00:19:22.349]>>I'll go to my handy dandy radar for you here, John, and see what we got coming our way. There definitely could get some rain today.

[00:19:32.800]>>Boo Weekley for his birdie to get to 6 under.

[00:19:45.010]>>The

[00:19:48.849]>>It was a good putt and it's a good round.

[00:19:52.609]>>Beautiful thought before I heard in here.

[00:19:57.810]>>Really not much in this pot at all.

[00:20:13.020]>>Didn't see that coming. Grimacing, cringing, you know, really the majority of the back nine, still cringing a little bit.

[00:20:20.849]>>So Kelly gets to seven-under, Percy's at seven-under, still on the golf course.

[00:20:27.569]>>And now goosing with another putt to try to grind out another par.

[00:20:39.560]>>You wanna go ahead, John.

[00:20:43.420]>>You know, you, you don't get to the Hall of Fame without being gritty, but you don't think of Retief as gritty. It's game is so elegant.

[00:20:50.979]>>He's shown some grit this night, Paul.

[00:20:54.319]>>This is hanging on to survive. What a tremendous start.

[00:20:58.500]>>He had the day and now he's in grind mode. And that's how this golf course will do you. Couple of mishits, and you're grinding for par.

[00:21:10.250]>>It's the 4th major of the year for the PGA TOUR Champions in Akron, Ohio, famed Firestone Country Club, the Kaulig Companies Championship. Take a look at some highlights and Boo Weekley, who won for the first time earlier this year, playing his 3rd shot at the par 5 16th.

[00:21:31.219]>>And Boo dialed in.

[00:21:33.900]>>He would knock this tight and go on to make birdie, and that would get him to 4-under. He would shoot a bogey-free 3 under par, 67. Retief Goosen won here the first time it was played at Firestone back in 2019. Retief would birdie 5 of the 1st 6, but the trail has gone a little dry for the Hall of Famers. Zach Johnson playing in the Kaulig Companies Championship for the very first time. His birdie at the fifth, and that would get him to 6 under par.

[00:22:03.729]>>Jerry Kelly is a two-time champion here. This was his birdie putt at the 11th, and this would get Jerry to 6 under. Jerry, the oldest player to make the cut at the players. You win this week, you're in a spot in next year's players. Then he rolls in a birdie putt at the par 3, 15th to get to 7 under par.

[00:22:41.229]>>It's the 44th play of the Kaulig Companies Championship from famed Firestone Country Club, the South Course here in Akron, Ohio. Cameron Percy started round 3 with a one-shot lead over Zach Johnson. Zach Johnson, a rookie on the PGA TOUR Champions, a 2-time winner already this year.

[00:23:04.119]>>This was his 2nd into the par 4 1st.

[00:23:07.630]>>Zach Johnson would make birdie there, that would get him to 7 under par.

[00:23:13.579]>>Over at the par 5 2nd, this was his 3rd shot, spins it in there nice and tight. Birdie birdie start for Zach Johnson has him at 8 under par and in a share of the lead. Two-time champion Jerry Kelly just a shot back. Stewart Cink, who won the 1st 2 majors of the year, he's 3 back.

[00:23:35.760]>>Defending champ Miguel Angel Jiménez and past champion Retief Goosen, fullback. Bob Papa, Paul Azinger, so glad you can join us. John Cook and John Maginnes out on the golf course.

[00:23:52.469]>>Clark for his birdie.

[00:23:57.380]>>Darren drips it in.

[00:24:00.630]>>He shot 70 yesterday.

[00:24:08.520]>>And Weekley taps in for his birdie at the 4th, so.

[00:24:13.060]>>But Weekley

[00:24:15.689]>>Gets it back to 5 under after that double at the first.

[00:24:20.689]>>Major Championship for the PGA TOUR Champions. The winner earns a spot in next year's players from famed Firestone Country Club.

[00:24:32.699]>>All right, over at the 7th.

[00:24:35.140]>>Miguel Angel Jiménez for his birdie. Pretty nice defense. He hasn't played well coming into this event. Loves the course, obviously, and.

[00:24:45.630]>>Well, sometimes you get on a set of greens you're comfortable on and the line comes back. What a scorecard today.

[00:24:55.729]>>Jerry Kelly drilled these putts right in the back of the hole yesterday and the day before. John, yeah, there's not much break around these cups.

