

2025 PGA TOUR CHAMPIONS LEARNING CENTER SHOW #14

VO > PGA Tour Champions Learning Center.

VO > The PGA tour champion season hit the halfway mark over the weekend with another major hurdle. A stop in Akron, Ohio at one of America's Great Courses Firestone Country Club and recognizable landmarks.

OC > Hi, everyone, and welcome to PGA Tour Champions Learning Center. I'm Vince Chiellini and what we have learned about this season is that it has been one unpredictable twists after another. The third of five major championships, the Kaulig Companies Championship was another four-round test for the players and a great opportunity to move up and make a big leap in the Charles Schwab Cup standings. With more the men who called the action Bob Papa and Paul Azinger.

VO > Thank you Vince. Third major of the year, PGA Tour Champions, the Kaulig Companies Championship, Firestone Country Club, the South Course. Final round began with Miguel Angel Amarnath and Steven Alker and a share of the lead at eight under par. And you know, this was a big moment because Jimenez missed a birdie putt at nine. Had one a ten. Alker makes a clutch bogey.

VO > He did. This is one of the most difficult golf courses. Tee to green at the players a play all year long. And when they got a little flummoxed the putter bailed them out. Now after a couple of good shots, a smart layup. This putt got him a two-shot lead, and it looked like that was going to be it. Jimenez had to birdie the last two holes.

VO > And at 17 I mean he had to play a second shot out of the rough. And then he saw that. And so, he cuts the lead to one. And then he needs to birdie. The final hole for Alker though could have made birdie to seal the deal. And he just missed it as it turned left on him a little bit.

VO > Yeah. You can't really tell what he was seeing because he was blocking the hole. But he did just miss and well that opened the door for Jimenez who's Mr. Clutch this year.

VO > Back up the hill he buries that birdie putt on the 72nd hole to force a playoff. Both players made par Alker made an incredible par on the first playoff hole. And then on the second playoff hole after Alker missed his birdie putt Jimenez buries that for his fourth win of the year and his third major championship on the PGA Tour Championship. Just incredible stuff for Jimenez and Alker. Stewart Cink made a run but made a bogey at the par five 16th. Steve Flesch shoots a five under 65 finishes solo fourth. Freddy Jacobson finishes solo fifth, but Miguel Angel Jimenez wins for the fourth time this year. Let's hear from our champion.

VO > And he's done it. Miguel Angel Jimenez about us birdies the second point off hole here at famed Firestone. And he won the Kaulig company's championship his fourth win of the year. And he's going to Sawgrass.

VO > That's pretty impressive isn't it. He birdied 17 and 18 to get in the playoff. And there he goes again.

VO > Congratulations young man. That was spectacular finish. Take us through the 17 and 18 and 18 and 18.

OC VO > Yeah well, it's it was as you say it was amazing finish. No, I know I had to do that this year off to finish the 16 that they wanted to, to have any chance. And all I had a beautiful second shot on the, the 17th. Put up with the ball like, in the middle the postseason more or less. And I holed up, but. And then on the 18th, I hit a beautiful driver here, 52 wedge and then, maybe like a hole for me for birdie. And, leading up to there now, he's, he's really, really deserve it. You know, I've been playing very well. And then, I never missed a couple of shots around there. You know, a couple of shots made two bogeys. But overall, I play very solid. And I like the, this is to me, this is the finish on there. I'll miss every single hole. And now and then the play here. Well, I'm hoping that you see me play the for hole Mr. birdie on the first time. He may go recovery there and then he made his recovery in the second, although I think for before me and in that I hold this putt, for birdie. Yeah.

OC > You're going to see TPC Sawgrass next year.

OC > Well I was thinking about it was him know that that is a different league. I mean the next year I will be 62. You know that's a different league, we'll see

OC > Congratulations. Great player.

OC > Thank you too much.

OC > Thank you.

OC > Just as they finished in Akron, Miguel Angel Jimenez and Steven Alker are one two in the Charles Schwab Cup standings. Once again that is 17 career wins on PGA Tour Champions and the fourth this season in 13 starts for Jimenez, building a healthy lead on last year's Schwab Cup winner on health, Cabrera drops to third in the standings. Stewart Cink moves up to fourth, displacing Ernie Els, who rounds out the top five. With another major on tap this week, we could see plenty of movement come the weekend.

