

PGA Tour Champions Learning Center.

VO>> It is time. Big Island time by a picture perfect Paradise setting as PGA Tour Champions. Turns 46 in our 50th state. Another season of play for legends. Now it's just a day away.

OC/VO >> Aloha, everyone, and welcome to our PGA Tour Champions season preview. I'm Vince Cellini, so happy to be with you from our spectacular starting spot as we usher in what promises to be another exciting campaign. Step one. The Mitsubishi Electric Championship at Home Aiea which celebrates a 30th playing here in 2026. Now on a tour unique in age, it's worth noting competition is timeless and the desire to win forever young. If you speak with our players, they will tell you that's why they play.

VO>/OC>> In my DNA, I've always been competitive and I always loved the game of golf.

VO/OC>> I love the game go. You know, I love competing and I love playing. Down under is, finally on top.

VO/OC>> It's a new lease of life, a chance to relive past glories. And this major career continues.

VO/OC>> It's fun to have some new friends and travel and play. You know how it is, and we're pretty lucky. So in the 50s, he's playing golf for me pretty, pretty good.

VO/OC>> The guys can flat out play here. Darren Clark rolling in this birdie putt.

VO/OC>> We get back into the competing pit which is I guess what you've done all your life, you know you move from back when you played junior golf and all the way through your career. You can roll with, you know, no worries and can't push yourself the hardest and that's why you're living your best life. That's that's awesome to be able to do that again. That is very satisfying.

VO/OC>> Just hitting the golf shots, you know, just some something about it. Just the practice and the play. It's what I search for every single time I go out there.

VO/OC>> For a lot of guys work real hard But it it's, it's kind of scary place because you know for a lot of guys if they lose their card that's it. There's no way back.

VO/OC>> People have this idea of the campus tour being our golf courses must be 6500 yards long our flags must be middle of the green, easy. It couldn't be further from the truth. That is it. The courses are around 72. The the Greens run between 12 and 13 every week, our flags get more tucked into the corner. Everybody that's on the champions tour out here can flat out play.

VO/OC>> There you have it Steven Alker, But sitting here right now, 14 wins, a couple of cups, I'd probably say no you're a lie. Another win for Stephen Alker I'll give him credit. It's been very

gratifying to do all that and now all I've achieved some goals that I've wanted to, and exceed my expectations which is great. Good for the ego I guess.

VO/OC>> And the man who played his way to the top last year hopes to stay there. Stewart Cink took Phoenix by storm in November to capture the season ending Charles Schwab Championship and his first Charles Schwab cup. As such, Cink was the recipient of the Jack Nicklaus Award for player of the year. Aged 52, has four wins on this tour, three of them coming in 2025, and there is no reason to believe he will slow down any time soon. So good to spend time with sake. And when we last chatted in Phoenix, you had a trophy in each arm. As you were the overall season champion, have you had a chance, to enjoy that? What's it been like to process it?

OC>> Yeah. And, I do. I love thinking about those those moments. And you're part of it because. Yeah, that's basically right. What we did when we walked off the green is go to the interview and add the trophy. And yeah, it was awesome. We got to celebrate that with our good friends at home. And, you know, we pretty much stopped playing tournaments. We had the World Champions Cup and I had the PNC challenge, but those are fun sort of team events. So, it's been a nice sort of time to reflect that, of over the 2025 season.

OC>> You told me back in Phoenix that you'd like to win multiple Charles Schwab Cups, and, did you did you think you'd enjoy it as much as you did? I mean, the journey is always great, but the satisfaction of that, you just lit up afterward, I thought.

OC>> Well, I think I have to give credit to my wife, Lisa, because, I've never been a really big goal setter, at least sort of out loud or written down. Just, you know, make the Tour Championship, win PGA tour events, compete in the majors, play, you know, maybe win a major. The same goals that anybody could have but last year, she kind of convinced me to make the Charles Schwab Cup sort of a goal and talk about it and think about it and plan for it. And I think it made it even sweeter to, oh, win in May after making it public, that that was my goal all year long and then accomplishing that. So, I owe her a lot of credit. She convinced me and encouraged me to do that, and I agreed, and that became a reality.

OC>> Yeah. Behind every good man is a great woman, that's for sure. For sure. Chris Jones was saying your caddie that he was so proud of you for the fact that you really put in the work you were grinding. And how did you see it? How did you see the success of last season, multiple wins and getting it done?

