

2025 PGA TOUR CHAMPIONS LEARNING CENTER SHOW #9

VO > PGA Tour Champions Learning Center.

VO > As the calendar turn to May. PGA Tour Champions rolled into the Lone Star State. The 21st Insperity Invitational from The Woodlands Country Club just north of Houston, Texas, who emerged as the lone star of this season's ninth event. Here he is, emerging from a very crowded leaderboard is one Stewart Cink. Cink is locked in and captured a second win on the over 50 circuit, topping Retief Goosen in a playoff to take the Insperity Invitational. With more on sinks victory the men who called it Bob Papa and Peter Jacobsen.

VO > Vince, always one of the marquee events for the PGA Tour Champions, the Insperity Invitational.

OC > Final round, started with Mike Weir and Retief Goosen in a share of the lead at nine under par. Miguel Angel Jimenez made a run. Stewart Cink started just two shots back, but Peter nobody in those last two groups vaulted out, which kind of opened the door for just about anybody.

OC VO > Well, you see that happen a lot when you've got a bunch leaderboard in the last group and they kind of watch each other play and they forget about the players behind them because we saw scoring conditions are really good today and that's exactly what happened. Stewart Cink jumps past everybody to get the win.

VO > Stewart Cink birdied 13, bogeyed 14, birdied 15 and then at the difficult 17 rolls this in for birdie. That got him to 11 under par and a share of the lead. Miguel Angel Jimenez eagled 15, missed a birdie putt at 17 and then a three-putt bogey at 18, drops him out of a share of the lead. Retief Goosen, He missed birdie putt at 16, 17 and 18, so in the first playoff hole Goosen just whiffed his second shot.

VO > Yeah. Totally unexpected. As good as he is with these mid irons. And that is a shot that we do not see Retief Goosen hit ever.

VO > Stewart Cink then clear sailing from here and finished in style.

VO > Yeah, he did. There were only two birdies all day here at 18. But what does Stewart Cink do. He decides to make the third and finish this thing off, as you said in style.

VO > Winds up shoot the four under par 68 with his birdie and wins in a playoff against the Chiefs in the fourth playoff in a disparity invitational history. Stewart Cink comes away with the victory as he shoots 68 in this final round for his second win on the PGA Tour Champions. As we send it back to Vince.

VO > Thank you gentlemen. A look at the Charles Schwab Cup standings now. Leader Miguel Angel Jimenez finished third at the Woodlands Country Club after Steven Alker and Ernie Els. Cink and Goosen slide into the top five as the drama continues from event to event in the season long race.

VO > Now, more of this tour's unprecedented access. Major champion and former world number one David Duvall is in his fourth full season on PGA Tour Champions. At The Woodlands, David

shows us what it's like to play and sink like a pro. Mic'd up on hole number one in round one of the Insperity Invitational as we tag along.

OC > Playing here is funny for 35 years 38 years is crazy. So that's always fun.

OC > You still get nerves. Oh, of course you have such pride in what you do. And you think at this point you can get better and improve your craft. But it's not always the case in stupid game. So,

OC > green dotted. What's that a Swedish flag.

OC > What's up bud?

OC > How is it going Dave.

OC > It's going well.

OC > Next on the tee playing out at Cherry Hills, Colorado. David Duvall.

OC > Good hit. Less than brilliant.

OC > Yeah. Probably not the start you see.

OC > It's alright. Mind scoping out the other par fives. Well layup on this one to. It's only a driver and a four. You know, I hit my shot wasn't quite what I wanted. Now, the objective is a improve my position. You know, that's where the golfers get in trouble. And now make the mistake. I mean, you hit a shot. We hit so many bad shots. You know, that didn't hurt me, though. I didn't do what I wanted, but now I'm like, all right, how do I improve my position? How do I give myself the chance to to make a four? And it doesn't require the heroic shot. You know, if it's sitting up good, I can probably hit a three wood up there. If not, I might just pitch it down in front of the green. I have a 40-yarder left, hit us in the chair. Nice, nice. Take a seat. I didn't bring a cart,

OC > There you go.

OC > Hey, you want to play it?

OC > Not really. That's a little.

OC > Well, then I'll pick it up and clean it. Or remove the chair and just kind of drop it. Try to drop it right there. Do I need I don't need to mark anything. Right. So. So it's kind of like right here where that stick is.

OC > You get a relief area.