VO > Which brings us to one of the most animated, enthusiastic emotions on his sleeve players on tour? Not really. It's the even keeled Retief Goosen, but even goose gets amped up at the start of any event, especially a major. The two-time U.S. open winner in 2019, colleague Companies champion was mic'd up for the opening hole of the tournament and allowed us to tag along.

OC > Cut to, just double check that these are tight. Sometimes they come a little loose. You're always going to get nervous. It's just part of the game today. I mean, this morning, boys. Callaway. Me it looks like some of those are on the wall. So, I just go Callaway. Yeah. So, it should be good shooting. Well, I think we went okay.

OC VO > It's a nice feeling obviously that you've done something for the game. And there were years where I was playing 38 tournaments a year trying to, you know, support all the

tours around the world. So, yeah, it paid off. Obviously, it's a long time ago now, but it's what's good years, you know, it's it's a golf course. If you're off your game, you're going to get caught out. And if you play well, you get rewarded. And, yeah, it's nice to have won here a few years ago, on a Champions Tour. And then it was all the years that I used to play here and world golf events and and many other ones. So. Yeah. Great memories. I don't know where it is, but I could as I could have hit it.

OC > Yeah. Well good putt. Bad read. Didn't break as much.

VO > Ernie Els was defending champion at Firestone, but before the event was busy with a special cause, along with wife Liesel and son Ben. The family toured what will be the new Tom and Jill Audi, an autism center at Akron Children's Hospital. Ben, now 22, was diagnosed as autistic at age four and in the years that followed, the Els for Autism Foundation and Education Facility in Florida have helped families and those affected lead their best lives. Ernie spoke about the importance of the day.

VO OC > I read a little bit that I saw there was a thousand kids or families on a waiting list, so they're going to get a lot of great help. It looks very, very professional. The management looks fantastic. We met most of the management yesterday that's going to be running this center, the hospital people, they, you mean the hospital's been around forever. It's a very, very good hospital from what I hear. So, the whole scenario of how this thing came together is, is wonderful. So, I can only see positive things happening for the for the people in the autism world.

VO > Inspiring. Coming up, Padraig Harrington took a lead late on Sunday at Firestone until Tiger Woods turned up the pressure. Harrington takes us inside a final round duel from 2009 that left even this Hall of Famer rattled.

VO > I don't think I've been affected by another player in golf, you know, I'm very good at doing my own thing, but that starts with me.

VO > In 2009, at the WGC Bridgestone Invitational at Firestone, Padraig Harrington stood on the 16th tee with a one-shot lead over Tiger Woods until one of the wildest finishes of his career unfolded. Here's Harrington reluctantly taking us back to that moment when he was caught in the Tiger vortex.

OC > There she is from 2009. That is the one. Exactly where I hit it. Yeah.

OC > Take me back there.

OC > I don't want to.

OC > You don't want to.

OC > No, I don't want too.

VO OC > Yeah. You know, I bailed out here, which wasn't a bad thing. You know, I hit it dead straight down over the bunker into the tree line, which it's not like you wanted to go for the green in two anyway. So pretty. Which was kind of. It's a common theme with me. You