OC>> Well, I don't like the word grinding very much because it's got a negative connotation. Practicing hard and working towards, you know, the direction of perfection that we'll never achieve. But going that direction, pursuing it to me is not really a grind. It's something I enjoy doing. I love trying to squeeze everything out of golf that I can, you know, data wise, speed and everything. I can get out of it. I don't see that as a grind. Even though a lot of people might define that as grinding. So, it's something I enjoy doing and, I'm glad Chris recognizes that as, is something he likes. You know, a bit of. It's both of us and Chris is a great caddy. Is doing a great job, too and, but it's something I just always really enjoy doing.

OC>> How big an advantage is your power on this tour?

OC>> Well, it's an advantage in golf. Doesn't matter where you're playing, if you can be one of the most powerful players and hit it far, it's an advantage period. Just ask the guys on the PGA tour who hit it far. You know they have a lot more data. The sport they're you know, the decisions to hit it long and take driver over laying up more than we have out here but it is a major benefit no matter where you play playing.

OC>> This is your third playing at the Mitsubishi Electric Championship at home all of life. Played well here. What does it take to take that next step here?

OC>> The biggest thing here about this tournament here at this beautiful resort. Four Seasons walleyes. Awesome is that you just can't afford to tiptoe your way into the round and, like, get the new year started. You know, like oh okay. Now two putt the first 4 or 5 holes. You know conservative plays. Figure out where you are. You need to hit the ground running here because it's a track meet. If the wind's not really howling. And if you shoot even par in the first nine holes, you pretty much eliminated yourself from, Really? I think so, yeah.

OC>> Goals for this year. What are you looking forward to? Because what's it like to be on top of the mountain now?

OC>> Well, I'm going to go ahead and play the goals game again this year because, out of respect for Lisa and what it did last year, I want to win the Charles Schwab Cup again this year. You know, I want to win multiple ones in these things. I want to shoot some rounds in the 50s this year.

OC>> Wow. Yeah, that's a goal of mine. And, I think if you aim that high, then, you know, the if you don't achieve, you're going to come closer than you would if you hadn't been aiming that high. So I don't think that's been done on PGA Tour Champions. I might be wrong about that.

OC>> But yeah it's been it's been fun. You know we.

OC>> We've had 59. So I wanted. Kevin Sutherland I believe shot.

OC>> I want to join that club. And that'll be fun to try to accomplish that and got a couple other things that I'll keep to myself. But winning the Charles Schwab Cup, I also haven't had any major championship wins out of them champions yet, so, that'd be another goal to.

OC>> Love that you're going to manifest it. That's great.

OC>> Well, I'm going to work hard doing it.

OC>> Thank you so much, man. Congratulations on a great year. Good luck this year.

OC>> Appreciate it Vince.

VO>> Coming up on the PGA Tour champion season preview perennial contenders for top honors on this tour. The Kiwi Machine Stephen Alker and golf legend and last year's winner here, Ernie Els, remains a true force in the game. Their thoughts on the season coming up.

VO>> Welcome back to this one of a kind setting the Waialae like golf course in Hawaii. Beauty at every turn and competition among the very best in the game's history. Getting ready to deliver again this week.

VO>> A couple of years ago, Stephen Alker kicked off the season with a snorkel here at the Four Seasons Resort. Go all alive. A few days later, he won the tournament. He bookended that 2024 season with the Charles Schwab Cup championship. When we last saw Alker in competition, he was once again in contention for The Charles Schwab but relentlessly battling Stewart Cink. Set to the 72nd hole in Phoenix before an errant second shot the last derail his chances. New year, new challenge for this double digit winner on our tour.

OC>>And so it begins for Steven Alker, a winner here two years ago last year, 2025. 23 starts, two wins, 18 top tens, which is, more than anyone and Steven I what that tells me is that every time you go out there, you can win and what a nice place that must be to live in play.

OC>> Yeah, it sure is to have that consistency and, feel like you've, you know, you kind of pretty much like 70%, 80% of the time you get a chance to, to win. You're in the mix of it and that's, that's all you can ask really just, you know, you get out there and give yourself a chance and I know I did that a lot of weeks and, you know, two wins is nice. 4 or 5 would have been really nice, but, hey, you know, it's, the competition's getting stronger. It's it's, it's getting more competitive, and you just got to just just got to keep on pushing hard.

