

2026 PGA TOUR CHAMPIONS LEARNING CENTER SHOW #10

VO > PGA Tour Champions Learning Center.

VO > Road trip.

OC > Well, this is the best.

OC > Hello. Welcome aboard.

VO > PGA Tour champions players took their games outside the United States for the first time this season. Boarding a plane bound for Northern Africa and Trophy Hassan II. Our players settled in for the chartered flight and returned to Rabat, Morocco for this unique event to further establish this tour on a global basis in an anniversary year, no less.

VO > 2026 Mark the 50th anniversary of Trophy Hassan II, which dates back to 1971 and once a DP World Tour event. Royal Golf Dar Es Salaam stretched to a par 73, so who stepped up to mark a half century of champions played under a scorching Moroccan sun? Huge turn of events right here. Australian Scott Hend trailing leader Tommy Gainey by two strokes at 11 under his tee shot on nine from 162 and rolls it to five feet. Hend birdied here all three rounds. Playing in a threesome along with Hend leader Gagne also on the ninth. But he hits it heavy. This is not close and can't carry the water. The result was double bogey as Hend made birdie and walked away with a one shot lead. Now Tommy Gainey 12 under par, 289 yard drivable par four 17th. He's down by two trying to make something happen and something did happen. Rolls into the penalty area beyond the green and he would end up making bogey giving Hend a three shot lead headed to the last. Scott Hend at 14 under now third shot into the par five 18th and nearly finishes in style with a chip in eagle. Hend Settles for birdie. Tap in instead and breaks through on the PGA Tour Champions as Trophy Hassan II, winning by five.

VO > Scott Hend has won the 2026 trophy. Hassan two, in the 50th edition.

VO > 52 year old Scott Hend not only wins for the first time on PGA Tour Champions in his 12th career start here, he's also the first Australian winner in this events 50 year history. Hend also the third first time winner on PGA Tour Champions this season. Tommy Gainey denied a second win on this tour, but a solid week as Steven Alker is the only other player to finish in double digits under par, sharing the runner up. Here's Scott Hend on his maiden victory.

OC > That's awesome man. I love coming to Morocco. I love this golf course and to be under the same company of the of the royalty and win the trophy, it's awesome. Love it. I want to be back in the States full time where I live. I want to play against these guys that are played against 20 years ago, and I want to try and prove to myself that I can be up there and be competitive.

VO > You've been great entertainment. Congratulations.

OC > Appreciate it. Thanks a lot. Thank you.

VO > Congratulations to Scott Hend and movement in the Charles Schwab Cup standings behind Sink and Johnson. Ernie Els is now third, Alker fourth and Hend moving up nine spots into the top five. Gainey and Alex Cejka also move into the top ten as a season of unpredictability continues.

VO > Among the many worldwide victories for Ernie Els is the 2008 edition of this event. He remains a huge part of its history as a past winner, and on the 50th anniversary, Els joined His Royal Highness Prince Moulay Rashid during the Pro-Am in Morocco. It seemed only fitting that golf royalty and the person of Els would join the prince. Ernie spoke about the honor.

VO OC > His Royal Highness. What a guy. I mean, wonderful day. He plays a serious game of golf. He likes to play out. He's playing with three of his buddies. Then after that, I've made last year so many times you can say you're playing with the royal family of a certain country, sovereign country. So, it's a blessing for me. And it's really cool to see him again. Almost want to say we feel like we're almost friends. You know, you can't really say that about royalty, but, you know, after last year, you know, we've hit it off.

VO > As this event celebrates its 50th anniversary. We look back on one of the defining moments for a former champion. Vijay Singh won the 1991 edition, defeating Payne Stewart in a playoff, while Nick Faldo finished third. At that time, it was arguably the biggest victory of Singh's young career. 35 years later, Vijay reflected on his memories of that week and explained how the win helped shape his decision to play full time on the PGA tour.

VO OC > The King Hassan trophy was big then because it was a lot of Americans that came over. So, if you get invited, you know you were lucky to get in by it. And I was because I was with IMG, maybe, you know, I was obviously beginning of my career going into US a year after that. So those are the memories that, you know, it was a big win and that kind of elevated my, you know, my career from then on. So, you know winning is a big memory. I mean I'm going going back a long ways, you know. And so obviously when you win you remember what you win. And I the biggest memory I know was playing the playoff with Payne Stewart. He didn't know who I was. And you know, I always knew who he was then, but and I kicked his butt. Every time you win a big tournament he gives you confidence. You can know that you you're able to play with the big boys, you know. And I was just a young little kid then. But you know, I went to the States, and you know, I can't really specifically remember what Americans came over here, but there were quite a few and, but you know, obviously Payne beating Payne Stewart was my memory. You know, so, I think, you know, the year after when I did go there, I saw the guys. And you know I was a little bit more familiar. But you know I was still a young kid.