OC > Oh I do okay. So, what's our total. About 280 or so 285.

OC > 76.

OC > 76. All right. So, it's a club. Just that little arc thing okay. Okay. All right. Thank you.

OC > 225 just run out.

OC > I think that's the best play. You agree?

OC > Yeah.

OC > You just pop this down there now, you. Oh, yeah. Let's jump. I don't think so. Sure. Sitting. Okay, well, with should work. Yes.

OC > did that work?

OC > Yeah. You know, there's a slight downslope turn, so out of wet rough. But some bad things can happen.

OC > Ever hit one and chair before?

OC > Oh, yeah. So very few things we haven't done after so long.

OC > You still having fun?

OC > Oh, yeah, I didn't want. Wasn't for a while when you just totally lost. And in the wilderness. That's that old thing, right? Patients. Yeah. And when you're on the edge, you got to have more and more. And you don't have any. Yeah. So, it's like that's my thing is like, all right. Just right now just take it as it comes out here. Hill 43, hopefully somewhere in there it should just go up. Just release a little bit. Yep. All right. See I got a nice look. Pretty much just dead straight. No way it goes left. Yeah, it's just going right out. And it turned out. That's one thing I got to get better. I didn't take advantage of the fives at all. Oh, you do what you're trying to do, all right? There's no way that putt breaks left the slope. But I was there.

OC > Is there a way?

OC > I did.

OC > You might recall, last week on Learning Center, we chatted up Fred Funk, who was making his 1000 career start on PGA tour and PGA Tour Champions combined. Fred was back at Woodlands Country Club, where he won this event back in 2012 and which was also the site of the first of his eight PGA tour victories. Van silver, one of Fred's longtime friends and former caddie who's waged a longtime battle against cancer, was back on his bag last week. Needless to say, it was an emotional reunion all around for both.

OC > Oh, it's the best, friends for over 50 years in college, and it's turned into a work, and it's just, been fabulous. Going to try to make him smile over every shot.

OC VO > Very special week. And the biggest thing is, I always wanted this to be the week, you know, I wanted it to be this tournament.

OC > All right.

OC > Thank you.

OC > polish them off.

OC > Everything is pretty much in my career? Kind of started here. And so many great things happened here with my life. So, I'm glad I made it happen. So, you're making me nervous taking a milkshake? I'm already shaking.

OC > What was your reaction when he asked you to do this?

OC > I said, you're crazy and what are you talking about? The more I thought about it, the stronger I got. The last few months. I know I can do it.

OC > I never thought we were ever going to be reuniting when even in the mindset when he started feeling better.

OC > And then I was approaching this thousand, I said, van, sound like you're starting to feel a lot better. And you know, we can make this thing happen at The Woodlands for my thousandth event,

OC > We've got a cake there for you.

OC > All right. That's amazing. It'd be special. And it really is what I'm seeing from all the other caddies out there. Love seeing, you know, almost a fallen soldier that's back.

OC > Go to see you.

OC > I am going to Boston.

OC > Yeah, yeah.

OC > Hey Freddy. How are you going a thing?

OC > I mean, he's on his feet. He's alive and he's out here seeing all the guys is brotherhood. It's a special week for him.

OC > Oh it's fabulous. Yeah. And how many? They're coming up to me to welcome me back. So, it's been great to do this for 31 years. Just. It's fabulous.

VO > Still to come on Learning Center. Another past winner here Scott McCarron on why he sees his game trending in the right direction. Plus, Stuart Appleby is another year older, but that's not stopping him from grinding to get his first win on this tour. And the season's first major on PGA Tour Champions is right around the corner. We'll sit down with region's tradition defending champion Doug Barron, one of the most entertaining interviews on tour. Stay with us.

VO > Scott McCarron has 11 PGA Tour Champions wins, tying him for 28th all time. However, his last win came back in 2019. McCarron, like many other PGA tour champions, has had to deal with his share of injuries. But in 2021 it was a surgically repaired left ankle that really set him back. The former Charles Schwab Cup champion turned 60 this summer and recently shown signs of being his old self. Already multiple top 20 finishes this season. Here's Scott on why he's playing better golf in 2025.

