

2025 PGA TOUR CHAMPIONS LEARNING CENTER SHOW #28

VO > PGA Tour Champions Learning Center.

VO > Out of the Arizona desert was staged a season finale on PGA Tour Champions. Hardware on the table. History in the making. This was titled time, a journey complete, the Charles Schwab Cup championship, the Charles Schwab Cup.

OC > Greetings, everyone, and welcome to PGA Tour Champions Learning Center. I'm Vince Cellini Sunday at Phoenix Country Club, 36 players ended their seasons, but only the elite held aloft the event and season ending trophies. The PGA Tour Champions season in 2025 was fantastic start to finish, and the final chapter did not disappoint. Let's take a look.

OC > Good morning.

OC > Good morning.

OC > Here we go. Round four.

OC > It's almost summer vacation.

OC > It's gonna be fun today.

OC > Looking forward to today. It'll be awesome. Hopefully we both play great and have a big old battle coming down the stretch.

OC > Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to Phoenix Country Club and the final round of the Charles Schwab Cup Championship.

VO > Stewart Cink began the final round. A shot back of playing partner and leader Steven Alker. Here on five Cink for birdie and rolls that six footer. The first birdie of the day in the final pairing. They are tied for the lead. Stewart Cink now on the par five seventh and his trailing by one chipping to get it close. And he certainly does to tap in range. That led to birdie. Steven Alker also birdie. So Cink remains down one. Moving to 12, the par four Cink holds a one shot lead and looking at a long birdie putt around 20ft and knocks that down for birdie. Meanwhile after three putts for bogey on the same hole it is a two shot swing. And Cink now holds a three shot lead. Alker battles back with a birdie on 13. Then steps up to the par three 15th trailing by 2, 168 yards. And this is just a beauty within a couple of feet for birdie. And Steven Alker will not go quietly. Cink has a chance to answer. And his tee shot on 15 is clutch lands at about three feet from the hole. Stewart makes short work of this and that is a birdie. And he maintains his two shot lead with just three holes to play. To the par four 16. Alker continues his pursuit birdie putt from eight feet. Stephen Alker continues to put on the pressure. Suddenly it is just a one shot lead for Stewart Cink. Both missed birdie putts on the par three 17th. So, we head to the last the par five 18th and Steven off trying to be aggressive. But

instead, his second shot is right all the way and finds the water to effectively end any hopes. Leaving Stewart Sink with a tap in for par and a two shot victory at the Charles Schwab Cup Championship. Rally complete cup in hand, Stewart Cink is number one and the champion in Phoenix. Stewart Cink closes with a bogey free four under par 67 and 20 under total to collect both the Charles Schwab Cup championship and Charles Schwab Cup. Steven Alker showed tremendous grit to battle to the final hole and has never finished lower than third in this event in five appearances. First timers, Freddy Jacobson and Tommy Gainey join Jerry Kelly in a tie for third.

VO > A look now at the final Charles Schwab Cup point standings. Stewart Cink finishes just shy of 4 million, with Steven Alker relegated to second. Miguel Angel Jimenez led a majority of the season. He will finish third. Ernie Els and Thomas Bjorn round out an impressive top five, but back to number one.

OC > We're here. We are with a man who took it all in Phoenix. Stewart Cink joins us now. Stewart congratulations, first off.

OC > Thank you.

OC > And I know we've talked you know even in our previous show about your mission coming out here on PGA Tour Champions was to do just this. How did it manifest itself? How did it happen?

OC VO > I've evolved a lot during this year on the course, but one thing I haven't changed is that I've made it a stated goal every week I've talked about it that I want to win the Charles Schwab Cup because I feel like it's a real measure of consistency. You have to play great. I've been around enough of you to know the players are that they play really good golf, and it takes a lot to win tournament out here. it's not easy. The only way to win the Charles Schwab Cup is to win and win often. and I didn't wouldn't say I've won often, but winning at the right time and consistently finishing high and being in contention is what it takes to do something like this. And this week was a great culmination of, of hard work and and learning and growth and, and it paid off big time because I really was proud of the way I played.

OC > You should be, you know, you're such an established player and a major champion. Were you nervous? Starting the day on Sunday a little bit.

OC VO > Yeah. I mean, I think everybody would tell you this, we're all nervous. Nerves are just part of it. And we wake up being nervous, and we hope we're nervous because that means you really care. And. Yeah, I was excited. I was a little nervous. Started off the round today. My nerves probably showed a little bit, and I think Steve probably did, too. We weren't, you know, knocking it dead on on the first 4 or 5 holes that nerves are part of it. And you learn how to, sort of manage yourself. It's almost like you have two golfers within you, you know, you've got a calm golfer, and you've got a nervous golfer.