OC>> Before we get to, I, I want to go back to Phoenix. And in the final round, you may not be at your best at that point. Three bogeys in that five hole stretch. So you're three down but yet and still you battled back and you push Stewart Cink all the way to the last. Does that say as much about you as the winds do you think.

OC>> Yeah I, I kind of hope so. You know people kind of see that and I felt it myself like you know, it's been a long year. You know, I still had a chance to win it. You know, I'm three behind, but. Okay, we got to do something real quick here and then, I just kind of felt like that. That bounce back was great. It's. It's kind of always been in me since I played out here, and, and I bounced back and didn't quite get there, but it was a heck of a run and Stewart played great. I mean, he had a super year and, and pushed hard. But it was fun. It was fun to be in the mix and get the juices flowing and really be right there at the end.

OC> Before that now, the previous playoff event in Arkansas, I've never seen you better. What what is that like, and what do you have to do to get to that point where you're playing at that high level?

OC>> Yeah. You know, the week before you go back, the week before, I kind of didn't have a whole lot. I didn't play well. I think I finished 35th and nothing felt great. And, I just switched around when the pattern. I think that kind of snowballed into my long game and then it just flourished from there. So, it's kind of feel what I feel like in my game is there if I just find a little something and I get something going, then, away we go. Just, hit the pedal and go.

OC>> Yeah, we. You talked about this a little bit, touched on it, but in, 20, 26 now it's just going to get a tougher go out there with the competition. Stewart announces himself as the overall champion. Ernie McGill, Padraig and some of the new guys that are coming on the win too. So it's it's quite a setup, isn't it?

OC>> I'm not so young now. That's what it says then. Like I'm nearly 55 now. It's like, yeah, I'm not one of the young guys. So but yeah, that's that's what the tour's all about. You turn 50 and you get a, you know, a new, new lease of life and in a way you go and, this opportunity is, is amazing and I took advantage of it. I feel very grateful for that opportunity and, and what I've done, you know, I'm proud of and but I know I got to keep pushing hard and working hard on my game because, you know, fresh talents coming in and, yeah, just to try and -

OC>> Have some of those new guys mentioned that you had you kind of made a roadmap for them. On the tour maybe directly or indirectly?

OC>> Yeah, a little bit maybe. Yeah, certainly for the guys who didn't have you know, I don't have it like a, a career money category or, you know, you guys who have been journeymen and just haven't had the careers I wanted and, you know, Steve Allen's a perfect example of a buddy of mine and three wins last year played great and he was a guy, you know, he lives in Scottsdale. We talked all the time. I, you know, just stay fit, get out there and compete and go show you what you got. So and you know, for those guys I think yeah, it was it was a little something that I maybe passed on and bit of inspiration maybe. Yeah.

OC>> So so we get to, this particular event, the season opener, how do you shake off the cobwebs and get yourself in, real competition?

OC>> A couple of my thais and, where we go, that's pretty much it. No, no, I think, I just had a good break. I think for me personally, you know, everyone's different but for me, I, I've, I allow myself time off. I had four weeks. I didn't touch a club, and and for me, that's that's quality time, for my game, with a big season coming up and, you know, you come here. I mean, it's warm. You don't have to loosen up so much, and, you just go. I know the course. I love the course. And we'll just, you know, go out and young play and try to make some putts and see what happens.

OC>> Well, you're the kind of player that, grabbed several of the same trophies. So it'd be nice to get this, unique trophy out here. To Hualalai. Well, I once I get a second one. Have a great year. Thanks for your time, Steve. Great to see.

VO>> Perhaps in a previous life, Ernie Els was more South Pacific than South Africa. How else to explain his run in Hawaii? Els has four PGA tour sanctioned wins in Hawaii, the first in 2003 at Kapalua. Els captured the century in record setting fashion, posting a PGA tour scoring record in relation to par at 31 under par. Els hot play continued the following week on the island of Oahu, The Big Easy defeated Aaron Baddeley in a playoff to win the Sony Open and become the first player in 14 years to win the first two PGA tour events of the season. One year later, Els defended his Sony Open title by defeating Harrison Fraser at the event's third playoff hole. He became the tournament's first back to back winner in 17 years. And then last year, right here at the Hualalai. Els won by two strokes for his lone victory of the season. Ernie Els and his won the season opener. The Mitsubishi Electric Championship at Hualalai on Island Golf made easy, Big Easy.

