

Production Transcript for 25INTCUTCH - THE ALLY CHALLENGE - MASTER.mp3

[00:00:38] >> It's the 20th event of the season on the PGA Tour Champions schedule, the Ally Challenge, from Warwick Hills Golf and Country Club. Ernie Els, one of five World Golf Hall of Famers in the field here this week. His third at the par 5-7th. Ernie won the season debut at the Mitsubishi Electric Championship at Hualalai.

[00:00:59] >> Now, look at those greens, Paul Azinger.

[00:01:01] >> They're so pure. This is great week. The greens are good here every single year. It's Poa annua grass. Stewart Cink from way downtown. Going to get kind of the unexpected pleasure here.

[00:01:13] >> Rolls that in for birdie at the 8th. Stewart is the defending champion here at the Ally Challenge. Steven Alker always in contention. And he rolls in this putt for birdie. And this would get Alker to 5-under par.

[00:01:27] >> Well, you know, birdies are his business. And business is good for Steven Alker. Ever since he showed up on this tour, Bob, he's just been doing stuff like that. Simple little birdies. He leads the tour in scoring average this year.

[00:01:42] >> Now, we get him to 6-under par. Stewart Cink playing his second at the 10th. And just dialed in for the defending champion.

[00:01:52] >> Yup, that's a perfect leave. Nice little lob shot over that bunker.

[00:01:56] >> He'd go on to make that for five consecutive birdies to get to 6-under par. Six-under leads the way. Cameron Percy shoots 67 today. He's a shot back.

[00:02:14] >> The PGA Tour Champions proudly presents the year-long race for the Charles Schwab cup. Today from Grand Blanc, Michigan, it's first round coverage of the Ally Challenge. PGA Tour has a long history here at Warwick Hills Golf and Country Club. For many years, the host of the Buick Open. Now, in its eighth year, hosting the best of the PGA Tour Champions, and the Ally Challenge. Golf course opened in 1957, par 72 layout, just over 7,000 yards on the scorecard. Ideal conditions for this first round Friday. And some really good scoring conditions. Bob Papa, Paul Azinger, so glad you can join us. John Cook is out on the golf course. Take you over to 12, where Stewart Cink has this for birdie. John Cook is with this group.

[00:03:12] >> Thank you there, guys. Good to be out here, good old Warwick Hill. I've spent a lot of time on this golf course, Paul, you and I. And that was a golden opportunity miss there for Stewart Cink.

[00:03:22] >> Angel Cabrera, fifth in the Schwab Cup standings. Three wins for Cabrera this year. And John Cook, he has a look at birdie.

[00:03:34] >> He does. Birdie and two bogeys on Angel's card. Not the best of days, but he could get it back to level par. About 12. He doesn't do much. Might slide to his right slightly.

[00:03:47] >> This is an interesting grip with that claw on the left hand.

[00:03:51] >> Yeah. He's got like a -- he had the backwards claw.

[00:03:54] >> It is. And I said I was going to try that when I got home, but I haven't tried that one yet. I think I forgot about it or tried to erase it from my mind. But it works under pressure. We've seen him make a lot of putts that he had to make like that.

[00:04:13] >> Now, Stewart Cink, who won for the first time of the PGA Tour Champions last year here at Warwick Hills Golf and Country Club. Shot 66, bogey-free on Saturday, 66 bogey-free on Sunday to beat K.J. Choi by four shots.

[00:04:32] >> Yeah. Greens at 12.5 on these Poa annua greens.

[00:04:36] >> That's a nice little comeback there, but greens have some speed and they are perfect.

[00:04:44] >> Cink won the Insperity Invitational earlier this year. Ricardo Gonzalez rolls in his putt for birdie.

[00:04:59] >> Steven Alker playing with Bernhard Langer and Joe Durant. Has the short one for birdie to get to 7-under and the solo lead. So good up and down for the bunker at the par 5 and Steven Alker with that clean scorecard.

[00:05:20] >> Ernie Els has this putt for birdie. Ernie started the year with a win at Hualalai. He's got a solo second at the Mitsubishi Electric Classic, tied for third at Boeing, solo third in Morocco, solo fifth at the Cologuard, tied for fifth at the Hoag, tied for sixth at the Principal Charity Classic, and seventh at the American Family Insurance Championship in 17 starts. Kind of surprised he hasn't taken it across the finish line another time this year. Bernhard Langer, 26th in the Schwab Cup standings once that club cleaned off. Currently at 2-under.

[00:06:04] >> Ernie's gone back and forth with the center-shafted putter and the heel-shafted putter. If you notice Langer, he never changes putters.

[00:06:11] >> Remember when were in Naples when Justin Leonard got his first win, Ernie was in the last group and he played 18 holes and didn't make a birdie.

[00:06:18] >> I know. And he hit it well enough to make several birdies that day. It's very frustrating day. Yeah. This has to be perfect distance, obviously. Yeah, hit it over that bunker. How do you do that out of the rough? That's a mystery to a lot of us. But what a great shot.