You got to know the tendencies of both and recognize when to sort of switch gears and sort of being that nervous one. Your distances are different. Your ball curves are different. You're putting everything's a little different. And you just have to recognize that. And it's part of being a golfer at this level.

OC > What was generally the difference for you coming in? I know you said last year you weren't as familiar with Phoenix Country Club, but coming in this year and just really plowing through and having such a great finish.

OC VO > Well, in a way, Phoenix Country Club was a different course this year than it was last year because there's a lot more rough. There's a lot more overseed in the fairways, different grass. So, the course played, I thought quite differently than last year. So, it was almost like a new venue again. But this year, the I was a big difference. I just felt like I'm a lot more complete player now than I was even half a year ago. And I played Friday, 7 or 8 holes of scrappy, you know, kind of ugly golf. But then I finished really well of the play, the last six holes or so, roughly three under par, and made some really good birdies to finish and kind of keep myself up there. I was really proud of that day. That's probably the day that really ended up winning this thing was not letting that stretch of golf really hurt me too much, because in the past I've had some, moments where I let 5 or 6 holes go by and it was like catastrophic for my scorecard. And, but not this week. And, you know, I felt confident I was driving it plenty power and having fun, like, taking the course apart with the driver.

OC > Well, you can see why Steven Alker had won two of the three previous, Charles Schwab Cups. What's it? What was it like to be in that dogfight out there with him on Sunday?

OC VO > Well, it it actually helped me because he uncharacteristically gave me a little three putt on number 12 where I made birdie, and it was a two shot swing that increased my lead to three. And, but I knew because it was Steve Alker that he wasn't going anywhere, and it would have been easy to sort of play it safe and protect a little bit coming down the stretch from that point. But I knew because of his track record and the grit that he shows that he would be, he would bounce right off the mat and sure enough, he stuck it in there about six feet on the next hole and made birdie. Went on to birdie the next par three as well and the next par four. So, he birdied 1315 and 16 right after he three putted on 12. And I expected it. So, it kept me focused. I knew it was going to come. I'm honored to be able to compete at Steve. He's a great guy. I've enjoyed getting to know him a little bit more. We came to this point through very different paths, you know, in our career. But he's just developed into a world class player, and I hope I get to play against him a whole lot in the future because he's a he's a great guy to play with.

OC > I'm pretty sure that's going to be the case moving forward. So, what a tremendous year for you with the three wins and then everything that took place in Phoenix, that's a

lot to build on for 2026. It'd be nice to get a matching set, wouldn't it? Of Charles Schwab Cups.

OC VO > I'd like to have a whole lot of Charles Schwab Cups. I'm going to tell you right now, it feels good. And I think this is my first week I've ever led the Charles Schwab Cup. In my career, I've never been first. So, this is it. It's a good week to be first. And the last time I finished first on any season long race was the 1996 then Nike Tour Championship, which is now the Korn Ferry Tour. So, it's been that long since I was first. At the end of any season in anything, I forgot what it felt like. But now remember, it feels good.

OC > Yeah, I bet it does. Thank you, Stewart, congratulations on everything.

OC > Thanks, Vince.

OC > Great year, great finish.

OC > Thank you.

VO > Straight ahead on Learning Center. We'll hear from the man who led entering the week, Steven Alker, talking about his day and a near miss for a third Charles Schwab Cup. And our champion Stewart Cink gives you an up close look at playing in the finale. Cink takes us inside the ropes, mic'd up and throwing down. That's next.

VO > Steven Alker entered the Charles Schwab Cup championship on the verge of history, aiming to become just the second player on this tour to earn three Charles Schwab Cups, battling Stewart Sink to the end with only a wayward second shot on 18, fully ending his pursuit. The 54 year old Kiwi reflected on the season's final round.

OC VO > It's a whole mix of emotions, but I think it's it's fun because this is what we wake up and we keep playing for. I'm 54 so I keep playing for it. I wake up, I go, I want to play golf, and I want to try and win a golf tournament. And yeah, I did that today. I give myself a chance and to win the Cup as well. And that's all I can ask, you know. So, it's still a world class player. You can still play on the PGA tour. He's got enough length and still putts it nice and chips at nice. So, and an a world class guy too. I mean heck he and Lisa are fantastic. And yeah, we're the champion I mean he's had a great year. Is this one of the year. And he's been consistent. And, hey, he's he's going to be a force to be reckoned with out here.