know, when I get a hole, that's. That's not important. You know, the tee shot here wasn't that important because you weren't going for it. Two I kind of wasn't the worst tee shot, but it wasn't the best tee shot. You know, the layup. Awkward. I remember we went down here, and it was famous enough because John Palmer came and told us we were on the clock, which is, you know, it's awkward because whenever you're in the trees and you're around the clock, you, you know, it's obviously harder to get yards and things like that. It wasn't like it was a big shot or anything like that. And I remember I punched it out, but I punched out, I thinking into the rough, Tiger was in the trees. He laid off way short and I think Tiger shot is the greatest shot I've seen in person. Like, you just can't understand how small this green is for a wedge. And with swirling winds, I know it was the 170 yards and might hit a nine iron, something like that. It was. It was a stone dead. It was. And if you get into the water or by the way he's done, you know, it's a hard green to hit from 110 yards. And we're in a swirling wind and he's probably got 190 yards, something like that. And he's hit it to a foot. And I will say, I don't think I've been affected by another player in golf. You know, I'm very good at doing my own thing, but that startled me. It's probably a great shot I've seen against me at a moment in time. And yeah, I would say I, I did the sense of hitting my shot out of rough. I hit it to the back of the green over the rough, which was fine, but then I chipped it into the water. And I'm a great chipper, particularly our off. So, for once another player has an effect on me, there's no doubt about it. And then, just like Rory at the Masters, I forgot I could have dropped to where it was, and I went to the drop zone. You know, whenever you put in the clock, it puts you, you know, you're even if you're playing well within the time, you're going to end up speeding up a little bit, or you're going to think, where am I time wise? And you're conscious of it. So, it's easier to be on the clock. Funny enough, if you run the clock for more holes, you know, hey, you know, you get into the room, it's actually quite easy. It's not a problem to play on the clock. You know, if it was up to me, I would say to every group should be timed the first two holes. Full stop. Where to? The imposition. Not in position. Just to get momentum for the rest of the day. Get used to what's what you're meant to do. So, it's not really a problem, but obviously in that situation being thrown on a. Yeah, I don't know if I rush my shots are Tiger such a great shot. And yeah, I blew up on the hole and I didn't mind at the time. You know. You know you think you're always going to go on and win tournaments. You think it's okay. It's not the end of the world. You know, I was on top of my game at that stage. You know, I was playing great in 2009 all the way through so. But now I look back and wish I had one. I wish more I'd want it now than I did then.

VO > When Learning Center continues, another major on tap, the US Senior Open, promises a stern test. Our guys on why the USGA events are unlike anything else. And past U.S. Senior Open champion David Toms on grabbing that win and returning to the Broadmoor. DT with the inside scoop next.

VO > The 45th U.S. Senior Open will be contested this week at The Broadmoor in Colorado Springs, Colorado, for a record tying third time. It features challenging greens and sitting at an altitude of over a mile above sea level, both increasing degree of difficulty for players.

OC > Each of our major championships in golf has its own personality, distinct aspects of play and strategy. As for the U.S. open and U.S. Senior Open, the venues may change, but

the grind certainly does not. And recently, we asked our players what it was specifically about our national championship that makes it so unique.

OC VO > The USGA say they want to identify the best player of that week, but a lot of us feel sometimes it gets pushed right to the edge. I'm sure everybody watched Oakmont last week. You know, it was so much rain that fell and, you know, the roof and everything else. So, there's always an argument there. You know, they open themselves up a little bit for that kind of argument. But, in my history, you know, with USGA, I feel they try to identify the best player. At times I would walk off a golf course being very, you know, very disappointed in my, in my game. But, for the most part, they, they get it right. They try and get the golf course, play as far and and really as difficult as it can be. So hopefully, we'll see in Colorado hopefully they have that right.

OC VO > The conditions set up is you know what to expect, right. You've played enough for them that you know it's going to be challenging. The rough should be up, especially in Colorado. Greens will be fast, you know, which is great because ultimately, what you want to do is reward the guy who who drove it the best, who hit the, you know, most greens in regulation and putted and chipped well. So, it'll be a true test of all facets of the game.

OC VO > I personally like the US Senior Open because it feels like playing a major tournament. You know, I was surprised when we got there. My first one, that. Wow, they set this up. It's very similar to how a US open was, say, from 2000, the early 2000s. So, a big golf course for us. It's actually the exact same golf courses that we would have played in early 2000. Obviously, technology has gone on. So, you know they play short and then but it's very, very similar to back then. So yeah, I was surprised that you surprised how big a test they set up. And how much of a championship it feels like.

OC VO > Well, I think, what we're going to be looking at even on this, on the senior tour is, is the toughest golf course we going to play. I mean, that's the whole idea behind the US open. Is make the course as hard as possible, driving especially rough. The main thing is, is going to be the rough. So, it's going to be interesting to see how the course will be set up in the next week.

VO > Does it really take its toll? Like they talk about how you over every shot is important, and maybe by the end of the week you realize how tired you really are?

VO OC > No doubt, no doubt. I mean, I remember after playing I finished third at Pinehurst in 95, and I remember the next week just being drained. I mean, I slept so good and, you know, because there's so much adrenaline running through you so much. Every shot seems like you can make a bogey. It's kind of like the Masters every...greens, if you don't need it where you're supposed to, you know you going to struggle. So, no doubt it takes a toll.

VO > So after a U.S. open, once you are completed there, how tired are you really.