OC VO > We're never that far off. You know a couple good rounds; a couple good shots can lead to some good tournaments and some good play. I got back with my old swing coach, E.A. Tischler, about three and a half, four weeks ago, started working on some stuff that I worked on all 20, 16, 17, 18, 19, and I was playing really good. So just kind of getting back to some of my fundamentals, I get a little tilt in my back swing, so getting a little more rounded with my shoulders, a little more level with my shoulder turn, and then really posting up on that left leg. I think that's helped quite a bit. Also working with, a really smart guy named Doctor Izzy Justice just on being relaxed, being focus, just doing a little more meditation, keeping my, you know, brain electricity down and keeping calm

and all those things. It really is. I've started playing better, started having more fun out in the golf course and being a little more relaxed.

VO > Stuart Appleby turned 54 this past Thursday. The Aussie made his PGA Tour Champions debut in 2021 at the Pure Insurance Championship at Pebble Beach. Since then, he's competed in 80 PGA Tour Champions events, but his best finish is a tie for second, which came at the 2024 Insperity Invitational. There was a time when Stuart was on the fence about joining PGA Tour Champions. But he has since embraced the tour, the grind and the love of competition.

OC VO > It's gone real quick. Season seems to fly by. The offseason seems to go too quick. I think the game feels the same in some senses to what I've always has. You're always trying to find a way to just get better for work on where your weaknesses, get the right mindset. I probably don't get as angry as I might. I used to when I didn't play good when I was younger. You know, all I know out here, if you want to be competing, they use that term loosely, week in, week out. It's got to be at a very high standard, because there's another 5 or 10 or dozen guys that are trying to say, if you don't mind, get out of my way. You know, and you know who those people are. So, there's something about executing it, and there's something about that mixed with the competition. Is it addictive in the sense that you know about it's addictive now you don't. But golf's full of quote-on-quote disappointments. You're not hardly ever hitting the shot you wanted to hit. And there's something weird about hitting a ball 300 yards or getting it in the hole from 500 yards and pegging it up and knocking in this little cylinder that's just weirdly addictive. From a tour level to think that we can do this at our age to some guy who's trying to break 100. It's very similar. It's just crazy addiction that we all have, and I enjoy it, I probably would. You know, I'd like to have we have a shorter season then the tour, but I'd like to spend more time with my family. But it's hard to put the bone down, you know.

VO > Some sad news to share about a past winner on PGA Tour Champions. Former caddie turned professional golfer Jim Dent passed away on Friday. Dent grew up in Augusta, Georgia, and as a young man was a caddie at Augusta National Golf Club. Despite growing up during racial segregation. Dent pursued his dream and would go on to play professionally on the PGA tour, becoming a 12-time winner on PGA Tour Champions, all the while displaying tremendous power as a former World Long Drive champion. A trailblazing figure. Jim Dent was 85 years old.

VO > The first of five major championships on this tour takes place next week in Birmingham, Alabama. The Regions Tradition again sets up at Greystone Golf and Country Club. It's a place where Roll Tide and War Eagle co-exist, at least for four days.

VO > Last year's edition provided an exciting Mother's Day finish, with one player walking away with his first major championship. Doug Barron outlasted his Hall of Fame playing competitors in his group, going ten under par on the weekend and posting a two-shot victory, his first since 2020.

VO > Doug Barron has won the region's tradition and earned the first major of his PGA Tour Champions career.

VO > We caught up with Doug to get his thoughts on regions, then and now.

OC > Always great to spend time here with Doug Barron, the 2024 region's tradition champion. Going back to defend champ. What's that going to be like?

OC VO > I love the golf course. I've had a nine there like a 17th and then I won last year. It was cool, having my sister there on a Father's Day. That was cool. My wife wasn't coming over for the final round, and none of my friends were allowed to come. My wife wouldn't let them. She didn't want to run the mojo. But my sister was already there, and my brother-in-law and me. And my wife wouldn't let her go home for Mother's Day.

OC > So that final group is you, Padraig Harrington and Ernie Els. Tell me about just that dynamic of being in that group?

OC VO > Well, I mean, Ernie and I really good friends. I mean, I mean, we've all been doing this a long time, and it was nice to be playing with Ernie, and, And I love Padraig and Ernie. Padraig is intimidating how far he hits it. But Ernie, he's a good friend, and he was a, actually, it was comforting to play with him. If you could have someone to play with to win. Ernie, he's one of those guys. No offense, but, I mean, being one of the greatest players of all time, he's he just he's the greatest. He's never going to treat me any different.

OC > Yeah. And what a great performance by you in that final round, a bogey free 68, finish 17 under win by two shots. What are your what are your, the key recollections of that that Sunday round?