VO > 52 year old Stewart Cink entered the Charles Schwab Cup championship, number three in the points standings. He started hot and took us along through those early steps in warmup and then lets us ride along, mic'd up and motoring through the opening hole of the 72 holes season finale. It was a harbinger of things to come. Stewart was on.

OC > Absolutely. You know, first, the first shot of any tournament is always nerve-racking for anybody, including us. And, it's just how you handle those nerves, you know,

you can't really control all the results. Try to control the controllables and and, have some acceptance and a good heart and go from there. So, we'll see.

OC > Play well.

O C> Yeah. Good play this year. Hold on. Mr. Hi. Hi, Stewart.

OC > I'm Jan.

OC > Hey. Okay, okay.

OC > From Atlanta, Georgia, please welcome Stewart Cink.

OC > Thank you, thank you. Miss it. Couldn't tell Chris I. I can't tell if it hit anything too hard or not.

OC > Please welcome World Golf Hall of Fame member Ernie Els.

OC > I got 5 of it.

OC > Good shot Ern. Yeah, I thought I heard maybe nicked something right of the way down.

OC > Just great to be out this week. You've got really coming to this field. Obviously, you've done something. Something good. You know, just like back in the regular days if you made The Tour Championship. I mean all good.

OC > All good.

OC > Playing with this man.

OC > Yeah, it's been fun. You know, you play a long season out here and especially for Ernie and me and a few others here playing late on the first round. It's a kind of a validation. You know, you've done some good stuff this year and everybody in the field I know would love to cap it off.

OC > And to go low.

OC > Yeah. You got to go low.

OC > Guy knew he was.

PC > They're not going to lay down. This whole you know so a little claustrophobic. You got fence over there and a fence over there. So, you kind of don't aim down the center. You kind of. Your line is about right where Ernie Ball went, just on the right edge. And You take what you get sometimes hit it hard and go find it.

OC > 185.

OC > 85 so that's our our runway. So, we're just talking like a nine iron hit something 160 in the air and go wedge. You know think you're going to get up in the air. Yeah. Like yeah at the scoreboard. Yeah.

OC > Nice shot.

OC > Thanks. If it was the regular lie our little center, we could have gone low and put some heat on it. But practice is more effective when you do it little by little as opposed to one huge batch of like, ours. And we kind of focus on what we're trying to do and we on the range we have like a little 16 ball set that we do every day. And that's really all the real practice we do, at tournaments and it's before the round. And that's about it. I think we probably want something to carry pretty close to at it and no end at all. Right? Maybe 1 or 2 short little but might get a little birdie off Ernie. Shots like that that are all feel we try to just let the body do the work. And, you know, if you're shooting a basketball, you're not going to think about how hard to throw the ball from behind the three point line. You're just letting your body just react. So, that athletic type of reaction, that's the way we try to approach shots like that. And it's like anything under 120 yards or any like little half shots, like a smooth eight iron or something like that.

OC > Get it.

OC > Thanks.

OC > Good job.

OC > That's a little different pin from before from what I remember. Oh, yeah. Fairly short par five like that. It gives you some, it usually gives you some forgiveness and at least one of your shots in that case the tee ball was a little to the right, but, you know, we made a short way out of it and a good wedge shot and good putt. There you go.

VO > When Learning Center returns one of the great season stories of 2025, the smiling Aussie Steve Allen, making the most of his opportunity and certainly one to watch on this tour. His journey here is worth a list.

VO > PGA Tour Champions has long been fertile ground for great golf stories, and Steve Allen is certainly one of them, winning again this year after a two decade plus drought, resuscitating a career and creating a foundation for future success. He's easy to like, easy to pull for.

OC > We're spending some time with Steve Allen, a multiple winner in 2025 and a real story of perseverance, which I will get to in just a moment. But I want to talk about 2025 and why the big breakthrough for you this year? What what was the deal? What's going on?

OC VO > I think I think, I think I was close last year to to breaking through, playing well didn't quite get over the hump. You know I didn't didn't wasn't really in contention. But

it was really close to being there and improved a few things I think in the off season, a little bit of technical, a little bit of mental and a little bit of, just comfort level of knowing what we're doing, where we're going. And, you know, it all kind of came together a few times.

VO > But winning helps, right? How big was the Gallery classic for you in taking that? And it had been a while, right.

VO OC > Yeah. Funny story, I when I won the Australian Open back in oh two. Yeah. I told my now wife then girlfriend that it wouldn't be four years before I win again. Unfortunately, it was like 22 or 23. So it was it was exciting. It was a relief as well. It definitely, you know, gave you the validation that you can compete out here, which, you know, you sort of know, but it's nice to actually get it done. And I think the relief of knowing that I was going to be playing for a couple more years out here was huge. You know, as the season went on, that, that that lets you know that when you play well, you're going to have a chance. So.