VO OC > Yeah. Mentally and physically you're pretty tired. I mean, it's a long week. It's a tough week. But it's it's a lot of fun. And, you know, I had to qualify this year, which is the first time I really had to go qualifying. I wasn't looking forward to that. But when I got out

there in the qualifying in Wisconsin, Oconomowoc, I kind of realized this is pretty cool. I mean, you got a guy like myself is won 11 times in the Schwab Cup trying to qualify. And so is the guy who's an electrician and a plumber. We're all trying to do the same thing. And so, I think that's a pretty cool deal.

OC > Well, David Tom, second season on PGA Tour Champions was highlighted by the US Senior Open victory. And David, you had a brilliant career on the PGA tour with the 13 wins and the major. But in that regard winning this tour, how important was it at that time?

OC VO > I think it was very important. You know, you you don't really know what to expect when you get out here. I guess expectations are that year since I played the tour until I was 50, that I was going to come out here and do really well. But guys still play great golf out here. They really work at it. It's not just a little bonus for a job well done for so many years. You get to come out here and just ride around in a golf cart and play golf. I mean, guys are working out hard, practicing after the round. It's, a little more than, than I thought it would be. Especially when I first got out here. So able to win a major. The second year, it was a nice deal. I was, you know, I thought it would set me up to, you know, many, many victories out here with that confidence. But again, you have to prove yourself every week. You know, confidence comes and goes way golf is. And my game hasn't been a sharp since I turned 50 years. I hoped it would be, but I'm still working at it and still trying to kind of get over that hump. I guess I've won four times now, but it's, you know, it's still, makes me want to just keep working at it, keep going through the motions, keep, showing up, and hopefully things will start going my way.

OC > Well, you're a testament to guys doing the work on PGA Tour Champions. You look the same. You look like David Times I've always known.

OC > Right.

OC > I know how much work you're putting into your game. Like you go back to, the win at the Broadmoor. And what can you recall about that Sunday other than it was pretty tight, I guess it was, it was pretty exciting, exciting finish there.

OC VO > Well, I mean, it goes back to tournaments or big tournaments that I've won in the past. On the regular tour. You get out there on Sunday, you have a chance, and the day goes really quick. Even though pace of play wasn't that quick, it just when you get down towards the end, it was like, oh man, it's almost over. And you know, the big putt on 17. I mean, obviously I birdie 16. But then the par putt on 17 was a big deal. And then getting the ball in play on 18, even though I was just through the fairway and the light rough. Getting that in play on a pretty tough hole. Kind of set me up to be able to two putt, you know.

OC > So, returning to the Broadmoor, what is it about a course like this that's over a century old that can still be set up for major championships?

OC > Well, the greens are such that they're pretty treacherous. And then you got the altitude to contend with, which we don't have on a weekly basis. You got to run a lot of really strong golf holes in the design of it. Lot of tilted fairways. If it gets dry, it's hard to hit

the fairway. But it's a beautiful set up to be able to stay on property in a major. That's a bonus for us as players. I've always played well in Colorado, you know, one at Castle Pines. And so, you know, I've had some success up there, and I've always enjoyed it. I mean, it's such a nice break from Louisiana in the summertime, so I guess I just look forward to just even just being there.

OC > Yeah. You mentioned the greens firm and fast. What's the key to really set yourself up to have success there?

OC VO > Well, obviously. Yeah. Positioning your ball you know, keeping it out of trouble when you do. You know, it's like the guys were saying last week at Oakmont when you're going to hit bad shots, you're going to get in tough spots. It's to, you know, try to recover as best you can and not compound your problems and avoid double bogeys or worse. And, you know, if I can do that and play with confidence and play with, you know, the fact that I've been able to succeed there on that golf course, you know, I should have a good week.

VO OC > You know, you talked about, being here and and age. You turned 58 this year. So, nothing really, though is a is the fountain of youth or the tonic like winning?

OC > Right.

OC > You feel you feel as young as you've ever been. I guess if you win.

OC > Well, that's the thing is, you know, it gives you a little shot in the arm. It gets you motivated to show up at the next event and keep working. There's nothing like it. And it's a great medicine. And, you know, I'm hoping to get another one here soon.

OC > All right. Well, thank you for your time. Best of luck in your return.

VO > Time to rise up in the Rockies for PGA Tour Champions next major. Until then, we thank you for being a part of the tour where legends play. I'm Vince Cellini and we will see you next time.