[00:06:39] >> This is a birdie putt for Steven Alker. He actually drove this green 331 yards. And that's a heck of a two putt for birdie to get to 8-under.

[00:06:49] >> He's a machine.

[00:06:56] >> Ricardo Gonzalez for birdie at 16 to get to 5-under. Cookie, Stewart Cink has been rolling it great so far today, 7-under and, you know, had to play safe here. What's he staring at here as far as this putt's concerned?

[00:07:22] >> Yeah. Not a whole lot going on here. Pretty straight putt. He missed a makeable putt at 11 and another one at 12 too. So he could have a real special round going, but might tail off to the right a little bit. Yeah, safety first. Kind of was little out of position with his tee shot.

[00:07:41] >> Yeah, he made a good decision there. Definitely a little close to his work to have to flop it up and over that bunker. When you're in your, I guess, 45 and over on the PGA Tour, you start counting your age in half increments. Forty-five and a half now, 46 and a half, like --

[00:08:04] >> I like to say it's all relative, right? Like when I was 49 playing the PGA Tour, I was grandpa to everyone. And then, you turn 50 and you're the young chicken.

[00:08:11] >> You're the young guy. Yeah, you're the rookie.

[00:08:17] >> Ernie getting set to play his third. But let me ask you this. Obviously, you can't make the courses longer, but they're hitting it further. But you can grow the rough up, right? And you can use nature toughen up the golf course.

[00:08:29] >> You can. I think firm and fast is probably the best way to protect the golf course. The rough, like you think about Bryson winning the US Open at wing foot, that rough was totally out of control. What did he do? He bombed it as far as he could. If he hit the fairway, great. If not, out of the rough, he was still close enough that he could get it up there on or around the green. And so, rough is a factor, but not like it used to be in Paul and I's day.

[00:08:55] >> Wasn't that the big advantage that Tiger had? But he hit it so far. And even if he missed a fairway, he was hitting a wedge in.

[00:09:02] >> Absolutely, absolutely. You know, kind of brought the next level of athleticism to our game. Absolutely.

[00:09:15] >> Ernie Els, after that nice little pitch shot, has this for birdie to get to within one of the lead.

[00:09:21] >> Now, I read years ago about Ernie Els, the way he thought of putting, Jim. He felt like when he put it great in his prime, he felt he was standing over a 7-iron. Like, OK, I get that. But he still looks kind of like that to me. But he has switched putters a lot. This is a different kind of technology for sure.

[00:09:44] >> What I've seen playing, I play with Ernie a lot the last couple of years, he makes a ton of putts, 10 footers, 15 footers, 20 footers. If he's had an issue, it's been on these shorter putts where he struggled a little bit. When he's knocking those in, he's a force every week.

[00:09:59] >> Yup, no doubt. He's like, you know, he's the Big Easy. He's got the great touch. He lags up nice.

[00:10:05] >> Absolutely.

[00:10:07] >> We saw Langer with that bad miss at the last. This for birdie at 17.

[00:10:12] >> Much better stroke and in. Yeah, that stroke on the previous hole was weird looking for sure. He feels good about that. That's a little bounce back. You know, some guys are great left to right putters. There's no doubt about it. And right handers, I should say.

[00:10:32] >> It's always difficult when that ball is breaking away from your body. It is the hardest thing to do.

[00:10:36] >> Yup.

[00:10:37] >> Cink for birdie.

[00:10:39] >> Oh, yeah.

[00:10:41] >> There's enough to balance the --

[00:10:43] >> Who cares about the lot?

[00:10:45] >> Well, I mentioned Scottie Scheffler. He made a double bogey earlier today and made a putt like that the very next hole to make a little bounce back.

[00:10:52] >> This was a moment ago at 18, the third for Darren Clarke.

[00:11:01] >> One time, Darren, come on.

[00:11:03] >> Look out.

[00:11:04] >> Hello. Attaway.

[00:11:11] >> Dinner's going to taste a little better with that one.

[00:11:13] >> Angel Cabrera will have a putt for birdie here at 18.

[00:11:26] >> Yeah, from across the green. Looked like kind of a nothing round there for a long time for Angel, and then, all of a sudden, making six birdies. Pretty slow putt. And that was wide right.

[00:11:41] >> Oh, boy. Work left. Not the thing you want to do there on the last holes. Have to grind out one of those for a two putt.

[00:11:54] >> Richard Green will be next. Jim, you won 17 times on the PGA Tour, three times on the PGA Tour Champions, and many wins around the globe. You know, Richard Green gets his first win in his 91st start last week. How hard is it to back it up the next week with a great performance?

[00:12:14] >> I think it's really difficult. I think you're on an emotional high. It's not really the physical side of things, it's the mental side of things. Kind of getting back into the game, the flow of things. And I think expectations are really high, right? You know you're playing well, and you tend to force the issue at times.