OC>> Seated with the one and only Ernie Els, The Big Easy, the defending champion here. And given your success in Hawaii, do you have property in Hawaii? Ernie? I was just curious.

OC>> I was this close by buying. Yeah, I don't know if you guys remember, but back in 2020, it was my first time here at this resort. And we actually started looking at homes and my people looking after my I guess my money said no no no no. You never going to go to Hawaii. I said that's not the point but anyway I did not but I should have.

OC>> Yeah, you should have been. If you've owned a lot of trophies here for sure. 2025. Let's talk about that. It was an interesting year because there were a lot of close calls. You got your win, but a lot of close calls. Two with the four, runners up and the three thirds. How do you look at that? Do you look at it in a positive way and say, hey, I had a chance, I had chances. Yeah, I guess that's the positive way to look at it. You know, to look at, you know, you had so many chances, you put yourself in contention so many times but we had to to try and win. Of course not. Get ourselves and, some of them, I fell into a second place, I guess it in North Carolina, again, you know, losing a playoff to, Stewart Cink at the LA and then also coming very close up in Richmond with just a minute. Had such a great finish. You know, this does kind of hurt me a little bit, but it's not like I made a couple of mistakes coming down the stretch. But looking back it was a very solid, positive year. You know I just got to keep working on it.

OC>> Yeah. And this year the twist I guess, is the new event that you're hosting, the Portugal Invitational at Elks Club, Villa Moura. And it's the first PGA sanctioned individual stroke play event in Portugal. How exciting for you I mean, and what are you anticipating there?

OC>> It's really exciting. You know, not only, redoing the project, you know, redoing the golf course, it was all old Arnold Palmer, golf course. So, we have so much regard to Arnold Palmer and his company, but, you know, we made some big changes that, the resort was built back in the late 80s, 90s, but really, to bring the PGA Tour Champions to Portugal. It's so exciting. The people in Portugal are really looking forward to it. To see the characters that we have in our tour, the champions we have having our tour coming to coming to Portugal and for the very first event of its kind, we very proud to to be hosting that event.

OC>> You should be. And with all the expansion that you're doing in terms of off the course, how do you juggle all of these projects that you have and still say, stay focused for the task at hand?

OC>> I think that's exactly what you need to do. Whatever you, committed to at that particular time, whatever project it might be, whether it's in philanthropy, be with my, my, my, my wife about what else for autism or design or whatever. Sector we in, you know, you concentrate on the task ahead. And I think that's what the game of golf taught us. You know, you have to prepare, you know, to do well. And I think in business and philanthropy, you know, that that kind of goes hand in hand.

OC>> You know, I've told you this before, your presence on this tour is so important, because of the stature that you have in the game and everything that you've accomplished. And I personally, and I think a lot of media people and fans appreciate the fact that you're not just out, you really want to come out here and win. I mean, you are really putting in the work to try to win here. It's it's important to you, isn't it, to show well.

OC>> Thank you. Yeah. And you learn from learning. You learn from seeing other people do it. You know, we just saw Bernhard Langer go past, and you see people like that really put their heart and soul into the game. And I think we've done it for such a long time. We know we've kind of running out of time, and although we busy with all kinds of other stuff, golf is still very important to us and you still want to try and get one up on you and your buddies at, you know, we've got a great relationship with each other, but it's so, so competitive.

OC>> I've asked, other players this, the tour has changed, probably even since you, you've been on it with the influx of new talent. You get a Stewart sink last year, he kind of, you know, makes his presence felt. It's not getting any easier out there, is it?

OC>> No. It's great. It's great to see the new guys, the young guys coming out. I always tell them, you know, I remember when I was 50 coming here, this just new energy that you have, you know, from the age from 45 to 50 on the regular tour. Not many guys, really, you know, containing all that much and I see Adam Scott still doing great, Justin Rose and those type of guys but for the most part, you kind of going over the edge, you know, but coming at you and Stewart seeing this energy that he brought and the way he's hitting the golf ball. My goodness. I'm starting to feel my age when I play with him but it's he's he's a great guy and he's such an asset. And there's more coming. So it's going to be great.

OC>> Well as are you have a great year this year. Always wonderful to spend time with you. Appreciate it. We'll see you down the road.

OC>> Thank you man.