[00:25:15.540]>>So if you keep pace up, you can make a lot of putts. They're so nice and they roll so well. Oh, perfect speed.

[00:25:25.900]>>Direction

[00:25:29.290]>>Zach Johnson for birdie right at hole high, so this should move slightly to his right.

[00:25:44.869]>>That's 3 in his 1st 4 holes in Zach Johnson.

[00:25:50.869]>>Gets it to 9 under.

[00:25:55.579]>>Now Percy for a par.

[00:26:10.030]>>After rattling it off the flagstick, not a great break for Stewart Cink.

[00:26:15.650]>>But he comes through, big putt there and a nice wry smile.

[00:26:22.439]>>Another one of those is right at hole high, so this definitely moves from right to left pretty significantly.

[00:26:29.160]>>It's got to get it well outside the hole, kind of let it try to catch that right edge.

[00:26:38.609]>>Takes a lot of determination to want to hole a putt like this, you know, it's, uh, he's on a hot run, last group on a Saturday.

[00:26:48.130]>>And, right where you stand, can you make another one? It definitely breaks left. Just walking it in. That's so good. That is just impressive. Look at that start. You don't see a lot of guys start like that in a final group of a major championship.

[00:27:06.520]>>I don't know if he's gonna try to flop it a little bit, bounce it on there. It looks like that's what he's going for.

[00:27:12.770]>>Or maybe let's see what that practice swing is. He's gonna put it up in the air just a little bit this is.

[00:27:19.859]>>All about pace now. It's definitely runs straight away from him.

[00:27:26.050]>>You putted this one from the collar. Cook did. Maybe, yeah, John did. John, John putted a few of these.

[00:27:40.739]>>Look at that. How do you like that? That is beautiful. Well, he sized it up. He read it like a putt on a wee tip of the hat there.

[00:27:51.089]>>Yeah.

[00:27:54.640]>>Darren Clarke playing with Tag Ridings, this for his birdie at the 8th.

[00:28:01.069]>>Nicely done. 2nd hardest hole on the golf course this week.

[00:28:10.150]>>Well, Zach Johnson, another good look for Zach, huh?

[00:28:14.030]>>Certainly is right at that same, same distance between, you know, 12 and 15 ft, just short of hole high, but this one will go to his, should work to his left.

[00:28:25.390]>>With some speed

[00:28:31.089]>>You know, Zach Johnson on the regular tour in his 15 events here at Firestone played the golf course.

[00:28:38.859]>>29 under and he's gotten to 11 under here this week.

[00:28:45.020]>>This is just really impressive.

[00:28:51.069]>>Let's see if Miguel Angel Jiménez can add another one. He just missed.

[00:28:57.030]>>At 9

[00:28:59.550]>>And just missed at 10.

[00:29:05.930]>>Get in there.

[00:29:09.469]>>Makes it at 11.

[00:29:11.569]>>So he gets to 6-under, 5-under through his 1st 11. I saw Darren Clarke hit a really nice shot.

[00:29:19.640]>>Into 10 now to pay off the birdie.

[00:29:25.449]>>Darren Clarke gets to 6 under.

[00:29:29.849]>>Goosen

[00:29:32.319]>>His 2nd and 11th.

[00:29:38.219]>>Beautiful tee shot way down here.

[00:29:42.650]>>Oh hello.

[00:29:48.839]>>Yeah, well, after 3 bogeys.

[00:29:54.119]>>Vijay Singh wrapping up his day at 18.

[00:29:58.209]>>And knocks the birdie down. What a player. He just keeps going and going and going.

[00:30:06.209]>> Y.E. Yang for birdie.

[00:30:14.479]>> Y.E. plays well here at Firestone. Wow, what a round after the double at 3. Holy mackerel.

[00:30:24.540]>>Well, it's been an up-and-down day for Boo Weekley. It sure has. Doubled the first hole, Bob, but great bounce backs to get back to even for the day. And, oh, and there's another birdie.

[00:30:40.819]>>Ben Crane

[00:30:43.260]>>35 straight holes without a bogey in a.

[00:30:47.140]>>Difficult spot here at 15, just flips it up onto the green and.

[00:30:52.390]>>Oh, he made birdie.

