

2025 PGA TOUR CHAMPIONS LEARNING CENTER SHOW #8

VO > PGA Tour Champions Learning Center.

VO > Well past the playing of the Masters. PGA tour champion sets up for more Georgia golf TPC Sugarloaf in Duluth again welcomes legends. It's the Mitsubishi Electric Classic.

OC > Hi, everyone, and welcome to Learning Center. I'm Vince Cellini. Sugarloaf offers hilly terrain and exciting risk reward finishing hole. And past champion scoring multiple wins here. So, what about the 2025 edition? With more, let's turn to the men who call the action. Bob Papa and Paul Azinger.

VO > Well thank you Vince. The eighth event of the year for the PGA Tour Champions, the Mitsubishi Electric Classic was a classic.

VO OC > Jerry Kelly set the stage by shooting a course record at ten under par 62 on Friday. He and Ernie Els had the lead at 15 under par going into the final round, but zinger Jerry Kelly jumped out early on Sunday in the final round.

OC VO > He just went out and won the tournament. Really took the bull by the horns. He was tied with Hall of Famer Ernie Els going to the final round without his best stuff, and he birdied four out of the five right out of the gate today and just took it. Ernie was able to come all the way back in time, but there was a critical point on the 15th hole that made the difference. But before that, this shot by Stephen Ames. Bob, you don't get to see this very often.

VO > Ames, a three-time champion having won this event the last two years, makes a double eagle at the par-5 18 and.

VO > He finished the last two years making long putts there at that hole. This was the critical point in the golf tournament. Ernie hits a great shot here. They've tied now Ernie tied him on the previous hole and just stuffed it on the hardest hole on the course. And then Jerry Kelly comes up. He has to answer him. Huge. But this perfect line from Jerry Kelly we got to see it all. He said it has to go right. And it did. Right in the center, right in the bottom.

VO > And that's after Els had missed a birdie putt at 16, had a poor second shot at 17 and Jerry Kelly needed just two putts for the win. He sets the tournament record of 20 under par, eclipsing the mark set by Stephen Ames in 2023. Jerry Kelly picks up his 13th win of his PGA Tour Champions career one shot over Ernie Els. As we send it back to Vince.

VO > Thank you. Charles Schwab Cup standings top ten for the top three. Cabrera has gone win top five in Back-To-Back weeks, moving to fourth. Kelly zooms up 25 spots with the victory and into the top five in this season long race.

VO > This past week, another PGA Tour Champions legend was back on board. World Golf Hall of Famer and former Ryder Cup and Presidents Cup captain Davis Love, the third, made his season debut in Duluth this just three months after open heart surgery to correct a valve problem. Love turns 61 this month and is excited about his return to golf and good health.

OC > What a pleasure to spend time with World Golf Hall of Famer Davis. Love the third. It's great to see you. Really great to see you. Because we're what, three months or so removed from your open-heart surgery.

OC > Yeah, I'm glad to be back. My golf game is not really ready to be back, but I'm ready to come back and see all you guys and see all my friends and, you know, hopefully knock some rust off and find my game.

OC > What can you tell us about the procedure now is as you move forward from it?

OC > Well, I've been really blessed to have, great care at Mayo down in Jacksonville, close to home. And about ten years ago that I identified that I needed a heart valve replacement. They just said, we're just going to wait it out a little bit. And it was a long wait. But, over the last year, I've known that it was coming. And after a thumb surgery last year that kept me out almost all year. On the back of that now, I haven't really played golf for like 16 months. I've played maybe four tournaments in 16 months. So, I'm ready. I'm glad the procedure is over. I'm healthy. I'm just rusty is all it is.

OC > Right? And and I'm sure it's medicinal to get back to golf and doing what you do. Do you have any restrictions at all or what are your expectations now?

VO OC > Well, my expectations were to see if I could actually hit a ball. April 1st. The doctor let me start hitting it. It's been a slow process, and I'm. I'm getting better. My expectations are, you know, just don't hurt something else. My heart's fine. I had a small valve replacement, even though it was a big surgery. It wasn't that big. A deal is recovering from the big incision and getting back up to speed without hurting myself again. So, the big goal. One of my friends is helping me on my rehab. So, what's your goal this week? I go just to finish.

VO > What are the guys talk to you about here, getting back out here with the players.

VO OC > Well, everybody's surprised to see me. And that's the thing, is that they think that I had this huge surgery and that I'm not going to be able to ever walk again or play golf again. Even the guys at home at Sea Island Club, when I pop out there on a cart with my clubs, I go, what are you doing? I'm practicing. I'm playing golf. I got a 1030 design it. Everybody's. It sounds bad, but it really was well planned out, well thought out. And as Jim Nantz said, I went in healthy, and I came out healthier. And so, I really wasn't I worried, I wasn't struggling. I've been very blessed to, to have good health, even though I've had a lot of injuries. I bounce back pretty quick from.

