

2026 PGA TOUR CHAMPIONS LEARNING CENTER SHOW #11

VO > PGA Tour Champions Learning Center.

VO > PGA Tour Champions rolled into June with a stop in beautiful Madison, Wisconsin, the 10th playing of the American Family Insurance Championship, a special format featuring two man teams navigating TPC Wisconsin. And here's how it shook out in the heartland. It was a tight one down the stretch, but last year's winner, Darren Clarke, teaming with new partner Ben Crane, went into grind mode and hung on to go back to back. Clarke's par putt at the last secured his sixth tour win and Crane's first on PGA Tour Champions. A 30 under total is in the books.

VO > Ben Crane, like Thomas Bjorn last year, gets his first PGA Tour Champions win.

VO > Bob Papa and John Cook called it and have a recap.

OC > Thank you so much. Vince Darren Clarke goes back to back new partner and Ben Crane and John we saw TPC Wisconsin on Sunday with wind and cooler conditions. Show its teeth in best ball. The scoring average was only five under par.

OC > Yeah two shots higher than it was on on Friday. And yesterday you know with scramble format was just a, you know just a track meet.

VO > Right. Let's take a look at some of the highlights. Darren Clarke and Ben Crane started the final round with a three shot lead. They made six straight pars until Darren Clarke played this third at the seventh. Kind of break the seal for them a little bit.

VO > Yeah. Ben Crane had it in there about five feet as well. You know they're close to first birdie on the card for today. And then beautiful two shots here for Ben Crane. Great tee shot. Back into the wind 255 yards. That's nice roping draw in there. Got a perfect kick right up there on the green. Great shot.

VO > And that would turn into a two plus birdie. So that got him to 200 for the day and 28 under. Darren Clarke playing his second half of 12. Ben Crane a little bit out of position off his tee ball. Darren Sark with a wonderful tee ball and a great approach. Had about five feet underneath the hole.

VO > And then this was the shot that won the tournament really. Darren Clarke second at the drivable par 4 16.

VO > About 25 yard bunker shot on the severe uphill line. Technically perfect. Great shot. They will remember that one.

VO > Now they both missed the fairway at 18 and pitch their shots out. And then Darren Clarke just carves in a beauty at 18 to set up par putt.

VO > Beautiful technique. Kept his upper body moving. Nice low follow through. Pinched it back there in this putt. Bob never left the center of the cup.

VO > Yeah. We saw a couple of groups in front. Missed that same exact putt, but Ben Crane gets his first win ever on the PGA Tour Champions. Darren Clarke gets his six. What a day for Kenny Perry and George McNeill as they shoot a nine under 62 but come off a shot short. Stewart Sink and Zach Johnson the Schwab Cup leaders just shot eight under par today.

VO > Kept kept their places.

VO > Well it was an exciting week. Darren Clarke goes back to back this year with a new partner. Let's hear from our winners.

OC VO > It was unbelievable. It was so much fun. I mean you can see why this guy's one Ryder Cup after Ryder Cup. It was just a league golf elite mentally and we just we didn't have our best stuff. But yesterday, as fun as yesterday was, is as tough as today was.

OC > It was hard. The condition

OC > Thomas, you know. Hey, thank you for at least letting me get him for one year. I hope your recovery is speedy but thank you.

VO > A check of the Charles Schwab Cup standings sees Stewart Cink and his Am fan partner, Zach Johnson, still at one and two. Alker L's hand round out the top five, with winners Crane and Clark both entering the top ten. In a wild Anything Can Happen season on the over 50 circuit.

VO > For 2023 Charles Schwab Cup champion Steve Stricker the road back to competition this year has been longer and more challenging than he originally expected. Undergoing hip replacement surgery, Stricker had hoped for a quicker return, but the recovery process required more time, patience and caution before he was ready to tie it up again. Now back inside the ropes, Stricker walks us through the timeline from surgery to his first competitive round and explains why getting back to action took a little longer than planned.