[00:12:31] >> I could lose a little bit of an intensity edge periodically after I won. I never quite carried the same intensity. And when I saw guys go back to back, and then when Tiger showed up, and you realized how his intensity levels never changed, it was really impressive to me. And I considered it a flaw that you could be that emotionally have that kind of letdown. But now. I hear Scheffler and see Scheffler the way he goes about it, and he talks about bringing the same intensity every day. And I think that's what Stewart Cink's been trying to do out here on this tour as well. Is there much in this putt, John Cook?

[00:13:07] >> A little uphill, moving slightly to his right. It is definitely holeable.

[00:13:17] >> I think, Jim Furyk, you brought that intensity with you every single week. And this to shoot 61. Not great, but still an incredible score.

[00:13:37] >> Lowest score shot on this golf course in the Champions Tour, is that correct?

[00:13:42] >> It is. Sixty-three was the previous number with Scott McCarron and Scott Dunlap.

[00:13:46] >> What a round of golfer, Stewart Cink. Hit every green in regulation and not a blemish on the card. Pretty fun to watch, I imagine, for John Cook down there.

[00:14:01] >> It was such a nice stroll. I mean, a perfect day, perfect weather. Watching good golf makes me want to go hit some balls. Actually, I'm going to play tomorrow morning early.

[00:14:12] >> Oh, really? Where are you playing?

[00:14:13] >> Where are you playing?

[00:14:15] >> At our buddy's house through his golf course, Mike Bylan from the Shepherd's Hollow. Takes good care of it.

[00:14:21] >> Boy, we wore that out last year.

[00:14:24] >> Did we ever?

[00:14:29] >> Cabrera for par.

[00:14:32] >> Come on.

[00:14:33] >> Well, that's too bad.

[00:14:40] >> Obviously, this is a relatively new event in the PGA Tour Champions. This is the eighth year of the Ally Challenge. But Stewart Cink trying to do something that no one has done before, become a multiple winner of this event.

[00:15:01] >> When I got here today, I haven't done an event for several weeks, I looked up all the stats, and Stewart Cink is in the Top 5 in almost every single meaningful stat on this tour. And off to a blistering start here as defending champion. It's pretty good stuff.

[00:15:17] >> And he hasn't made a bogey since Round 1 of last year because he shot bogey-free 66 on Saturday and Sunday last year. And now, a bogey-free 62.

[00:15:39] >> PGA Tour Champions in Grand Blanc, Michigan, for the eighth playing of the Ally Challenge from Warwick Hills Golf and Country Club. Stewart Cink shot 62 yesterday. After a bogey at the 2nd, rolls in this putt for birdie at the 5th to get it back to 10-under par. He has been rolling it excellent this week. And then, his third at the par-5 7th.

[00:16:05] >> Well, he didn't hit a great wedge into here, but -- Well, actually, excuse me. This is the par 5. Then, he hits a tremendous bunker shot, makes an easy birdie here at 7.

[00:16:16] >> That gets him to 11-under par after birdie at the 1st. Ernie Els' second into the par-4 9th.

[00:16:21] >> Look at the little bit of weight shift on these small shots of Ernie Els. Great rhythm and he left himself a tricky putt there.

[00:16:31] >> He'd go in to knock it in. And that would get him to 9-under par. Then, Ernie Els for a birdie at the 10th.

[00:16:39] >> Speed is everything out here, Bob, on these greens. And that is just the most perfect touch.

[00:16:45] >> That got him to 10-under par. Five World Golf Hall of Famers in the field, including Els and Retief Goosen. Fourteen is only 318 yards. This was the second for Goosen with some speed. And he knocks it in for eagle. And that gets Retief Goosen to 10-under par. Has not won in his 15 starts this year on the PGA Tour Champions. Cink by one over a couple of Hall of Famers. Going low in Grand Blanc.

[00:17:16] >> Now, Cookie, where Ernie was coming off the fairway, good angle, Stewart Cink is coming out of that little bit of rough with a bunker he's got to couple clear.

[00:17:25] >> And cross-handed.

[00:17:26] >> Yeah, but he's got plenty of green to work with. So nothing to this, really. Just to judge it just over the bunker, let it release. That's a little hot.

[00:17:38] >> Pretty well done, though.

[00:17:39] >> Yes, it was.

[00:17:40][Applause]

[00:17:47] >> Stewart Cink has this putt for birdie at the 12th.

[00:17:51] >> Yeah, very makeable. There's not much to this.

[00:17:59] >> It's got some speed, though. These greens running about 12.5 even with some cloud cover this morning. Still rolling out pretty nicely.

[00:18:08] >> Stewart sets up so nice and square to all these putts. He's not going to play much break, that's for sure. We got a great view of this one. That is so perfect.

[00:18:22] >> Another birdie for Cink. That gets him to 12-under.

[00:18:32] >> Well, now, Els says this putt for birdie to match Cink and pull back to within one.