OC > and I would imagine how you can offer advice to people who may be facing something similar. I think they are. What would you tell them about getting making sure they're checked out?

OC > Well, the biggest thing I've been saying is it doesn't matter what it is. Early detection. They detected this ten years ago. Two of my, doctor friends that were taking care of me just said, did anybody ever say you have a heart murmur? And they started researching it and doing some tests and found out that I had a leaky valve instead of a murmur.

OC > So we talked a little bit about being out here. Expectations, you say to finish, as you look at the course of your schedule this year, have you thought about exactly how many times we'll see you out this year?

OC > Yeah, as I said, I didn't get to play much, over the last year or so. This is the kickoff of trying to get ready to play some some bigger tournaments in May. Obviously, we've got, you know, major championships that I could get in, on both tours and, I'm just looking to play. If I could play 15 this year, I would be very, very happy. I've got some goals out here on champions Tour. Obviously, I've never really played that well on champions. And I can play about 12 or 14 more PGA tour events and break Mark Brooks's record all time starts record. So, things like that that I haven't been able to do over the last 4 or 5 years because I've been out so much, I'd like to get back and just get into the rhythm of playing and play wherever they'll have me.

OC > It's great to see you out here.

OC > Thank you.

OC > Thank you so much. Good luck.

OC > Thanks.

VO > Still to come on Learning Center Georgia is on the mind of Bernhard Langer for many reasons. Competing over the weekend here and prior to that at the Masters. He'll share with you what you might not know about his final Augusta playing appearance when we return.

VO > The 2025 edition of The Masters was easily one of the best ever, thanks to Rory McIlroy taking us all in a dramatic roller coaster ride. In the end, McIlroy secured the green jacket in his 11th attempt to become the sixth man to win the career Grand Slam and getting over the mental hurdle was a huge factor. Rory turned to sports psychologist doctor Bob Rotella for help, as have many major champions. We caught up with two of them. On why Rotella is able to guide them through the mental struggles that wrap themselves around the game, particularly in major championships.

OC VO > Rory is very comfortable with who he is and his game at the moment, so he was very much bought into, you know, Bob's taking a both very simple Bob, just focus on the target, have a good attitude. It's as simple as that. And the story doesn't change, which again is very important. You know, you don't want to be working with somebody that's coming up with something new every week when it's not working. He's very consistent.

OC VO > Pressure is a funny thing, though. Ideally, nobody puts pressure on you. You exert pressure on yourself, and you got to understand that and, you know, it's all comes down to acceptance doesn't work. We're all humans. We make mistakes. We do. We're not perfect all the time. And sometimes if you're trying to win a tournament, you're trying to do what you do. You expect to be perfect all the time. That's never going to be the case. So, it's how you react to those imperfections, which just helps you deal with pressure if you can accept them, move on. Find your ball. Do the best you can. From there. That's basically it. That's a very I've always found it, somewhat difficult to get into that mindset, but when I have, that's invariably when I play, when I'm playing my best.

VO > When it comes to mental toughness as well as longevity, few can match the great Bernhard Langer, competing in his 41st and final Masters. The two-time champion at Augusta National, did his usual grind on Thursday and Friday, coming up one stroke shy of making the cut for the weekend like a sponge, Bernie soaked up every emotional moment, taking his family and all of us along for an incredible two days.

OC > Once again, it's a pleasure to spend time with Bernhard Langer here, who is coming off an emotional, Masters Week just a few weeks ago. And Bernhard, you've had time to process that, and I guess I wanted to ask you what what are some of the the great memories of your 41st start there as a participant?

OC VO > Yeah, there were lots of them. It was, just, all the planning up to it, all the interviews, all the requests from overseas as well as locally. But then, you know, my son, asking if he could caddie for me, that was extremely special, that he would want to do that. And we pulled it off. So that was cool walking the fairways with him, having my whole family there with grandkids and, everybody to support me. My brother flew in from Germany with a few friends and just, you know, the ovation I got on the very first tee teeing off Thursday, was very emotional almost brought me to tears. And good thing I had a few minutes to calm down and I might have whiffed, a ball who knows. And it kind of went on and on for, you know, the whole 36 holes. And then it was then it became a little strange because I'm coming up 18, I'm two over par. And the cut was going to be 2 or 3 over. So, I'm walking up there and and getting the standing ovation and I'm wondering, is, is this going to be the last one? But I'm probably going to be here making the cut that will be here tomorrow, you know, that kind of thing. And as it turned out, I bogeyed it, and I didn't make the cut. So, it was the last time for me personally, it was, a wonderful farewell. Really enjoyed it. On top of that, I got a brand-new Mercedes, which almost blew me away. Had no idea that was coming.