VO OC > Well, I got hip replacement on January 9th, you know, just wanted to get that done. It was a good time to get it done. The first part of the season is pretty slow for us, and I wanted to get through PNC Championship and the holidays, and then I figure, let's just get it done. So, I was on track to play Senior PGA, and then I tore that hip muscle. And then, you know, I talked to my physical therapist and then the doctor and the hip replacement. Everything was fine. And it was just the muscles that I torn on the outside of my left hip there. Also, just take your time, because if you do that again, then you're going to be out even longer. So, I literally didn't pick up a club for another eight weeks from from the middle of March to when it happened and then just picked up a club

again about ten days ago. And, you know, it's it's a challenge, you know, I mean, the game is you got to practice. You got to play, especially out here with these guys are so good. And they get the ball in the hole so well. And so, I just got to keep doing it keep practicing. And but this whole left side you know was my neck and left hip and all that is feeling so much stronger.

VO > After returning to competition last week, Stricker said he'll see how his body responds before deciding how many more events he'll play this season. But whenever he does tee it up again, there's a chance his daughter Bobby could be right there alongside him. The two teamed up last week and Steve said Bobby's calm steady demeanor helps keep him relaxed on the course. So, during the opening round, we might up Bobby to get an inside listen at what makes this father daughter pairing work so well.

OC > Thanks, I am. Thanks for coming. Yeah.

OC > From Madison, Wisconsin. Stricker.

OC > Nice. Well, super stressful now. I'm fine. Getting here is so stressful. His time management. The worst thing I've ever seen in my whole life. I don't know how he does it. I don't know how he's never been late to a tee time. I literally don't know. I'm sorry. It's literally the worst thing I've ever seen.

OC > 108 9 117. Yeah, that's what you got.

OC > Looking at I mean, you had Ernie Els, Zach Johnson, Stewart Cink. Like, these are all like the best players in the world. And they're on our range that we grew up on. Like that's just so cool. I don't play for some very much. It's very nice to have. You got no caddies like to help one another. That's nice. You got and we have a teammate like Dean's my teammate. Okay. Yeah. Ma a. I'm very proud of it. Proud of him. And what both my parents have felt and yeah. And especially when I get here, it's not too sweet.

VO > When learning center returns. It's been a season of health concerns for players, including Davis Love, the third past champion here, Scott McCarron and Ken Duke all in action in Madison. All of them giving us the latest.

VO > Davis Love the third has made three starts this season. First two coming in the opening two events. After stepping away from competition due to a knee injury, love returned last week teaming up with Scott Verplanck. DL three is hopeful that start will be the first of many, as he looks to play more events throughout the rest of the season.

VO OC > You know, I keep saying that every year that this is going to be the year, and I thought this was going to be the year again but had a little bit of a setback. But yeah, I'd love to play. You know, I'm getting so old that I better hurry up and do it. So, I'm looking forward to getting a few tournaments in and see if I can get back in shape.

VO > Scott McCarron is an 11 time PGA Tour Champions winner and the 2018 and FAM champion. Back in late March, Scott discovered he was dealing with throat cancer. His stage two diffuse large B-cell lymphoma resulted in an initial chemotherapy treatment at the end of April. Here, some six weeks later, Scott gives us an update, including a bit of temporary appearance change.

OC VO > I had my third chemo treatment on Monday just a couple days ago. I'm a little tired after that. You know, there's some things that go with it. You know, elevated heart rate, that type of stuff. Not really sleeping great. But right now, I feel pretty good. So, I'll have a PET scan in three weeks. See how we're doing. See how the chemo is done with the cancer. And then probably about three weeks after that, I'll do two full weeks of radiation right there on the throat area. And I'll do that up at Duke Medical. And then after that I should be done. I mean, I should be cancer free by then. I'm hoping, you know, you never know after that. So, the Pet scan will be a big deal in three weeks, and we'll see how we're doing. But the cancer. It got all my hair, so it's definitely working. And as long as it's killing all the cancer. I don't care about losing the hair. We can always grow that back. So, all is good.

VO > 57 year old PGA Tour Champions winner Ken Duke had a medical scare of his own, his body telling him something was off. About a month ago, Ken decided to address a hard issue that couldn't be set aside. Ken walks us through the timeline for treatment and offered advice to anyone who may be going through a similar situation.