VO > Like Singh. Aaron Rai is now a PGA champion. Rai's journey has been well chronicled. Born in England and of Kenyan and Indian descent, Rai steadily climbed the golf ranks and through gloved hands eventually grabbed the Wanamaker Trophy. Many years ago, as a child Rai crossed paths with Collin Montgomery and who knew at that time what the six year old was destined to become?

VO OC > And I was up at The Belfry in Birmingham, which of course is where our and rise from, and I was doing her have been doing some promotion for the club or something. And here's this little boy, what, six, six years old, no bigger than my golf bag as you see in the pictures. My God, I think my God is bigger than him and amazing, isn't he? He goes and wins a major. Amazing. You know. Amazing. So, I've texted him. I've told him that I taught him all he knows. You know, obviously from that, from that little lesson I gave him. But tell you what, you can see what you want. You know about a surprise winner. He played the course the way it was designed. Some of the guys going for it made mistakes, you know, and thought it was just a bombers place. It wasn't. He played the course properly. Yes, he putted well. The one at 17 was was dramatic. Obviously, they gave him the title. But at the same time, he didn't putt a foot wrong. Six under from the ninth hole onwards around there. And that's the tough nine. Easy nine he was one over. The tough nine he was six under. So fantastic effort for him and I wish him all the very best.

VO > Back on May 10th, Jim Colbert passed away. Known for the bucket hat and sometimes animated style. Colbert was a Kansas State football recruit who turned to golf after an injury. How fortunate for our sport. He won eight times on the PGA tour, 20 on PGA Tour Champions and twice player of the year on the over 50 tour. Successful on the business side of golf as well, Jim Colbert Golf operated 23 courses. He also served as an ESPN golf analyst in the late 80s. Jim Colbert was 85 years old.

VO > Perhaps the most impactful change in golf has come through equipment ever changing. The tools of the sport have allowed the game to develop into a power precision path to optimum play. However, we occasionally dial it back for fun and asked several pros to feel like a kid again and swing a kids club. Here are the results.

VO > When is the last time you hit a kids club?

OC > When I was a kid.

OC > Got a little kids club here.

OC > When we were kids, they were just cut down men shafts, steel shafts.

OC > We got a Wilson Pro staff, the high launcher with a very solid Junior Flex Pro staff shaft. Look at that, junior flex. Let's go baby.

OC > That's what these long drive guys look like when they take the thing, they give it this one. I feel like Rodney Dangerfield here.

OC > It's made for a senior golfer or someone on Medicare.

OC > I'll tell you what. Junior flex is pretty close to Senior flex, so I think I've graduated.

OC > Nice. Right down the middle.

OC > Super whippy. Swing slow.

OC > Oh, wow. It's like, so slow to. Oh my God, you see it? Wow.

OC > And it peers it right down the middle.

OC > All right. With Georgie. Oh, yeah. We got the right cork trees peppered over there.

VO > All right.

OC > Trying to carry the bunker. No, no, but a cool club, man. That's cool. I love it.

OC > Fairway finder. Josh, I think we found our new driver. I'm the only one about 180, but it's in the middle of fairway, baby. It's like Fred Funk.

OC > Oh, hey, you guys, look it up. We got a little thicker poker out there.

VO > There we go fairway finder.

OC > Can I use this this week by going in my bag?

OC > Maybe get one of these made up and maybe a little longer size, maybe a touch stiffer.

VO > Aussie Michael Wright is in his third full season on PGA Tour Champions and building on a solid 2025 campaign. Still seeking his first PGA Tour Champions win but certainly flashes of what can be his is an interesting journey in the game and like so many others, perseverance paid dividends. We spoke with Michael recently about where he has been and where he is going.

OC > Michael Wright is kind enough to join us and talk a little golf, talk a little about his life with us as well. And that's where I want to start. Michael, growing up in Australia and your father, Gary, was a golf pro. So, what was life like back then in your introduction to golf?