[00:18:38] >> Look at that beautiful little pitch shot. Got to take advantage of these. And birdie there at 10, and now one at 12.

[00:18:52] >> Now, Cameron Percy for his birdie. Percy finished a tie for second at the Principal Charity Classic, but finished T5 at the Senior Open Championship. Finished solo seventh at the Senior PGA Championship, and tied for ninth at the US Senior Open. So he's played well in the majors, and makes a birdie there. He's at 6-under. Tommy Gainey over at 17 for birdie to get to 4-under on the day and 7-under for the week.

[00:19:37] >> Walk it in. He walked it in. Oh, yeah.

[00:19:38] >> Busy scorecard coming in. They love him at 17 with that half price beer. Stephen Ames for birdie at 17.

[00:19:47] >> If you get multiple birdies on 17, then does it get free or cut in half again?

[00:19:53] >> I don't think so.

[00:19:53] >> Just, yeah, I mean cut in half again. What about hole-in-one?

[00:19:57] >> Kirk Triplett yesterday. I don't know. I doubt if all three make birdies that they're giving you \$2 as you get the beer.

[00:20:08] >> That would be the all-time backfire.

[00:20:11] >> Well, Ally has done such a great job over the years. McLaren Health Care, raising so much money for local charities throughout Flint and the surrounding communities.

[00:20:30] >> Stewart, you know, he's up at the tippity top of the leaderboard every week. He's had a few chances to win. He's got a couple wins. Birdie to increase his lead to two if he could get it.

[00:20:41] >> That went in with a holing speed. That was beautiful, Paul.

[00:20:49] >> It was, John. That is the kind of touch that is required. What a good putt.

[00:20:57] >> Let's go over to 16. Robert Karlsson has this putt for eagle. And the first eagle of the day at the par-5 16th belongs to Robert Karlsson.

[00:21:13] >> Well, it can be done.

[00:21:19] >> Jeff Maggert at 18 for his birdie to get to red figures heading into Sunday.

[00:21:24] >> One of the most accurate players to ever play the PGA Tour. Just drove it so straight, irons like laser beams.

[00:21:37] >> Mark Hensby for birdie at 15. This would be only the sixth birdie of the day. And Mark Hensby makes it look simple. Soren Kjeldsen for birdie at 18 after the bogey at 15. This to finish with three in a row and get to 10-under.

[00:22:00] >> Oh, man, and what a big day tomorrow could be for him.

[00:22:09] >> So Arnie Els here, Cookie, has an opportunity for a two shot swing, if he can make this, and take the outright lead.

[00:22:18] >> Absolutely. This is very makeable. Fifteen feet, breaks slightly to his right.

[00:22:30][Applause]

[00:22:33] >> And the Big Easy with a birdie at 15, the hardest hole in the golf course. Has moved to 12-under and now leads by one.

[00:22:43] >> What a turnaround the last couple holes.

[00:22:48] >> Cameron Percy for birdie at 17.

[00:22:52] >> He had a fine shot in here, I got to tell you, 165 yards. Got it all the way back. There haven't been a lot of birdies at 17 here in the last hour or so.

[00:23:04] >> Mark Hensby at 18. Just off the green for birdie. And he shoots 68 today, bogey-free. And he joins Kjeldsen and Goosen at 10-under. Cameron Percy trying to join the party at 10-under.

[00:23:31] >> And it is a party now. Holy mackerel.

[00:23:37] >> He shoots 67 today, and he's in at 10-under.

[00:23:46] >> Alker for his par.

[00:23:47] >> Yeah, this is good 6 feet up the slope, and pretty slow.

[00:23:58] >> Seems to be doing pretty well considering old Steven Alker.

[00:24:02] >> Again, Steven nearly withdrew before the start of play today. Back spasms, he's wearing a back brace. Fought through it. Now, a big par putt here for Ernie Els to stay one up.

[00:24:17] >> Got to pay attention to this. There's not much to it. Just slow.

[00:24:23] >> Give him 3 feet here, Paul.

[00:24:26] >> Yeah. It's not a gimme. No problem, though.

[00:24:35] >> Great bunker shot there by Els to save par as they head to the par-4 18th. Final group on and around the green at 18. Alker with putter in hand for birdie.

[00:25:00] >> Yeah. Just off the edge of the green. Slow putt breaking to the right. Good effort.

[00:25:04] >> Yeah. He had it right on line. Way to survive the day for Alker. Hopefully, he'll get a couple of treatments, ice up a little bit, and be ready to go tomorrow.

[00:25:23] >> Three-over 75 for Steven.

[00:25:28] >> Yeah, he'll make an assessment. Get with the physios and -- That need to hurt himself, that is for sure.

[00:25:35] >> Now, Stewart Cink playing his third.

[00:25:42] >> Not a bad lie. Has a little bit of green to work with. And into the wind.