VO OC Had a little hiccup, and my health issue here, but not just did a routine check up on on my health and my heart. My dad had a heart condition, and so my wife and my doctor just did an offer to to do a calcium score test. So, I did that about two months ago. And and it was the score was really elevated. So, we went in right before I went out to the PGA and did CT scan with the contrast and found out a couple of my orders were blocked, not 100%, but 80%. So now I'm thinking, well, I may play the next four weeks. So, I want to go out and play. But my doctor says you're good. You've had no symptoms, no pressure, no nothing. I'm like, okay, oh, I was thinking for four straight weeks. But after Insperity, I came back and went into the hospital and met with the doctor, and we went in and did a cardiac catheterization into my left wrist, went in to fix a few arteries that were blocked, but there was a few more. So, he put a few stints in and very, very thankful for all the doctors and and just all the prayers for everyone out there. It's been a whirlwind. But obviously if you have symptoms or pressure or if you have shortness of breath or something like that, but sometimes it could be too late. Your doctors sometimes don't tell you to go get these, these checkups. And luckily that, you know, I went in and did it because my dad passed away with some heart attacks and stuff. And that's why I do it. I do it every year, and here we are. But I would think try to go in and get checked. You just never know. You know, I did talk to a few players and few caddies that had some stents put in, and it's an easy procedure and all that stuff. But you really

don't know. Don't know until you get in there and you know when they are dealing with the heart, you know, it's it's a it's a different ballgame.

VO > Still to come on learning center a revealing conversation with Mario Tiziani and the sometimes uphill path taken by so many players who love the game and battle to stay in competition. Get to know Tis. You'll like him. That's next.

VO > Mario Tiziani was back in Madison, Wisconsin last week, site of his college glory days and teaming with brother in law Steve Stricker at the Am Fam. Every year for tis is unique, and at age 55, he's lived the highs and lows of the game. He joined us recently for a little background on life in the game.

OC > It's always fun to spend time with Mario Tiziani. It's good to see you and I want to talk about golf, but I also want to talk about you personally and your background for our viewers. You're kind of born into golf, right? Your dad was basically a Wisconsin golf legend. Played on The PGA TOUR eventually became the golf coach at Wisconsin for 26 years. So, what was that environment like and what are your earliest memories of golf?

OC VO > Yeah, right away I had a golf club in my hand. Really. I grew up on on the 13th hole at the team, you see, Wisconsin golf was in my backyard, so I played all sports. But it always kind of came back to golf. And, you know, in order for me to spend time with my dad, I had to go to the golf course. He was on the range teaching, you know, eight, nine hours a day. So, my spot was sitting on the bucket watching him give a lesson. And as he was transitioning between lessons, I would go behind and hit balls, you know, remembering everything that he was teaching people. And we had a great culture there, and we had a lot of kids that played. You know, it was kind of our summer, our summer thing. So ever since I can remember, it was just all with golf.

OC > What was it like being Dennis Coach Dennis Tiziani's son and one of his players as well as you go to Wisconsin?

OC VO > Yeah, I mean, I knew it was going to be, no preferential treatment, which is probably not what, you know, guys coming in thought, hey, this guy's going to have a spot that's already taken. So, I, I was pretty motivated to, to prove myself with them, you know, to the team and to, to my dad that, that I was going to earn those spots. And I had a great freshman campaign. I won a couple times. You know, I kind of solidified that and was in good graces with the team. And we had we had a good culture there as well.

OC > Was he sometimes tougher on you than the other guys?

OC VO > I mean, I think so, but, you know, I think it was kind of the same, you know, he didn't he didn't want to as much as he wanted me to play. You know, he wanted to make sure that I understood, you know, that that he wanted me to earn it.

OC > How would you describe your golf journey as a professional?

OC > Well, Yeah, it's it's it's been up and down and, you know, a lot of different, a lot of different paths, I guess. You know, I did it a standard way. I graduated from college, went to mini tours, hopped in a van, played the mini tours, went to Canada, you know, followed, you know, Steve Stricker path. That's kind of who my my North Star was. And just kind of try to get better all the time. I never was an elite player. I was at the, you know, work, work hard to get where I was. Made the tour not super successful, but, you know, it was a mountain that that I climbed and showed me a lot. And then and then gave it up at 40. I stopped playing it, did other things, got into got into the sports industry, management, marketing, and then got another opportunity out here that felt like it was full circle. I, I had to work hard. I didn't I didn't have status. I had to battle and play my way on. So, a lot of gratification, you know, just just a lot of hard work and, and happy to have the opportunity to have.

OC VO > Well, for those who may not be aware, Steve Stricker is your brother-in-law and you're in this golf family. Nikki's great. Your nieces are great, terrific. But when you're growing up, how competitive was it in the home?