VO>> When PGA tour champion season preview returns a storm that goes deeper than the game Ken timing out shares with us some personal news that certainly put golf and life in perspective. Conversation. You will not want to miss.

OC>> Kenton Tanagawe is a PGA Tour Champions mainstay, sound person and player whose logged three wins on the circuit. This includes a major at the 2019 KitchenAid senior PGA Championship. This week marks his 194th career event. Ken turn 58 the day after Christmas and shared the training center. A recent health battle that came to light last season.

OC>> And joining us now is Ken John, a guy who was kind enough to share his health journey with us and Ken, this is where I kind of just turn it over to you and let us know what you've been dealing with.

OC>> Well, thanks for having me on. It kind of started in June. You know, you do your your annual tests, your physical, and, I did my PSA test, and he came back high and, that's the beginning, the

start of my cancer journey. In June, I was diagnosed with prostate cancer. So, you know, it hit me like a truck.

OC>> I wasn't ready for that. The hard part was, you know, we had it. My family, my father had cancer, and he passed through cancer. So what I learned, unfortunately, way more than you'd ever watch and learn about prostate cancer. But, you know, when your father, you one removed, you have a higher chance of getting it just from hereditary in your DNA. So and it started then. And then, you know, you do your tests, you go meet your role at your urologist. And then I knew I've done it before, but he said, you know, we need you to do an MRI. So that was a conversation I haven't heard before, so I knew something was going on. So now the noise starts coming in, filtering your head a little bit more and so you do that and the MRI came back and you get scores on that and he came back one through five and he came back five, meaning that, the size and the abnormality means it's 90% chance it's going to be an aggressive tumor. So that's where I was with it and just keep going. You know, you do your PSA, your Pet scan tests, and you have to do a biopsy and the biopsy is what tells you where it is. So, major surgery in November. The last the three months leading up to were were difficult, but to say the least, Vince, it was, you know, it's just all the uncertainty that it brought. I think with my father passing of cancer, the issue and the severity of what I was facing, I just didn't know what it looked like here in front of me. So, you know, I got through the season, you know, I looked at it like maybe I could go out there for the tournaments to kind of help me maybe get away from it. But it was tough. I mean, I got it, it was stopped on. It was very, you know, your emotions are all over the place and, and, and.

OC>> I would imagine it never really leaves you know.

OC>> You know. Yeah. Yeah. Because you just don't know. The uncertainty is what made it awful, you know, because where it was, there was a chance you just, you know, worried about the spread of where it was and the severity. Look, I mean, I prostate cancer, you could do a lot of active surveillance. It could be, you know, all men, one out of eight, you know, statistically get it. And you just it could be team. It could be in the middle of your prostate. You could have a low Gleason score, and you could, you know, get older and pass with it. Right. And you don't have to pass out of it. But unfortunately, it's the second cancer deaths is cause man is with prostate cancer. So it's real. And I was faced with that and but so it's tough. But once the season's over in Arkansas for me, you know, golf was the least of my concerns, you know. Right. So and we had the surgery done and, you know, golf was not in the cards for me. So I shut it down, and it was a hard recovery. Six weeks. You can't do anything. You can't lift more than 10 pounds. You're just sitting around, you can start walking more, and, you know, it's not like I'm 28. You know, I'm 58, so you just lose some strength and, but, unbelievable to be here and certainly blessed to be here.

OC>> In that time period. I'm sure you you had to lean on family.

OC>> no doubt.

OC>> And how important was that for you?

OC>> I don't know if I could have gone through the hard times without them. You know, my wife was, Angela. She was. Sorry that she. She made it. You know, I had to put on a strong face for the kids, which was hard. I had to pretend, like, out here, like, everything is okay when it wasn't, but, you know, but she got me through it, and and I feel like I couldn't have without her. Sorry. Yeah. But I did. And, beyond grateful for it.

OC>> Where do we stand right now in the process so that you're getting your strength back? Right. And to get your game back a little bit, because I can imagine, going through that, trying to play and win professional golf events, stay focused. There was a lot happening there for you but let's let's bring you up to speed in January.