[00:31:02.959]>>Rory Sabbatini.

[00:31:05.520]>>Rookie on the PGA TOUR Champions makes his birdie.

[00:31:09.239]>>He gets to 4 under and shoots 66.

[00:31:17.469]>>Over at 14, Darren Clarke for birdie.

[00:31:23.689]>>Isn't that something?

[00:31:30.219]>>Well, Miguel

[00:31:32.579]>>Great up-and-down and make birdie.

[00:31:35.410]>>At 16, you remember last year he had a birdie, 17 and 18 on Sunday in order to force a playoff with Steven Alker.

[00:31:44.520]>>Much in this, John?

[00:31:46.680]>>Left center, maybe just just left of center.

[00:31:51.130]>>That's a

[00:31:52.739]>>Fabulous leave and

[00:31:54.969]>>This goes in. He's got a chance to get his name on the board in the locker room with a birdie at 18.

[00:32:03.859]>>Well, that's on pace for 61.

[00:32:09.439]>>Back over at 14, Zach Johnson for his birdie, and what a great look. Wonderful iron shot about 8 ft right at hole high again.

[00:32:20.579]>>Taking that right bunker out of play, playing it proper golf.

[00:32:26.420]>>Kind of survived 1011, 1213.

[00:32:42.579]>>Bury's another one, Zach Johnson.

[00:32:45.949]>>Gets to 12 under.

[00:32:50.310]>>I think under today. Yeah, what a round.

[00:32:54.839]>>Stewart Cink

[00:32:58.150]>>1 under today has this for birdie at 17 and sees 1 in.

[00:33:09.910]>>Tag Ridings, who won twice on the Korn Ferry Tour, makes birdie at 17.

[00:33:22.380]>>Zach Johnson now the short one for birdie. By the way, since.

[00:33:26.780]>>Moving to Firestone.

[00:33:29.510]>>This is the 8th year here. The 54 hole scoring record is 11 under. Steve Stricker in 23.

[00:33:37.329]>>Uh, in 24, excuse me.

[00:33:40.900]>>9 under is the 54 hole record set by Stricker in 24.

[00:33:46.660]>>And Kelly and Stricker in 22 and Zach Johnson with 2 holes to play, has now gotten it to 13 under. I mean, the best winning score we've had since we've been here is 11 under.

[00:33:59.420]>>Well, Zach Johnson, Zinger really made a statement early, right? Playing.

[00:34:05.859]>>Uh, in the last group shot off the lead and at the first.

[00:34:11.138]>>Just says, hey, uh, I'm ready to roll today. Yeah, no doubt. This is one of the hardest golf courses in the world, day in and day out, but you do get a chance early in the round to score a good wedge on one, then this shot here was something else. I don't know. We'll have to find out how he did that. That had all kinds of spin on it.

[00:34:30.628]>>And when you're making mid-range, you know, this is final group pressure on a Saturday in a major, and Zach's touch was perfect. His field was perfect, Bob. Yeah, so that's 3 in his 1st 4 holes.

[00:34:44.000]>>And then backs it up at the par 3, 5th again, hole high as you talked about.

[00:34:51.340]>>And, uh, you guys were hitting that putt this morning. I was out there watching you and it was easy to miss that low and another really good putt. This one, I wasn't sure if it was going in and then, oh, in it goes.

[00:35:04.159]>>And that 8th is so deceptive because it runs from front to back, even though it looks like it's uphill, and then a bunch of par saves at 10 and 11, and then he gets back on the beam at 14. Yeah, another hole high, this guy was just on point all day long.

[00:35:19.669]>>And this was crazy good. I made the statement, this is probably his favorite, uh, yardage ever, 89 yards.

[00:35:28.750]>>There it is.

[00:35:32.919]>>It's just one of those days, you know, you have him. Zach's the, he was 3rd in wedge control last year on, on, uh, the PGA TOUR, 125 and in, he was ranked third.

[00:35:44.679]>>And he's the best there is out here. Dan, I mean, he had a good look at birdie at 17 that he didn't make, uh, or else he would have tied Jiménez with a 62 today, but he's gonna carry a 4-shot lead into the final round against the defending champion, Miguel

Angel Jiménez. A lot on the line. It's PGA TOUR Champions major. It's a spot in the players next year. And, uh, Zach Johnson is gonna have a 4-shot lead and,

[00:36:12.969]>>He's gonna be tough to beat.