OC VO > I actually didn't start golf until I was 15. I did cricket, soccer, swimming, all the sports. So given that he was a golf pro, you would think that that's pretty late. I kind of went about it a different way. He taught me on a school oval for six months before he let me go on a golf course, so I could actually hit the ball before I got onto a golf course. And so, my first handicap was 12. I shot like 78, and I thought not. The game was easy, but I didn't go through that tough period of coming down off a high handicap. So, because I could already hit the ball.

OC > So he had you kind of focusing on fundamentals more so than the golf aspect.

OC VO > Pretty much. That's how I learned to hit the ball out of the middle, because it was through winter those months, and if I mishit it, it just jarred up my hands and it hurt. So, I just, yeah, figured out how to hit it a little better that way and away we went.

OC > Tell me about your time and being on tours throughout your career. And sometimes it's okay, sometimes it's not. So okay where there are times when you were struggling and thinking, I'm not going to do this.

OC VO > Many, many, I guess you could say unfortunate enough to not play a major tour for 25 years, so not having that sort of status was made it difficult for me to to make a good living. But there were quite a few times, probably at least a half a dozen I can count where we were on the absolute brink of nothing. But I persisted, and yeah, it it's been a long journey, but in the end, it's been rewarding because I'm here.

OC > It has persevered, that's for sure. You got here through PGA Tour Champions Q-School, which not really doesn't really exist. If it didn't exist, then we might not ever have a chance to meet Michael. Wright, right? And we we wouldn't need a lot of good stories.

OC VO > Yeah, yeah. It's a shame that that's disappeared. But yeah, the powers that be thought that that was a different direction. But yeah, I just feel very fortunate that I got through the time that I did. Hopefully I can just keep playing good golf and stay here as long as I can.

OC > You kept playing before Q-School. I mean, you were actively playing. Is that is that the way to go? Would that be your advice for people that are trying to prepare, even to get on the tour now, rather than just beat balls every day?

OC VO > Oh, absolutely. I mean, I played competitive golf right through till till the Q-School when I was 50. I thought about it coming over here when I was about 40. So, I kind of prepared for ten years really to come over. It's very important to be competitive on this tour, to keep playing through your 40s, because if you stop, it's real tough. I noticed a couple of guys, you know, like Zach Johnson has just come on the tour, Stewart Cink. Those guys have come off the PGA tour, it's just a seamless you know, it makes it so much easier because they've been competitive through those 40 something years of their age. They're able to keep that competitive mindset going and and perform straight away out here.

OC > Yeah, you're putting together a solid season. Is that because you're just more confident in who you are, your game or a combination of things.

OC VO > A bit of both. And also, being comfortable out here now I know the courses. I'm more comfortable standing over the ball here now, rather than being a bit of a fish out of water. When I first came over here, it was, you know, it was a big change for me, huge change, because I

hadn't played a full schedule of good tournaments ever. Back home I'd maybe play one, two or three tournaments in a row and then I'd have a break for a while so. But over here I'm having to and I do all my own management, so I'm having to think two, three, four, five weeks ahead, but just do that month after month after month. So, it was a big change for me. But now that's sort of, I guess, settled down a little bit in my mind. I'm a bit more comfortable with that off course type stuff that's helped me perform a little bit on course.

OC > Yeah, but it may be a carryover from last year. You played all the way through and get it.

OC > Didn't go hoe once.

OC > No. And top ten at Dominion Energy Charity Classic. So, how big a boost was that you think for you last year and coming into this year.

OC > That particular tournament?

OC > Just just getting all through a season, getting a season under your belt and then performing well in the playoffs as well?

OC > Oh yeah. I mean, the the biggest thing for me is that getting that top 36, because the year before, I finished fifth and first and I was on edge most weeks not knowing whether I was going to get a start or not, especially early in the season. This time of year, where it's a lot typically more difficult to get into events, I was there was a few that I sat on the sideline, and then when I come off from sitting on the sideline, I was so hungry to get going. And then I had a real good run of top ten. I think I had five out of six events in a row where I yeah, just kept top ten and that, then finishing like saying that top 36. Now I've got every event, and it just makes it so much different.

OC > And I would imagine it's a little more enjoyable than teaching Phys editor at the, at the elementary school level.

OC > Yeah, its totally different game, that's for sure.

OC > Although we are children, a lot of us are.

OC > Yeah, yeah. You know what a part of me actually misses a little bit of it. Yeah, yeah. And I actually taught right up to just substitute teaching. Not so much Phys ed, but taught right up to, like, a year ago. I went back and did a couple of days and actually enjoyed it catching up with everyone. But I don't miss the day after day, week after week grind of doing it. But yeah, this is this is a much better life.