OC>> Yeah. So like I said, you know, this is one of our favorite places to be right before Caesars walleyes. Incredible. Yeah. Boy, it's the state. It's just the state of the game is is. It's okay. You know, I played yesterday and I was surprised, you know, when I first came back fans it was ten weeks I didn't I was off the golf course. So you know January 1st from Arkansas. The last round was my first time on a golf course. So and my clubs felt like sledgehammers. It's like in my putter. Everything felt really heavy and but I had to work my way into it slowly but surely. You know, you don't want to come back too soon because they go. I had that nerve sparing, in the the radical prostatectomy. What they they go through six rods through your abdomen. So they go through your core. So they just say, hey, you got to take it easy because, you know, they don't want any terrors or, you know, hernias or anything like that. So, you know, obviously never want to come back too early.

OC>> So I took my time and but, you know, I've gone back and, you know, my speed is maybe not quite the same, but it's there, you know, it's so, you know, I.

OC>> Just maybe the season baby steps, you know.

OC>> It's baby steps. Yeah. I mean for sure golfs. It's a different perspective for sure on on the game and where it is now. It's very positive. You know the you report came back almost perfect. I'm not totally out of the woods, but when you have cancer, you kind of it just feels like it's going to be a kind of a life journey where you keep getting checked in and but look, it's no worries me. Those are the cards I have to play and I'm dealt with and and you just for John with it. So.

OC>> And lastly, yeah. What would be your message to men of a certain age? You know, who should, should or may face something similar?

OC>> I mean, our demographic on the champions store, the viewership, who watches the Champions Tour? We're all at that age where it matters to go get screened. And it's one of the, you know, prostate, colon cancer, breast cancer, skin cancer. You could get in front of it and get screened for it in. I think if anybody is watching, if you haven't done it, yeah, I think you just go get screened and it's not it's just a blood test. You know, it's easy and I think that yeah, it's huge. I don't know why you wouldn't.

OC>> Well the very best you thank you for being here. Thank you so.

VO>> Coming up on our PGA Tour champion season preview. Waiting for the big chat. Will he there will be the idea for Tiger Woods on video for champions. Has our players buzzing nature China next.

VO>> Birthday time. Some notable names who will turn 50 since the end of last season. And we anticipate what could be next. In alphabetical order, they include Ben Crane turns 50 on March 6th. Author of five PGA tour wins. Two time winner Zach Johnson celebrates his 50th February 24th. He has 12 PGA tour wins. Ryan Palmer hits the big five oh on September 19th for PGA tour wins could possibly make his debut with three events left in the regular season, and fiery Rory Sabbatini turns 50 on April 2nd. Six PGA tour wins and a 2020 Olympic silver medalist.

VO/VO>> Oh, you've probably heard this man turn 50 back on December 30th. He's really good. Tiger woods has battled injury last year, a torn Achilles and then went through disc replacement surgery and his troublesome back. He has only recently taken full swing yet and still there is a buzz. What is the possibility. We can see Tiger Woods in a 2026 PGA Tour Champions event.

VO/OC>> Please welcome from Jupiter, Florida. Major champion and World Golf Hall of Fame member Tiger Woods.

VO/OC>> I'd love to see if he can come out here and and beat us.

VO/OC>> So wherever Tiger plays, the needs goes up and people are interested, the media is interested.

VO/OC>> Which we know he can, but it'd be pretty cool if he decides to play, even if it's just a little bit.

VO/OC>> He changed our game, and this is the generation of players that have changed that for the most.

VO/OC>> I think he would like the bump right here. I think he would like all the chirping that we would be giving them. Whatever he gets out there.

VO/OC>> I mean, obviously we know that the, the desire to, to compete is still there because of the things that he's tried to do to to get back in the playing.

VO/OC>> You know, he's won so many events. How but he hasn't won the senior U.S. open and they haven't won the senior British yet either.

VO/OC>> We owe a lot to him for what he's done during a game of golf, and we would love to see him out here, you know, with his elements and all the surgery he's been through to be up for him, to be able to get in the cart and ride around if he wants to, to ride around, you know, it'd be a perfect place for him to come out and play and be welcomed here with open arms.

VO>> Fingers crossed when we come back, one of the feel good stories of the year. Two gloves and a firm grip on his future. Tommy Gagne drew a big step to the big Island his next.

VO>> We were first introduced to Tommy Danny as a contestant on Golf Channel Big Break after turning 50 in August of last year. Then began a steep climb for charity Monday, qualifying for its first five events. Capturing October's Constellation, Furyk and Friends as a Monday qualifier. The game full status for 2026 and punch his ticket to the all For his effort game was recognized as the Hale Irwin Award winner as rookie of the year.