[00:36:15.229]>>Oh, there's not a lot of guys with a chance, really. It's a 2 or 3-horse race, you know, maybe some miracle happened, but it's going to take a train wreck, and I don't see Zach having that.

[00:36:25.610]>>Uh, but it's a kind of a who's who every week up here. We know all these players.

[00:36:32.209]>>Pretty darn well, and it's fun to watch them do battle.

[00:36:35.729]>>Zach Johnson shoots a bogey-free 63, has a 4-shot lead through 54 holes of the Kaulig Companies Championship.

[00:36:57.060]>>The 4th major of the year for the PGA TOUR Champions, the famed water tower Firestone Country Club.

[00:37:06.340]>>You've got 16 holes north and south, 2 east and west, as the great Ken Venturi would say. Ideal conditions as golf course playing long this week with some of the rain we had earlier this week, par 70, just under 7100 yards. Zach Johnson enters this final round trying to win his first senior major. Zach Johnson was perfect yesterday, bogey free, bogey the first hole today, birdie the 2nd.

[00:37:33.419]>>Miguel Angel Jiménez on the strength of that 62 yesterday is in a share, uh, 3 shots off the lead.

[00:37:44.179]>>All right, let's go over to the 3rd and Zach Johnson getting ready to play his 3rd shot at the par 4.

[00:37:53.979]>>Like

[00:37:55.389]>>Zack got off to a rough start today, hooked his opening tee shot into the penalty area, made a really good bogey.

[00:38:03.969]>>Let's go over to 5. John Maginnes is with this group with Jerry Kelly, Stewart Cink. Should be a fun day. John Maginnes, and, and Boo Weekley rounding out the group. No pun intended, boo.

[00:38:20.449]>>Birdie putt up the hill for Kelly after a nice tee shot in here. There we go.

[00:38:34.439]>>Zach with 183 and not a great, not a great lie, has to fly it at least 170 to get it on top. This is a 6 iron.

[00:38:45.939]>>Part of what makes this tricky too is you wanna get it on the ground, you know, down there in the front of the green somewhere, but if it doesn't go far enough, it's gonna trickle back off. Uh, starts up the right, not coming back. That's, you'll have some room from over there, but.

[00:39:02.139]>>Yeah, I think, I think the lie dictated that that wasn't a very good lie.

[00:39:09.479]>>This is one time tested individual.

[00:39:13.159]>>Enduring

[00:39:15.219]>>Being a professional, probably since he was 16.

[00:39:20.209]>>Two-time Masters champion. He's got 12 majors on the PGA TOUR Champions, 47 wins.

[00:39:30.090]>>And he turns 69 next month.

[00:39:33.879]>>It's just, yeah.

[00:39:36.689]>>Made sense to me. Hit a good drive, I got a good chance to make a par.

[00:39:41.929]>>Ben Crane all covered up.

[00:39:44.169]>>He's been bundled up for years and years, and ain't gonna let that sun touch his skin. No way.

[00:39:52.189]>>OK, you get a look at the lie here for Zach. Yeah, it's OK. It's not a bad lie.

[00:39:57.889]>>It does have a little bit of room to play with, but it's going to be pitching on a downslope.

[00:40:03.580]>>You know, he's gonna create a feeling here. I caught too much ball. Yep, he's gonna create a feeling. It's gonna be a good feeling or a bad feeling, and now it's gonna be a bad feeling walking up to that.

[00:40:16.760]>>Off the edge of the green here for par.

[00:40:20.139]>>When we talk about, you know, winning golf tournaments with big leads. Well, one thing, the only way to lose a big lead is to start hitting it out of play, hitting it out of position, and Zach has done that now a couple of times.

[00:40:36.479]>>He'll figure it out though, no doubt in my mind.

[00:40:41.020]>>The problem for the chasers is.

[00:40:44.550]>>The course is just hard. It, it just is.

[00:40:48.080]>>It's gonna require a little bit of both. Zach backing up. He was outstanding yesterday, just mediocre to start, maybe a little worse than mediocre, and this is.

[00:41:00.479]>>Whoa.