OC > It's really remarkable, that you took your route to almost play to the weekend there.

OC > Well, I think they felt sorry for me when they didn't look back there. You know, where it was only 80 or whatever. 60, 80 behind, you know, and, I'm hitting on, on, 11. I hit driver, driver as good as I could on Friday and, six yard short of the front bench. And, you know, some of the other holes I'm hitting three woods into for, fours and hybrids and the, the younger generation to hit eight and nine and and it's just hard to compete. And that was my reason to, you know, call it quits there because I, it's just hard to you have to plan almost, okay. Where do I miss the greens? I can get it up and down. Well, that's not that a lot of fun playing golf or anyway, I do. I missed the green. So, you know, you want to hit the green and and have a birdie putt. And that doesn't happen very often anymore for me.

OC > You were quite the showman there wearing, the all red two, as a tribute to 1985, your first victory.

OC VO > Yeah. It came to me a few weeks ago. I saw, you know, I know where the the two outfits. The first two days that you won West. The red and then the green and yellow and so, yeah, I think I can pull it off.

OC > Well, you look exactly the same. You can pull it up. Yeah?

OC > I'm not sure about that, but it was fun. You know, it's interesting.

OC > It's never really goodbye for past champions at the Masters. Of course you will not. You won't be playing in the future. But there has to be some, give you some sense of comfort that you'll always be able to go back. You're a champion forever at the Masters.

OC VO > Yeah, again. You know, it's. We're always welcome. We have our own locker up there, and you can play the past three contests if you want to with your grandkids or kids or caddying or something like that. And you be part of the champions dinner, which is always, a highlight of the week. And, you know, it's the only time you can wear your green jacket if you choose to. So, it's it's a wonderful few days, I think even if I don't play the tournament anymore, I think I'm still going to enjoy just being there for a few days. And, enjoying the tournament and everything that it offers, and bring some family and friends and show them around.

OC > Do you think there would be a time when I could drive the Mercedes some time?

OC > Absolutely. Yeah. Just. You might have to come to Boca.

OC > I absolutely will, thank you.

OC > You're welcome.

OC > Great job. Bernie.

OC > Thank you.

OC > Thank you.

VO > When we return on Learning Center, that blue eyed ball of energy known as Fred Funk. This has been an amazing ride as we celebrate a career milestone taking place this week. Why? His golf is a thousand times better. Stay with us.

VO > PGA Tour Champions is ready to celebrate a new event on the schedule. Jefferson Health and Lehigh Country Club in Allentown, Pennsylvania, to announce the new Jefferson Lehigh Valley Classic, set to debut in 2026. The inaugural is ready for play the week of September 28th and is expected to provide a \$50 million boost to the local economy.

VO > As for this week, it's a return to The Woodlands Country Club in Texas for the 22nd playing of the Insuperity Invitational. Bernard Lager will again be in the field as a four-time champion. And then there is 2012 winner Fred Funk, not only a past champion, but he'll hit a special career milestone, putting tea in the ground there. Fred will celebrate his health and a monumental tour start.

OC > Spending some time with Fred Funk. And he has been a professional for over 40 years. And as it turns out, PGA tour, PGA Tour Champions Fred. Soon you will be making your 1000 start as a professional on both of those tours. And a little background on this, your first victory came the 92 Shell Houston Open.

OC > Yep.

OC > You're heading back to the Insuperity Invitational in Houston. So, it kind of comes full circle for a thousand. But a thousand. What a number?

OC VO > Yeah, it really is considering my goal was to keep my card once. Actually, my first goal was to qualify. But then when I got out there, I said I really want to keep my card at least one time. I lost my card to rookie year. Got it right back for the 90 season, 89 was rookie. Got it back. Never had to go back to school ever again. And then it just was a progression of getting better as I was out there on tour. Probably the biggest thing was, learning to believe in my own abilities, which took me

probably the first ten years on tour. I didn't believe how good I could be or was. And, and then I turned it into 650 starts on a regular tour and now a thousand on the Champions Tour. Pretty amazing. And considering I didn't start out, I was 32, 33 years old. Most guys came out right out of college and they had ten years on me to get all these tournaments. But I worked hard and, and it's a great milestone. Going back to The Woodlands that you mentioned, a lot of great things happened because I went to school there and got through and got my first win there. My current wife I met there, Sharon, 20 years later, Taylor was on the bag and the champions when I won there, and I always wanted to win with him on the bag. Godparents and my kids are their first record I still have. They're still holding up 62 on that Saturday in 92. So, a lot of great things happen at The Woodlands. And to make that the my milestone week is is happening.