[00:25:46] >> Caught right on the down slope. Kind of kicked it to the left. That was a really good effort.

[00:25:53] >> Yes, it was. Well, it sure looked a lot harder when that ball went shooting over the green. Once the camera got behind him, it didn't look like that tough a shot. That is where all the players walk off.

[00:26:05] >> Yeah. He actually drew a pretty good lie, Paul. It wasn't kind of in that -- into the green. It was kind of just sitting up a little bit.

[00:26:24] >> Now, Els for birdie. Now, we saw Mark Hensby from off the green roll in a putt for birdie.

[00:26:29] >> He did, John Cook. Just a minute ago, Hensby was able to make it from here. I felt like it went a little left at the beginning, and then pretty straight the rest of the way.

[00:26:37] >> I think that's a great call, Paul. I think it's, yeah, left off the, you know, the fringe cut --

[00:26:46] >> Yup.

[00:26:46] >> -- and then goes uphill. And then, once it slows down, it'll go back to the right.

[00:26:52] >> And you know, Stewart Cink's par putt is huge, because Kjeldsen, Goosen, and Hensby posted 10-under. If Stewart doesn't make his par, he would not even be in the last group tomorrow because it's first in at 10 that would be in the last group.

[00:27:11] >> He actually would be in the third to last group. He would drop all the way down from last group to third to last group if he'll miss.

[00:27:19] >> Els for birdie.

[00:27:20] >> Yeah. And it peeled off to the right at the end just like you said, John. Very good par. Probably from that tee shot though being in the right rough.

[00:27:29] >> Yeah, pretty efficient round. Yeah. Five birdies, no bogeys.

[00:27:33] >> John, once again, Ernie, the only par 5 he birdied was the first hole.

[00:27:40] >> Yeah, shocking to me.

[00:27:45] >> He had two pretty good shots at 16 to come up short, you know, missing that 4-footer. But he played that hole well. But, yeah, this did not convert on that opportunity.

[00:27:57] >> Bogey-free 67 for the Hall of Famer.

[00:27:59] >> Well, he can shoot 67 only birdieing one of these par 5s. Just to let you know. Ernie's very comfortable this week. If he does take care of business on the par 5s tomorrow, he'll be pretty tough to beat. Again, this is for the last group tomorrow, and to stay just one shot back. Maybe just a little right, John, I think.

[00:28:29] >> Yeah, should slide to his right slightly.

[00:28:34] >> You know, Stewart Cink survives the day after shooting a bogey-free 62 yesterday. A 1-under 71. And he'll be in the final group tomorrow with Ernie Els and Soren Kjeldsen. We saw a lot of good scores out on the golf course. Ernie Els with that bogey-free 67. And listen, Els and Cink have been great all year. Opportunities for other guys. And don't sleep on Retief Goosen. The eighth year of the Ally Challenge, Grand Blanc, Michigan. So much history at Warwick Hills Golf and Country Club. For many years, it hosted the Buick Open, now the Ally Challenge. Stewart Cink, the defending champ. Golf course in great condition. Par 72 today, playing 7,139 yards. That trophy is on the line today here at Warwick Hills Golf and Country Club. Ernie Els started the day with a one shot lead. Cameron Percy, who lost in a playoff earlier this year in Des Moines, just eagled the 7th, and he pulls to within one. Stewart Cink playing his third at the par-5 7th. John Cook with this group.

[00:29:55] >> Good to be with you on this championship Sunday. That was from 76 yards. Had to drive it in the left rough. Had to lay it up.

[00:30:06] >> Bob Papa, Paul Azinger, so glad you can join us. John Cook with this last group of Ernie Els, Stewart Cink, and Soren Kjeldsen. Ernie Els shot a bogey-free 67 yesterday, John. This year, won for three when playing in the last group, won at Hualalai, lost the Chubb Classic, and the Mitsubishi Electric Classic. And the 13th time, he's had the lead or co-lead going into the final round. In the previous 12 times, he's converted four to victory.

[00:30:36] >> Yeah. He just hangs around on Sundays. Only got it done one time crossing the finish line early in the year there at Hualalai. But little wide right with his second. But no major obstacles here for Ernie. Has a lot of green to work with. Doesn't have to contend with the bunker. Ball should run out. He missed is marked by a couple of yards. Carries on the green. That gets all the way to the hole.

[00:31:01] >> Not his best. He did not take advantage of the par 5s yesterday. He didn't birdie number 1 today either. So, really I think Ernie's strength is that he is one of the longest hitters, top two or three biggest hitters out here. He has to kill the par 5s. He hasn't done it yet, but he's still leading the tournament. And I'm wondering how comfortable Kjeldsen is playing with these two great players.

[00:31:27] >> Soren Kjeldsen, a medalist at the 2024 PGA Tour Champions School. Didn't turn 50 until May and nearly hold that out for eagle. He'll have that for birdie. Ernie Els has this putt for par, and taking nothing for granted, John.