OC VO > Pretty competitive. You know, Nikki and I completed at everything. She she was an athlete and she played basketball. She played every sport. We just competed all the time. And, you know, my dad was competitive, so, it just seems like everywhere we went, we were we were battling, you know, to win something. It could have been anything when it was darts or checkers or whatever. So, I think that's what finds you as a, as a competitor. You know that you're you're doing everything.

OC > You have a strong relationship with Steve Stricker. And I wonder if that's a double edged sword because you, you, you have this guy who you're very close to. But on the other side of things, it's like, is he leaning on this guy? What's, you know, what's the relationship, you know, that kind of thing. The burden that goes along with that, not that it's a burden. But, you know, maybe the the dynamic.

OC VO > I mean, I've always pulled for Steve, I can't I can't say I pull for everybody. I mean, I, you know, good on people when they do well. And if they beat me at my best, so be it. But, you know, he's he's always been a brother to me. I never had a brother. And, you know, he's just he's just been a great, a great human for me, great part of my life. And, you know, I can't help but feel for the guy. And he's been paramount in my journey as well.

OC > So here we are, another season and last year, we got pretty emotional as we were chasing that the playoffs there. At 55 what's the path here moving forward?

OC > You know it's it's still year to year right. And and I know there's good golf I know there's good golf in me. And I know I'll play great this year when I get the opportunities I think I think that's the biggest thing is my opportunities are kind of sporadic.

OC > Right.

OC > But but here I am and I know I'm going to have chances this year. And you just have to be patient. I mean, it's it can be stressful. The game is hard. You know, you're going to have good weeks. You're going to have bad weeks. Again, I'm not an elite player. I'm not I'm not Padraig and the guys that plagued it every single week. So, you know, my hope is that I'll, I'll play good 4 or 5 times. And if I can pick off a win, that would be an amazing. Pulling for you.

OC > Thank you.

OC > Thanks, Mario. Great seeing you, man. Have a great year.

OC > Thank you.

VO > But wait, there's more. American family meets golf family. Stricker, Tiziani and Madison and Learning Center got some inside information thanks to a little Q&A. Bobby and Izzy Stricker teamed up to do the asking. And we call this rapid fire.

OC > Hey, guys. So, we're here with our Uncle Mario and our dad, Steve. We got some rapid fire for you. First one, right off the bat, we were talking about food. Favorite food or Wisconsin restaurant? You can answer both or either.

OC > State Street brats. The Brat House.

OC > Oh good one. I wasn't thinking about that one, but that's. That's good. I'm going to go with Culver's. Oh, proud sponsor of this event. Also plugging this guy.

OC > How many times has Mario been late to a tee time?

OC > Good question. I'm going to say, do you know?

OC > Yeah.

OC > I'm going to say once.

OC > It's once and you learn after once.

OC > Where is it?

OC > I don't I think it was a; I actually think it was probably just the standard tee time. And, and I think my dad and uncle both got me pretty good for being late to the tee.

OC> Okay. What's dad's go to complaint on the golf course?

OC > It's going to be grainy fairways. I've never seen a guy whine more if something snags is club house. Yeah, it's pretty animated. I won't do it, but it's super animated. And from 150 yards away, you should go. Exactly what happened.

OC > What song is Mario most likely to play in the car?

OC > I don't know what song, but it's. What does that stuff called yacht rock. Yeah. I don't even know what that that is.

OC > What is this? What is this? I'm like, it's yacht. I like it. Yeah. Hey, I'll listen to that with you. Okay.

OC > All right mar. What is dad's biggest pet peeve? Like golf pet peeve or just.

OC > No in general.

OC > I mean, I don't have any. I mean, it's it's kind of science in my head, so. So, there's so many I can think of. Like what? So many I can think about when I was carrying from one time and his shirt kept coming untucked, and it looks like the world is going to say these shirts are coming untucked. So that's one. He's a clean freak, OCD kind of things. He's always cleaning stuff up lights, checking burners, checking doors.

OC > I do have a lot. It is chewing.

OC > And we're going to go chewing.

OC > Well, just pick one. Okay, guys, that was it. Thank you.

VO > With that, we bid farewell to Madison. And congratulations to the American Family Insurance Championship winner. Up next, it's Des Moines and the Principal Charity Classic. Until then, I'm Vince Cellini. Thank you for watching. And we will see you next time here on Learning Center.