[00:41:03.570]>>Well, this is a big, this is a big putt here for Miguel Angel Jiménez because it's for par cooking, and par means he's picking up a shot on Zach Johnson.

[00:41:15.310]>>At the least, yeah, that's exactly right, Bob, and

[00:41:18.600]>>You know, laying the sod over that 2nd shot and actually still might pick up a shot.

[00:41:23.620]>>I mean, absolutely settle for that. Not much to this.

[00:41:30.489]>>Yeah, opportunity missed.

[00:41:34.979]>>But this group, they can't, they, they, they can't get complacent with what's, who's in this group. They gotta kind of pay attention to what the golf course is going to offer them.

[00:41:47.739]>>I got to spend a little time with Darren Clarke this morning.

[00:41:52.100]>>Pretty cheerful.

[00:41:59.340]>>Suddenly the Cinks of the world at 7.

[00:42:02.500]>>That whole group

[00:42:04.379]>>Now suddenly

[00:42:06.340]>>It gives them at least a little energy, a little light, like, hey, this is doable. Everybody out here knows what a tough test this golf course is. Anybody can succumb to Firestone, a couple bad drives, and you're making bogeys this.

[00:42:21.419]>>This to make bogey John Cook and get out of here with no blood against his opponents, at least that's true.

[00:42:33.510]>>He made some great parsleys at 10 and 11 yesterday.

[00:42:42.250]>>Well, he'll have a good talking to himself on the way to the 5th tee.

[00:42:48.360]>>Miguel Angel Jiménez getting ready to hit his tee shot at the 5th. 180 yards today, 174 to the front. Pintee on that lower left deck, and this is right.

[00:43:01.600]>>Doing the right, yeah, I did.

[00:43:08.600]>>Now Zach Johnson.

[00:43:10.540]>>180 yards went slightly in out of the left.

[00:43:14.909]>>I think this is a big important shot right here for Zach Johnson to get some confidence, and that was a good strike going right at it. Oh yeah, that's like yesterday.

[00:43:26.870]>>Everything was right around the hole. It didn't matter the distance.

[00:43:34.709]>>All right, Stewart Cink, got a look at birdie jump, a little hooking pott down the hill.

[00:43:45.669]>>Zach Johnson for birdie at the 5th. Yeah, beautiful iron shot in there.

[00:43:51.010]>>Right underneath the hole, right, just on the front part of the green, a good breaker from right to left. He made a few of these yesterday.

[00:43:59.580]>>Oh.

[00:44:03.979]>>Yeah. Yeah, good putt, good touch, nice.

[00:44:07.429]>>Nice pace on that.

[00:44:10.500]>>You know, and I think a good message too from his caddie Brian Smith, good player himself and a crafty veteran, but.

[00:44:17.370]>>You know, a lot can, there's a lot of things that caddie can say or cannot say. He knows exactly the right things to say. They're a good team, yeah, they're a good team, and things aren't going.

[00:44:30.090]>>So

[00:44:31.719]>>As planned.

[00:44:33.409]>>The caddie can play a big part.

[00:44:38.969]>>Yeah, that was a good putt. It was a high line. It missed on the high side, so it wasn't like low and left and wrong speed.

[00:44:51.639]>>Now can Sabbatini.

[00:44:53.679]>>Make a birdie here at the 8.

[00:44:57.899]>>So finally somebody gets to 8. Well, it's the hardest hole on the course too. 477 today.

[00:45:06.229]>>Uh, Zach Johnson for his birdie. Yeah, I think you got a pretty good read off of Cameron Percy's Putt.

[00:45:13.219]>>Speed wise and.

[00:45:15.540]>>He, he knows it's gonna move slightly to the right.

[00:45:31.620]>>I always like to bring up the importance of lag putting on a Sunday. There's so much value in in being able to roll it up to the, I'll finish.

[00:45:42.590]>>And not have to leave yourself any work.

[00:45:45.389]>>Today's stressful enough as it is.

[00:45:50.889]>>There you have it. Perfect speed, perfect line. That was no doubt and really.

[00:45:59.100]>>That is a huge little message to Miguel as well. Well, Miguel sent the first message and Zach sends the 2nd.

[00:46:13.110]>>Back at the Kaulig Companies Championship, Rory Sabbatini for birdie at 13. This would get him into a share of 2nd at 9 under.