OC > Well now let's get to the journey of being on PGA tour or losing your PGA tour card, getting it back, losing it again, just trying to find places to play Steve, so that you could stay in the mix again. What was that period like for you? Just trying to hang on.

OC VO > Yeah, I think I think every time I, you know, had a setback and lost my card, I was never you always felt like the game wasn't that far away. You know, the first time I lost my card, I, you know, had a had a good year the year before and then sort of lost the card and you drop back on to the Korn Ferry, you know, you see you're playing well out there. Get it back. And then I think, you know, I think it was a bit of confidence a couple of times that, you know, and ironically, it was getting close to winning that probably dented my confidence. Had a couple of mess ups and you always feel like the game is not far away. So, you're always sort of just trying to get back. And, you know, had a couple of days right now, status in the U.S. at all played in One Asia, which was a tour that was trying to start up through the Australian tour, and and Korea and China and things like that. But you always feel like it's not that far away. So, you sort of I had great support. You know, my wife was was huge to, to keep me going and, and encouraged me to keep playing. And then, you know, I got back on the Korn Ferry Tour and got really close to get my card back. Didn't quite make it. And then, you know, getting into late 40s, that was probably the toughest, toughest time.

OC > Sure always is.

OC VO > And, you know, because now you I don't really even have I've got status on the Korn Ferry. I'm not getting any events. So, you have to try and play wherever you can. Lot of mini tours, a lot of little things try to go in Australia and the Australian summer, all those things to keep playing, to have a crack at the Champions Tour.

OC > And here we are.

OC > Yeah.

OC VO > You're you return to golf, PGA Tour Champions with a T3 at Q school. Q school as we know it is going away for PGA Tour Champions. For now, I wonder how you feel about that because we may because of that not ever see some stories written from players who get an opportunity here. You must have some interesting opinions about.

OC > Yeah.

OC > or feelings.

OC VO > Oh, I'm a little disappointed in that decision I think that, you know, there's so many good golfers around the world that want to try and play on the Champions Tour and to give them that chance to give them that hope that they can do it. As we've as you know, I've proven other guys have proven there are people that are really good players in the 50s. And so, yeah, it's a little frustrating, I think, because that happened two years ago, who knows where I'd be. I would have been doing some Mondays for a while, but they're they're so difficult and so cutthroat that you never know how that's going to pan out. So, I don't know. We'll see how it goes.

OC > Finally, what is what does this tour meant to you?

OC VO > It's been it's it's meant a lot. It's great to it's great to be able to still compete in, you know, the game of the sport that I love in my 50s. To be able to still compete is great. Financially it's been amazing for me because obviously those tough years, the bank balance was getting pretty low. When you put it all together, I've got a lot of, you know, a lot of my friends from golf are out here playing. It's been it's been fantastic.

OC > It's been great to have you.

OC > Yep.

OC > Thanks, Steve.

OC > Thank you.

OC > Appreciate you.

VO > And that will do it for our PGA Tour Champion season. In the words of Maximus, are you not entertained? Many thanks to our players, our event sponsors, and to you for making 2025 a fabulous ride. I'm Vince Jordan and we leave you with the tour's winning moments.

VO > Ernie Els and his won the season opener.

VO > And there you have it, Miguel Angel Jimenez.

VO > Justin Leonard is the Chubb Classic Champion.

VO> There you have it, Steven Alker.

VO > The red wine will be flowing tonight.

VO > Steve Allen he is the winner of the Gallery Classic.

VO > And Jerry Kelly has won.

VO > Stewart Cink has won.

VO > Angel Cabrera has won his second major in six days.

VO > Bjorn and Clarke, your winners.

VO > Senior Open add to to the year's Senior Open.

VO > For the third time this season. Steve Allen is a winner.

VO > The man from Down Under is finally on top.

VO > and he's done it, Stewart Cink.

VO > Thomas Bjorn puts the pedal down.

VO > The goose guts one out.

VO > It was worth the wait. Means everything to him.

VO > He was the qualifier on Tuesday. He's the champion on Sunday.

VO > Oh, goodness.

VO > And Cejka is the champion.

VO > What a close for Leonard. Your champion here in Virginia.

VO > And Steven Alker dominated in little Rock. Now atop the points list with one event left.

VO > Stewart Cink, he put it out there to start the year. Exclamation mark to end.
Charles Schwab, Cup champion and a winner here in Phoenix.