OC/VO>> Tommy Gagne story is a familiar one on this tour in that turning 50 isn't necessarily the end, but a chance at a rebirth to rewrite a career resume and to take care of unfinished business. So whether you're a journeyman player or a former major champion, you walk the same path. And in many ways, on this tour, the rewards are even more meaningful.

VO/OC>>> As we celebrate our superstars of the past, because they are the ones that carry this tour and the important important to the tour but it's nice to see some new faces that are out there as well.

OC/VO>> Justin Leonard is the champion. This is a second chance, if you will. And, I think it provides for a lot of great stories.

VO/OC>> It's worth the wait. Means everything to him. It's diverse. Which is great. I'm going to take this opportunity and Steven Alker dominate this great system. Will find his way to senior open. And

it's to the senior open. You have players who. It's not a new lease of life. It's what they've been focused on. This is the biggest money they've ever played for tournaments. They played in their pitching for expenses. You know, they've waited for a number of years to get here. And they're making the most of it

VO/OC>> Angel Cabrera has won his second major in just six days. Like I said, you know, maybe not that successful on the on the tours around the world. You know, this is their real big chance to make an impact both for their lives but also for, for the golfing sanity. I guess if I would extend you was the qualifier on Tuesday.

VO/OC>> He's the champion on Sunday and I think it's what provides such entertainment. What a close for Leonard, your champion for, you know, people that follow the PGA Tour Champions.

OC>> Tommy Gagne, welcome to Hawaii as a PGA Tour Champions champion. What's it been like for you here?

OC>> It's been a whirlwind, but it's sure awful nice to be here.

OC>> Let's talk about your journey to get here. Explain to folks the path of Monday qualifying. Okay. And shortly after your 50th birthday, you get a five at the Rogers Charity classic, and then you're kind of off and running. What's that? What's that journey like?

OC>> Well, it's a hard journey because I put in a lot of sponsor exemptions asking for spots and all the tournaments coming up after turning 50. Yeah, I got turned down by pretty much everyone. So I mean, you know, that was kind of slap in the face. So I decided, well, you know, the only way to fix it is to just money qualify and just take off and let's go.

OC>> And once you got in, do you feel like you had momentum?

OC>> Absolutely. Once, once I got in, the first one I minded in, I felt I didn't feel any pressure because really, I didn't have anything to lose and everything to gain. Because if I play well, then I'm over to the next week. And that's basically my goal was to just get in and just take off.

OC>> You win. In your fifth start on PGA Tour Champions at the Constellation Furyk in France, you closed with a 66. Is that as important a day as you've ever had golf?

OC>> Absolutely. And the reason being, because, you know, if you want to talk about back when I was on the PGA tour, I won in 12. But I played good for a lot of those years until I got hurt. But the Champions Tour, I didn't make enough money for career money. I mean, these guys got 75 million, 70 million, 60 million, 80 million and not Tiger's got 100 plus. And I've got like 6.3. I mean, 6.3. Don't add up. Very good. Not to those numbers. So you know I just had to had the money in and just take off and hopefully win.

OC>> But but that day to be able to close like that. What did it tell you about yourself.

OC>> I still got it. I'm still pretty good. The the thing is, it's healthy. I mean, it comes down to health. Now that I'm 50 and, you know, people say, well, you're 50 now, what's the difference? Well, the difference is I'm a lot older and it doesn't take much to get hurt versus as it used to. And that's a big, big thing.

OC>> Yeah I know you're really taking care of your maintenance too, for your body and making sure you can play out here beyond, winning and having status. It's like a change goes through you as a player on this particular tour. And I want to reference in particular, Phoenix and the last day of playing in the Charles Schwab Championship and you're playing with Bernhard Langer. What was that kind of day like for you? And and what was it like interacting with a guy who's won more than anybody else on this tour?

OC>> Well, you know, first of all, since you bring that up, what a day it was, it was a special privilege for me because I played with the goat. And, you know, before Bernhard played and won, like, 47 times, I believe it is Hill. Irwin was the guy. He was the guy that was the best on the PGA Tour Champions but now Bernhard just took it to a whole different level. And for me, it was just an honor and a privilege to meet him. That was the first time meeting him personally. I got to play with him the last day of the Charles Schwab. And what what an honor and a privilege it was to meet him not only to meet him, but I got to play 18 holes with him. Spend the day with him. And just kind of we talked a little bit here and there because he's kind of quiet, but we we kicked it around a little bit. And, you know, when we got done, I said, I said Bernhard and I said, this has been an absolute privilege and honor to not only meet you, but play a round of golf with you and I've just been it's been fun It's been a lot of fun. And he said and he told me, he said, you know Tommy, You have a lot of game.