[00:31:48] >> Yeah, not a lot of break around these cups. You get within 5 feet. There's not a ton of break on any of these putts. So you better be careful because they're still running at 12.5.

[00:32:03] >> That was real solid by Ernie. We've seen some of those shorter strokes periodically. Look a little wobbly maybe, I guess, lopsided looking, but that was pure.

[00:32:20] >> Now, Cink, for his part, just inside Ernie's mark.

[00:32:23] >> Stewart used to use the belly putter. He switched around, John. Different grips, different styles. And now, he's, you know, all in an effort to better on these length of putts.

[00:32:33] >> Yeah, he's been solid. He's been with this method now for a while and he's been rock solid. Five feet in. He just hits that foul ball every once in a while and can't quite get to the house.

[00:32:50] >> Stewart, the defending champion, shot 17-under last year to beat K.J. Choi by four.

[00:32:56] >> Good solid stroke there as well.

[00:32:58][Applause]

[00:33:03] >> This would be a heck of a par for Retief Goosen. He uses the prayer grip that he dusted out at the Kaulig Companies Championship when he won his first major on the PGA Tour Champions. And he is right in the mix here this week. Now, Stewart Cink on the tee at the 8th.

[00:33:25] >> Hundred and ninety-two yards today. Ernie hit it right to the center of the greens. Soren Kjeldsen hit it right on line about 12 feet underneath the hole. So Stewart Cink, this is 7-iron. Little bit downwind out of the left. Way up in the air. Going left though. Needs to cut.

[00:33:50] >> Well, he was trying to hit a huge 7-iron. That's going to be a tall order to hit 192 yards in the air.

[00:33:59] >> Stewart Cink with this putt for birdie at the 8th.

[00:34:03] >> Yeah, good 50 feet. Does have to be careful of speed. Good breaker from left to right.

[00:34:09] >> Got it. Stewart Cink from long range.

[00:34:14] >> He just took the one side step to get a better look at it, Bob. What a putt.

[00:34:20] >> And that gets him to 12-under and within one of the lead.

[00:34:25] >> Those last like eight holes. So we'll see what happens.

[00:34:32] >> Brian Gay drips it in. He is 8-under today. He's moved to 11-under. He has two holes to play. He started his day on 10. But an eagle at 7.

[00:34:45] >> Yeah.

[00:34:45] >> Percy, 2-under today. Now, Retief, who birdied the 1st, bogeyed the 6th, did not birdie the 7th, made a great par save from the greenside bunker at 8th, has this to stay three back.

[00:35:03] >> Look at his grip. Now, we're going to take a look at some unusual grips. Different styles, if you will. Radically different styles really. All trying to achieve the same thing. That's a good putt.

[00:35:18] >> Yeah. We first noticed that at Firestone when he won the Kaulig Companies Championship.

[00:35:30] >> It's pretty amazing, especially here when you have to hit it straight.

[00:35:35] >> John, this is a huge momentum putt here for Ernie Els.

[00:35:39] >> Yeah. This would go a long way right here. Keep the lead good 6 feet here.

[00:35:46] >> So good. So solid.

[00:35:48] >> He looks good over that putter. Paul, he looks really good over that putter. His pacing is good, the roll is consistent.

[00:36:00] >> Percy for birdie at the 10.

[00:36:10] >> Never had that one quite on line. Get at that easy two putt speed.

[00:36:18] >> Pretty good par 3 coming up for them at number 11.

[00:36:27] >> Stewart Cink, his second and 10.

[00:36:31] >> Seventy-five yards. Just needs to fly it over that bunker. Let it run out.

[00:36:35] >> We needed that.

[00:36:36] >> That looks good.

[00:36:38] >> Well judged. Ernie Els, his second at the 10th.

[00:36:44] >> Yeah. From 64 yards. Pin is way in the back. Got to guard against going long. But nice and low, this should be pretty good as well.

[00:36:58] >> John, what about this birdie putt for Els?

[00:37:01] >> Yeah, uphill, moving right to left. Very makeable. What a miss.

[00:37:08] >> He's going to start eliminate some of the actors in this movie.

[00:37:15] >> Yes, he is.

[00:37:17] >> Only his second birdie of the day. No bogeys. Els' only bogey this week came at the 9th in Round 1. Bogey-free yesterday in shooting 67. Cink now to match Els' birdie.

[00:37:35] >> I feel like this is a must make here.

[00:37:42] >> It's like gut check --

[00:37:42] >> He cannot get any further behind.

[00:37:44] >> Gut check time. You got to -- You can't wish this one in. You got to make this. That's just like that. Stewart Cink, he's a champion golfer, I'll tell you that. Champion golfer of the year. And that is a really big putt for him. Well, he made a great bogey putt at the 9th to avoid disaster, and then, bounces back with a birdie at 10 in a share of second, two behind the leader, Els. Final hole of the day for Brian Gay. Has this putt for par to shoot a 65. Kind of a costly finish with bogeys at 8 and 9. Still a 66 today. And he's going to move inside that Top 72 with five regular season weeks left in the season. Ally Challenge, the 20th of 28 of the PGA Tour Championship. Let's go over to the 11th. Lengthy birdie putt for Ernie Els.