OC > So you've put together some really good golf knocking on the door. What's it going to take to break through and get that win?

OC VO > Keep doing what I'm doing, I think. Yeah, I nearly got it done there in Naples at the start of the year, finishing second. But the opportunity was there for a win. I mustn't have been ready just then, but that experience is obviously going to hold me in good stead for next time. I'm ready to go and yeah, no, I'll get it done. I know I'll get it done.

OC > All right. Thanks, Michael. Great to see you.

OC > Thanks.

VO > Still to come on learning center. Looking ahead to our next event, the American Family Insurance Championship. How a couple of marquee teams came together in this very special format.

VO > Because Boo Weekley is fun, we tend to overlook the talent and dedication to put into his game, both of which came together at the Insperity Invitational. Boo went bogey free for the week and earned his first PGA Tour Champions win in his 64th start. Afterward, he mentioned it didn't quite sink in because he was thinking about some things he had to do at his house with heavy machinery, but Boo mentioned when the moment finally hits him what he'll expect.

OC VO > I've grinded so hard for the last two and a half years to get out here and hoping to stay out here and, you know, having to write letters to all the tournament directors. And thank you all very much that who have helped me along the way for everything that y'all done for me. It's going to feel good, man. It's just it's going to be like a just a burden lifted off of me. And knowing that I've actually accomplished what my dream is to be able to win out here on this tour against these guys, it's hard to do and it's hard. It's hard to believe still.

VO > Up next this week, the American Family Insurance Championship in Madison, Wisconsin, with a couple of points of note. First, the return of tournament host Madison resident and 18 time PGA Tour Champions winner Steve Stricker, who makes his season debut after hip replacement and injury, and another season of the team scramble format. Stricker will again pair up with Mario Tiziani.

VO > Play at the Am Fam. Looks like this best ball in rounds one and three, with each player playing their own ball and the best score recorded for that hole and scramble. In round two, the team selects the better of both shots through the hole. The format produced the winning score of 32 under last year, and the early favorites are a couple of guys with a hot hand of late.

VO OC > My partner has kind of been in a slump lately, so I'm gonna try to take him out of it. The great Stewart Cink I got lucky. I mean, full transparency. We talked about it a long time ago, but then he mentioned that he usually plays with his good buddy and my good friend David Toms. But David's got a conflict family stuff, which happens. And he called me up. He's like, hey, you want to do it? I'm like, yeah.

OC VO > My partner this year for the American Family, the team event is Zach Johnson. He's the first alternate because I had a partner, David Toms, who kicked me out because his daughter is turning 21 and they're having a big party or something. David chose her over me and so I was left as a free agent, and Zach was the first alternate in my camp. So, I played in the World Cup together. We played Ryder Cup and Presidents Cup matches together. If nothing else, we're going to laugh a bunch.

VO > There's no gaining that week in Schwab Cup.

OC > This is true. Regardless of who plays better I want to see if I can get more points than him. You know, it's kind of like splitting the bill. So hopefully it's an odd number and I'll get the extra one.

VO > The defending champions of the American Family Insurance Championship are Darren Clarke and Thomas Bjorn, but the team will have a different look this year as Bjorn is sidelined while recovering from spinal surgery he underwent at the end of April. Last season's team title marked the first of two victories for the Great Dane in 2025, and now Clarke teams up with a new partner who will be chasing a milestone of his own that first PGA Tour Champions win.

OC > I'm like a kid in a candy, so I can't wait to play with Darren Clarke. I mean, Thomas Bjorn last year made 15 birdies in three days, so my quota 16. I understand that. Know your job, do your job but couldn't be more excited to play with DC.

OC VO > Unfortunately, Thomas is undergoing surgery on his back and he's going to be out for quite some time. So, we had a good time there last year, obviously winning and stuff. And so now that it's injured, I've got a new partner in Mr. Crane, Mr. Ben Crane, hell of a player. We play a slightly different game. I may be on the green where he's still on the tee, but you know, we will have some good fun and hopefully we'll have a real good run out of again this year.

VO > Teamwork makes your dream work. Or so they say. With that, we bid you farewell from Morocco. Event number ten is in the books and it's back to the heartland very soon. As always, we thank you for watching. I'm Vince Cellini. We'll see you next time on Learning Center.