[00:46:27.939]>>I

[00:46:33.750]>>He's played some pretty terrific shots from the rough starting on the back nine yesterday that he has.

[00:46:48.459]>>Takes it up with a big high cut.

[00:46:51.570]>>Right to the center of the green.

[00:46:58.590]>>What did that hit?

[00:47:00.649]>>I'm not sure.

[00:47:02.600]>>Over the green you heard Zach say it. He must have gotten a signal from somebody. He got caught a flyer, huh?

[00:47:09.290]>>Well, that opens the door now. And if ever there was a time, one of the great Ryder Cup players, one of the great match play players,

[00:47:17.540]>>This is a match play brain now.

[00:47:20.229]>>Can he jump

[00:47:22.479]>>In there with a birdie, that's from 147.

[00:47:28.159]>>Well, that's what he needed. He's going after Zach.

[00:47:34.090]>>Sabbatini with a par to stay at 8 under.

[00:47:41.770]>>Well, Zach Johnson

[00:47:43.790]>>He's been OK scrambling this week. This is his 3rd at 11, and not a bad lie. He's pitching on a downslope out of the rough.

[00:47:51.830]>>Uh oh

[00:47:54.870]>>Oh, wow, hands on hips, he shocked himself with that one.

[00:48:01.350]>>He almost wants to apologize. Look at the look on his face. He kind of does. OK, thank you.

[00:48:11.600]>>Over 13, but Weekley.

[00:48:15.620]>>That's for birdie.

[00:48:18.479]>>Another good putt for Boo, and this one finally falls for Boo.

[00:48:22.770]>>Who shot 70 yesterday.

[00:48:29.320]>>Yeah, Zach played an outstanding shot, John, that this was one of those little uphill, downhill kind of chip shots he played. This might have a little break. Yeah, I mean, it wandered to there, so definitely this, this green does slope from back to front and that pitch shot, like you said.

[00:48:44.300]>>You know, you get that sticky bluegrass and you know, if you don't keep speed up, you can stub those little things. No doubt.

[00:49:01.949]>>Waved that whoopsie, yep.

[00:49:07.550]>>See that right hand just took right over right there. He didn't stay in that triangle.

[00:49:13.899]>>I didn't expect to see that.

[00:49:18.899]>>So Stewart Cink.

[00:49:25.770]>>Gets back to 7 under.

[00:49:33.189]>>Rory Sabbatini, a great shot. Beautiful little wedge. This was always an uncomfortable hole location.

[00:49:40.620]>>Unless you get a perfect yardage, that's a nice birdie.

[00:49:45.479]>>So he's at 8 under.

[00:49:49.300]>>Now if this putt goes in, it's going to be going in creeping speed because this is super slick and he got a good read off of Cameron Percy.

[00:50:01.520]>>He hit a glorious wedge shot on the previous hole and a terrific 9 iron to here.

[00:50:12.209]>>Zach Johnson birdie at 16, birdie at 17.

[00:50:17.080]>>One under on his round after all of that.

[00:50:20.590]>>And now his lead is 5.

[00:50:24.870]>>Schwab Cup leader Stewart Cink trying to finish his championship with a birdie, and Stewart does just that. Shoots 2 under 68 today, of course, a winner here at Firestone on the regular tour in 2004.

[00:50:41.300]>>He wants to get it up-and-down desperately for just for pride purposes. You want to finish like a champion.

[00:50:50.959]>>Yeah, not a very good lie right here. It's just gonna.

[00:50:54.280]>>Drop the club on the back of the ball to kind of stab at it.

[00:51:02.600]>>He's had a few of these today.

[00:51:08.419]>>How about that for Zach Johnson.

[00:51:17.010]>>Finished like a champion.

[00:51:21.229]>>Suddenly it's an emphatic victory.

[00:51:26.620]>>It didn't look like.

[00:51:28.820]>>A 2 under 68 for most of the day, but that's what it winds up, and Zach Johnson has won the Kaulig Companies Championship, his first major on the PGA TOUR Champions, and he's punched his ticket to the 2027 PLAYERS.

[00:51:51.820]>>Well, congratulations to Zach Johnson. He wins his first PGA TOUR Champions major. Kaulig Companies championship, the Senior PLAYERS goes to Zach Johnson.