[00:38:57] >> Yeah, that is for sure. And this is no gimme two putt either. This is going across the green to the -- moving right off the ball, and then uphill and moving a little bit left towards the end of the putt.

[00:39:13] >> You said earlier about every player in the field walked between him and the hole. And he's got a little tickler left. That's a definite not good yet.

[00:39:24] >> Had a great two putt at the 9th, and made his birdie at the 10th. Cink, after a bogey at 9, birdied 10, and has a look at birdie here at 11.

[00:39:39] >> Yeah, nice comeback. Bounce back birdie there at the 10th. A good tee shot here at the 11th. He's got a really good look. Goes uphill a little bit and moving from right to left. Wind is actually starting to pick up right now. A little over 10, 12 miles an hour or so.

[00:39:56] >> I think Ernie gave him a little bit of a look-see as to how this breaks. Usually, you give a Tour player a look, and he'll capitalize.

[00:40:05] >> That just didn't break. Ernie's really did move left. Nod of the head, like, what?

[00:40:13] >> Stewart picked up his first win on the PGA Tour Champions right here last year at the Ally Challenge. Was dominant on the weekend. Shot bogey-free 66s on Saturday and Sunday to win by four. Soren Kjeldsen has missed a bunch of opportunities to really put some heat on the leaders. Birdied the 1st, missed birdies at 7 and 8, then made a bogey at the 9th, didn't make his birdie at 10, and has this one for birdie here at 11.

[00:40:52] >> Yeah, he has left a lot out. Not here so far. He wants to run these guys down. This has to go in.

[00:40:59] >> I think when you get to a --

[00:41:00] >> That's a pretty good read.

[00:41:01] >> Yeah. Sorry, John. I was going to say, I think when you get to a certain age, you miss that many in a row, you should look at the hole on one of them and just putt it.

[00:41:09] >> He looked back.

[00:41:10] >> I thought he was going to do it. No need. No need. Good birdie there, Cookie. He's still in it.

[00:41:21] >> That gets him to within three. Ernie still has a putt for par to stay at 14-under.

[00:41:28] >> Yeah. So you know, a day of patience. These conditions are not going to get any easier. The wind's starting to pick up. It's a little bit cooler. Got some birdie opportunities coming up though at 12, 13, and 14. So, you know, get a birdie at 11, that's a bonus.

[00:41:44] >> Sure is. And Ernie with this little tester now. You spend so much time figuring out how to hit 300-yard tee shots, but if you want to win golf tournaments, you got to figure out how to make 3-foot putts. Yeah. He handled it nicely. A couple very nice short strokes for him.

[00:42:12] >> Mentioned Steven Alker with that bad back yesterday, shot a 3-over par. But Alker, feeling good today, rolls that in. He's 7-under, bogey-free. And at least for now, he's in a tie for second with a hole to play.

[00:42:27] >> Mentioned five World Golf Hall of Famers in the field here this week, including Vijay Singh, who won here at Warwick Hills three times on the regular tour, '97, '04, '05. And finishes with a birdie. Only the fifth birdie today at 18. And Vijay back to back 68, finishes the week at 9-under.

[00:42:51] >> Well, Stewart Cink birdied 13 and 14 to get to within one of the lead. He needs to make this to stay within one of the leads.

[00:43:04] >> Not a ton to this, other than it's got some speed to it.

[00:43:09] >> Not very good. That's disappointing for Stewart. You know, we talked on the previous hole about the value of these putts down the stretch. When you want to win, you have to make, you know, a couple nice putts at the end of a golf tournament in order to pull it off.

[00:43:27] >> So now, Ernie Els, who hit a perfect tee shot here at 16, is now playing his fourth shot. And Cookie, did he go for the home run shot there based on the fact that Cink had hit such a wonderful third in there?

[00:43:43] >> I think so. And knowing that he didn't want to hit it over the green, he knows how good his bunker game is, so his miss was going to be short in this bunker. He just had the same shot on the last hole, identical.

[00:43:57] >> So Els is going to have that length for par. Cink, though, despite the wild miss off the tee, is going to have a putt to pull within one.

[00:44:09] >> He closed his eyes standing behind that as if he visualize this going in.

[00:44:14] >> What a birdie for Stewart Cink. So he gets to 14-under, and now puts a lot of pressure on Els, who has a par putt still to come. And now, this par putt for Ernie Els, who was in control, leading by two, and blistered his tee shot here at 16. Has this to stay at 15-under and remain in the solo lead.

[00:44:49] >> We talk about routine, Paul. And you have to stay in it right here. A couple deep breaths. Trust what you see. Free it up, let it go.