OC VO > So, birdie two with Ernie. We both birdied and then birdie in the other par five. But the key to the round was number eight. I hit a ball that was going out of bounds clearly. And it hit a tree and stayed in. And I hooked a seven iron 50 yards to the fringe of the green. And Ernie says, the greatest shot I've ever seen. Greatest par he's ever seen. And then I hit it in the left. Rough at number nine. Got it on the green and made a 40-footer downhill. So, it left me with, I think, a three-shot lead going into the back nine. And you know, I couldn't hardly breathe the hole back now. But I made a great par at 11. I hit the wedge in my life at 12. The par five, I hit it to a foot. So, I pretty much from 12. In. The only person that could screw that tournament up was me, and I know how to make a par, so it was pretty cool. Yeah.

OC > Now, now. That particular week I read that you and your coach, you made a putting adjustment.

OC VO > Yeah, my putting coach at home, Jonathan Fly, he had just scooted me away from the ball and had me squared my shoulders up a little. And I was just talking to my coach a minute ago. My swing coach, I said if I still made any I missed a lot of ten footers that week. Still, if I putted all my putts and made like, what I'm on my good week, it would have been a really crazy good week because I shot a 72. You know, I shot 17 under, but I shot send me to the second day, you know. So, I played great three rounds and obviously a great Saturday. That got me back into it. But I kind of shot myself out of it on Friday, you know.

OC > So, you had one before on PGA Tour Champions, but to win a major, does it mean more? Does it take you to another place?

OC VO > Well, it meant more for the fact we play four rounds and, you know, extra days and, the course is I think everyone loves the course is very challenging as long it's you got to drive it well. And yeah, it felt good. I mean, I got in some other tournaments for five years. My wife likes going to. Why? I kept her happy for four more years. Now we've been this year. I just, you know. Yeah, it did validate a lot of things. I didn't have the PGA Tour career that some of the guys had, and I, I'm just

I'm the same person. It didn't change me, obviously, but it is gratifying to win a major, but it makes me want to win more. I really want to win a senior British. I love going over there. And I really want to win a USGA event so bad. I didn't play enough of them when I played on the regular tour, and I'm really excited to go to Colorado Springs this year too. So.

OC > Yeah, well, that's kind of what I'm talking about, is that your vision of things maybe changes a little bit. Your perspective, whatever that scope is.

OC VO > I want to win this tournament. I finished second, fifth. I got Dougie proud out here. I made A11 year on the 15th. We were tied. So no, I, I want to win every, every week. Special to me. I need to win every year to stay out here. I don't have the career money all these guys have, but I'd love to have a chance to win another major. It'd be very special. I've come close before Regions. I come close several times at the British and, you know, at has some top tens. But you know that last year was a dream. Come true. Marco Dawson told me, Doug, if you didn't win that tournament, you're never win another tournament. I was driving it. So, guys, after we played together the first two days. So that was pretty cool.

OC > You know. But it's so interesting. And I know we've talked about this before with players. The really the nuances. It's there's really a fine line isn't it. I mean we're winning out here whether it's a major a regular event, it's really tough.

OC > Unless

OC > Fine line?

OC > Yeah. Unless your name is Steve. I mean I'm going to start going by my first name, Steven, which is I'm going to be called Steven Baron at the major because my first name is Steven. Would you guys' Steven Alker and Steven aim Steven Ames and and Steve Stricker I mean I'm excited. I mean, if you got to be named Steve Steve Allen lately but but yeah, I'm going to go by Steven I think in the first round I spell it like Ames. I think it would give me a better chance to repeat

OC > Hey, whatever it takes.

OC > Different guy, I'd be a different person with.

OC > No, no, don't change. Don't change that part. Lastly, do they get to give you the green bike from the Regions.

OC > I do have the green bike.

VO > Have you ridden the green bike?

OC VO > I have. It's got zero gears and it's very difficult to ride. I'm one of those. So, I'm going to stick with my beach cruiser.

OC > Gotcha Good to see you. Thank you.

OC > Good to see you.

OC > My pleasure.

VO > And congratulations to Doug on his inclusion in the Mississippi State M Club Sports Hall of Fame class of 2025. Until we meet again in Sweet Home, Alabama, we have to say goodbye. A major championship on the line next week, and we cannot wait. For all of us in Learning Center, I'm Vince Cellini. We thank you for watching.