OC>> Wow. That must have really meant a lot to you.

OC>> Well, it stuck out and it still stuck with me as we sit here today. Because who's going to not take anything he says seriously? Everybody's going to take what he says.

OC>> I want to get to your background in terms of your style, where you grew up. It's all unconventional. Anybody ever try to change? You change your swing?

OC>> No, sir. Nobody tried to change me. I didn't want to try to go look for a teacher to try to do this or do that, because, you know, everybody knows I struggle with chipping. That's my weakest link. But my ball striking and my putting and everything else is pretty spot on. But the problem is, you know, if I was to get a change, it would mess up. I think it would mess up the other parts of my game. And it's too valuable to me to do that.

OC>> And before we go, just what would you say to somebody out there who might be a Tommy Gagne the next one on this tour? What would your message to them be?

OC>> My message to those guys, or whoever it might be, is, listen. Look at all the players. Look at their swings. There's no swing. The same. There's no swing the same. So take your swing. Just have confidence in it. Trust it and just go with it. Everybody has dreams. Just follow it.

OC>> Go get em. It's your man. Thank you sir. Thanks. Appreciate it. No gloves. Oh, well. No gloves.

OC>> Yeah. No hands. Right.

OC>> Thanks.

Straight ahead on PGA tour champion season preview A snapshot of the upcoming campaign.

By some new venues and new events will challenge the legends. And why players are beyond excited for a promising year ahead.

VO>> The PGA Tour Champions hosts three major championships that stand out for their rich history, competitive fields and the unique challenge of rotating venues. Each year. The longest running major championship in senior golf, the senior PGA Championship moves to Florida as the Concession Golf Club will be the host venue. This is the first of three consecutive years in which The Concession Golf Club will host the senior PGA Championship.

VO>> The US Senior Open will be held Independence Day weekend at Salto Country Club. Rich in history and, of course, where Jack Nicklaus learned the game of golf under teaching professional Jack Rowe. Crossing the Atlantic, the senior Open returns to the Kings Course at the Gleneagles Hotel. It first hosted this event in 2022. And there Darren Clark captured his lone senior major title.

VO>> This year will feature 25 regular season and three playoff events while welcoming two new events to the Tour Portugal Invitational and the Jefferson Lee High Valley Classic. PGA tour champion golfers will visit 18 states and four countries, while competing for more than \$69 million in prize money.

VO/OC>> Man, it's been a long year. I work really hard at golf. You know, it's not something I just do for fun. Stewart's sake. He put it out there to start the year. Exclamation mark to end. Charles Schwab, Cup champion.

VO/OC>> I do have fun doing it. And that's a blessing because I know players who their fun runs out and they start having a good time doing it. But I still love the practice, the preparation, the anticipation. You know, the I'm using Google Earth to look at golf courses and come up with like different ways to maybe play holes.

VO/OC>> Up top. I love that part of golf and so it keeps me going. It's a major driver for me. I'm still competitive, but I can still play at a very high level. Bernard Langer again, when most people probably given up competitive golf, you know, sort of in their early mid 60s. I'm still here and I'm still doing well at six here.

VO/OC>> I love the game. A little practicing luck trying to get better. Patrick Harrington is a two time U.S. Senior Open champ. Sometimes that gets away in the short camera playing well, but. That's just me. I consider a 54 years of age, and when it comes to golf with candor and the Right to do what I like

VO/OC>> And Els says the outright lead, I think my overall game is actually in better shape than it was in my in my heyday. I think my driving has become better because the golf courses have forced me to be a better driver, and my ball striking ability overall, I think is is a little bit more consistent.

VO/OC And yes, this game gives me a on some and to be able to do it again and again at this age, to have around and be competitive is and that's who I am and that's who I want to be. Thomas Bjorn puts the pedal down and drops the hammer. This tour is a fantastic tour to play on.

VO>> Players of a lifetime in a setting beyond breathtaking. And that will do it for our season preview where the important number is score, not age. Thank you so much for being with us, Sam. Hang on for what promises to be another memorable ride. I'm Vince Cellini, Aloha.