[00:45:02] >> Yup, 70th hole of the golf tournament. Well, 51st hole, I guess. That's a good solid save considering. And didn't need to be that hard for Ernie. A little head shake.

[00:45:18] >> Stewart Cink for birdie at 17 and the share of the lead.

[00:45:23] >> Will move gently to his right.

[00:45:25] >> The defending champion, with back to back birdies, gets to 15-under. And now, Els for par to remain in a share of the lead.

[00:45:41] >> I'll tell you what, this is no gimme. This has got a little break from left to right, and it is quick.

[00:45:55] >> So Els maintains now a share of the lead as they head to 18.

[00:46:00] >> Well, Stewart Cink really showing the heart of a champion with those two birdies. Poor tee shot on 16, was lucky enough to go way over to the 7th fairway. Cink now needs a big time up and down, or Ernie's going to have two putts.

[00:46:18] >> He's got an OK lie, and going into the wind. Has room over the bunker as well. Yeah. It came out a little bit hot on him.

[00:46:33] >> Yes, he did. The putt goes left too. Everybody's missed it left.

[00:46:40] >> Ernie Els eyes this putt for birdie. This for the win.

[00:46:47] >> Has to get it way up there. Now, it starts to break. Again, great pace.

[00:46:51] >> Yeah, man, the big boy's got some real touch. And he has forced Stewart Cink's hand here. Not going to mess around. Going to clean this up.

[00:47:08] >> Ernie Els taps in for par. A bogey-free final round, 3-under par.

[00:47:19] >> That's a good solid round when you start with the lead. The holes were tough today. No real gimme hole locations.

[00:47:27] >> The defending champion, who won his first PGA Tour Champions event here last year, has this putt for par to force a playoff. And he's done it. Stewart Cink drains the putt for par.

[00:47:50] >> That is awesome. What a putt.

[00:47:56] >> What a finish for Stewart Cink. After the bogey at 15, birdies at 16, An improbable birdie at 16. Then the birdie at 17, and an incredible putt for par at 18. And Els and Cink will head to the first ever playoff in Ally Challenge history.

[00:48:22] >> Stewart Cink with an incredible par save at 18 to force a playoff with Ernie Els. Cink, who has been erratic off the tee.

[00:48:34] >> Thirty-six, 41 back edge, a little hurt.

[00:48:39] >> There's Lisa, his wife, looking on.

[00:48:45] >> Maybe it's like take it out of the air.

[00:48:48] >> Take it out of the air.

[00:48:49] >> And run --

[00:48:50] >> And stop. Let's go with camera guy. Yeah. Which is the flag. I'll go narrow down the flag, OK? OK. Let me take it out of the air with a good push, please.

[00:49:01] >> All great advice. One-thirty-six flag gives him 130 to the -- over the bunker and 141 to the back of the green. Got to be out a little bit to the right. Should be able to control spin here. Shouldn't fly. A little bit out to the right.

[00:49:08] >> Beautiful.

[00:49:09][Applause] That was all about distance control for him at this point. He knows the situation Ernie's in.

[00:49:21] >> Stewart did what he had to do.

[00:49:26] >> Maybe feels like he has to take it on and get over top of the tree to go straight at it.

[00:49:30] >> Looking at him now, he's looking like he's off to the right a bit. Like he wants to curve this thing.

[00:49:42] >> Clean contact. Trying to turn it from right to left. And gave himself a chance.

[00:49:49] >> He sure did. What a great shot.

[00:49:54] >> So Els will have that for par. Stewart Cink, though, has a putt for birdie to close it out.

[00:50:02] >> Stewart won the Ally Challenge last year for his first win on the PGA Tour Champions. Birdied the first playoff hole to beat Retief Goosen to win the Insuperity Invitational at the Woodlands.

[00:50:17] >> Not much in it, huh, John?

[00:50:20] >> No, just moving from right to left. It's fairly flat. Doesn't have to worry about speed. He can give this a -- you know, get it out there to the right. Let gravity take over.

[00:50:30] >> Stewart Cink for birdie and the win.

[00:50:40] >> A very good putt by Stewart Cink. Was always just a smidgen to the left. He tried to make it.

[00:50:54] >> Now, we're going to have a potential reverse of emotion. Stewart Cink is going to finish up for his par. But Ernie was in the driver's seat on the 54th hole. Stewart Cink watched Ernie miss his birdie putt that would have won it outright and then buried his par putt. Now, Ernie Els has a chance to return the favor.

[00:51:25][Applause]

[00:51:31] >> Hall of Famer Ernie Els, going through his routine, now steps in and has this putt for par to extend the playoff. And Ernie Els makes bogey. And Stewart Cink has won the Ally Challenge and goes back to back here in Grand Blanc, Michigan, winning in a playoff against Ernie Els.

[00:52:06] >> Stewart Cink wins for the second time this year, a 4-under 68 pars, the first extra hole to defeat Ernie Els.