VO OC > Yeah. You got some spiritual connection there's as Maryland guy, with the state of Texas. You met Sharon at a post party right after your victory.

OC VO > Yeah. Well, she no. I met her earlier in that week through Duke Butler. Okay. And, Ken Stockton, who was running the tournament, introduce me to share. But I saw her off and on, and I. And she was just way out of my league, and, and then I won, and I missed my flight, and they had that van called duck soup, and duck soup was, playing in the pavilion there. And I had a couple dances. I was dance with Sharon and and, we met, but I didn't see her again. Talk to her until the 93. And then we started dating. So, there was a year gap there from when I met her. And when we actually went out on our first date.

OC > Yeah. Look what golf has done. It's brought you all of these wonderful things in your life.

OC > Yup. It really is.

OC > As far as being out here for so many years, would you say that part of the longevity is. And to me, it's your attitude, Fred, I think you're always such a positive guy, upbeat and happy even when things aren't going well. Is that a big part of it?

OC VO > Well, yeah, I was just going to add that to it because I was probably one of the hardest guys on myself. Like a lot of us are out here on the tour, but but I love having fun. I love being with the guys. I, pretty much always rooted for the guys. And and I do remember back when, when I got paired with Tiger Phil and the energy level that they brought, and I love being in that group. I was never intimidated or seldom and intimidated by what they could do or what they brought to the floor. But, man, I really enjoyed the golf at that highest level and watching those guys do what I couldn't do. But, more than anything, it's the brotherhood, the fraternity. Whatever it is, it's out here. I don't want to give it up.

OC > We don't want you to give it up either. And thank goodness you're not going to have to give it up after a recent health scare. Tell us about that.

OC > Yeah, I was down in Puerto Vallarta. Renew clinic that we go to is about ten of us out here that can go down there. And and any of us can go down there and get stem cell treatments and other wellness center, basically. But they had a CT scan of your heart that you could do at the hospital there. And I had no symptoms that I really connected. That would be any problem. But I had a 98% blockage with my widowmaker, and the branch off of it was, blocked as well. And I actually stayed

there. I met the doctor there, and he says, we can do it tonight, or you go home. And I said, I'm here. Let's do it.

OC > Yeah.

OC VO > I didn't know it was a walk in time bomb. So, it's a kind of a message that, you just never know. It's good to shape you. And I try to always stay in decent shape, and my heart's fine. It's just the the the arteries were clogged up, and that's not good.

VO OC > Oh, no. Well, I'm glad you discovered that and got it taken care of. Thank goodness. Before I let you go, how would you describe just your journey in golf all these years.

OC VO > I've been able to do what I've done. I love the game of golf. I took it up when I was ten. My dad was a really good player. I learned to play golf. The University of Maryland golf course and I was always there around golf. And then I was a coach on the golf team after I played the mini tour when broken 81, so it just was a progression. But I also had a, a simple goal was to see how good Fred Funk would be. If it was good enough great. If it wasn't, I believe. I just had to know. I gave it everything I had, and I believe that if I never did make the tour, I didn't last very long on the tour. I gave it up my best, and if it wasn't good enough, I could live with myself. So, it was always that goal. Just, if I lose my card, I know I gave it away and and that would have been fine. But it turned into what? It turned into a much better career than I, would have ever dreamed. The people I got to play golf with, the people I met outside of golf, that you meet because of golf. It's such a great game. The team meeting people like you. And no, honestly, it truly is a big fraternity between, you know, the caddies, the players, the the guys have put on the tournaments, all the announcers, the the we do it together. It's a big, big deal. And, and then the people you meet along the way, it's, it's really cool. So, I've been very blessed to, to have had this game to get as good as I got at the game. That's great. I, I do miss that part. I miss I miss being as good as I used to be. I think you're saying that...

OC> We all do. We all do.

OC > You're better. You think you're better than you were. But I think I was definitely better than I am now. That's for sure.

OC > Well, it's great you you're one of the great guys on the tour and

OC > Thank you.

OC > Golf and sports. Fred, great to spend time with you. Great thing.

OC > Congrats on a thousand

OC > Thank you. I'm glad you were here to announce it.

OC > 10,000 more.

VO > And with that we bid you farewell from the Peach State. Next up Texas PGA Tour Champions. Rolls into the month of May. I'm Vince Cellini, and as always, we thank you for watching.