

2026 PGA TOUR CHAMPIONS LEARNING CENTER SHOW #7

VO > PGA Tour Champions Learning Center.

VO > PGA Tour Champions sandwiched a classic between majors. The Mitsubishi Electric Classic, a return to TPC Sugarloaf in Duluth, Georgia, some 30 miles northeast of downtown Atlanta. Only this year with a twist.

VO OC > Hello, everyone, and welcome to PGA Tour Champions Learning Center. I'm Vince Cellini, Sugarloaf, and this event has long been a part of the tour schedule, but the twist was use of the modified Stableford scoring system. After 54 holes, the winner seeking the high point total, it promised aggressive play and high risk high reward results. With the point total and a recap, the men who called the action Bob Papa and Paul Azinger.

OC > Well thank you Vince. What a shootout we had at the Mitsubishi Electric Classic as Retief Goosen picks up his fifth win on the PGA Tour Champions, and Zinger Zach Johnson tried to go wire to wire. He started the day with a three point lead, but in this system, anything can happen.

OC VO > Yeah, stable first system is so unpredictable. No lead feels safe. And that's kind of what happened today. I felt like the leader was always coming out of the last group today when we started the day. And sure enough, it ended up being Retief.

VO > Yeah. Retief Goosen trying to seize control of the drivable 13. Plays a perfect tee shot contour of the green using all the slope, and he would go on to give himself an opportunity here to really grab control of this tournament. I mean, you're hitting it hole high in a par four.

VO > Yeah, well, the course was set up for this kind of scoring today. They wanted players to make Eagles. They had this hole an 18 set up and just missed it.

VO > But he got two points Stewart Cink the tournament host. What a final round. He shot a bogey free nine under 63. This was his third shot in the 18. And the tournament host would go on to make the birdie. Stephen Ames had only two points after round one and then Ames, like he always does here at TPC Sugarloaf, gave himself a chance after shooting 65 on Saturday. He had that putt for birdie and Stephen Ames would post 37 points as he to shoots a bogey free nine under 63. Then he had to sit, wait, and watch because Retief Goosen got to the green and two after another monster drive.

VO > Well, he did hit a monster drive. His driver came through in the clutch. He didn't miss hardly any iron shots the whole week, only missed five greens in regulation. He just left himself a little bit of one of those. But Calm is he is.

VO > Yeah, had to sweat it out a little bit. A little bit more than maybe he would have wanted to have. But Retief Goosen comes up with the victory. 14 points in the final round to beat Stephen Ames by two points and Zach Johnson by three.

OC VO > I drove it nicely. First round. Second round wasn't good. Today was a little better. But putting I suppose at the end of the day, you know, when, when you make so many birdies, I don't know how many I might, think it was eight. It's a lot of birdies. And that's in this format that's what you need. I mean, those two bogeys I thought was going to cost me, but it all added up in my favor. Played really well here in the past. And, to come on one year again 23 years, 24 years later is is great feeling. Looking forward to celebrate with my son today who is here for the first time. His first time actually won in front of them. Him walking around. Well actually I won the 2004 U.S. open, but he was only one year old, so it.

VO > Goosen jumps up six spots in the Charles Schwab Cup standings to number three, behind leader Stewart Cink and Zach Johnson. Steven Alker and David Toms both drop a spot. Rookie Ben Crane moves up to sixth overall in a season long race that promises lots of movement, with each event.

VO > 2025 Mitsubishi Electric Classic winner Jerry Kelly started his year off strong with a tie for 15th at Hualalai but then followed it up with a 23 and the Chubb Classic, a T63, in the James Hardy Pro Football Hall of Fame Invitational and then was forced to withdraw from the Cologuard classic due to injury. Kelly has had his share of ailments big and small. This time he's dealing with a serious back injury, a fracture of the end plate at the T8 vertebra.

OC VO > And it probably wasn't that big of an edema until I played on it for three weeks, which was a mistake looking back, but I thought it was a rib. I didn't get those pictures until after it went into total spasm on that that third week. I felt it the morning after I did it and DFW list and, you know, 70, 80 pound travel bag up onto a golf cart flatbed with rails on it. You know, it was about chest high and I didn't feel it right then. I felt it the next morning, but I was playing with Coach Saban, and a little pain in my back wasn't going to stop me from there. And, you know, I played awful. He picked me on the first tee saying, you know, I'm pretty good at drafting. I think I'll take Jerry and I let him down. There's no good coach I had a broken back, literally. I can say it.

VO > Also, on the medical front, when we last spoke with three time PGA Tour Champions winner Ken Tanigawa at January season opener, he revealed his battle with prostate cancer. Diagnosed in June of 2025, Ken underwent a radical prostatectomy in November, facing a grueling road back both physically and mentally. Playing in his seventh event at the Mitsubishi Electric Classic, Ken offered the latest on his recovery.

VO OC > I feel great, first of all, and you know everything. I'm recovering nicely. As I stated earlier with you, the surgery went well, but I passed my first blood test, so you

know, which was huge. It was a lot of relief, but I have to take him every three months. So, after Houston, I'll take another one. So as long as those are okay, as long as there's no velocity in those numbers, I'll be in a good spot. So, I'm get my strength back slowly but surely. Not doing anything too crazy to get it back all at once. And just working on the game, just plugging away. So overall it's a win.

VO > I was going to ask you, is the strength the challenge in returning to golf, or how much of it is the mental aspect of it?

VO OC > I think, well, the strength will come back. I'm not concerned about that. That's just time. The mental part, it's always, you know, golfs so mental. Right. And just getting the confidence back and and competing out here and feeling good about your golf in the game. And it's there's signs that it's okay. And there's signs like that it's not. So that's the hardest part I think just taking all the time off and also distracted with a lot of stuff. So, but it's, it's, you know, you forge on and it's coming along nicely.

VO > Have you learned to stay more in the moment because of all of these experience?

VO > Great question. There's no doubt. And gratitude and all those cliches, but it is true. You stay way more in the moment. That was one of my my goals for the year to create small wins every day. You know, just focus on the day and, and put one foot in front of the other and not get too far in front of yourself or, or, you know, concern yourself about what's happened too much in the past. So, yes, to answer your question for sure.

VO > How is your life regimen changed or been altered about this? Just your daily routine?

VO OC > Well, my diet certainly changed here. I've stayed staying away. I don't necessarily have to. Well, maybe I should, but I do. I mean, I, I quit eat red meat, processed meats, dairy I stay away from I started doing that last year. So that's more than anything is just my diet is really because that's what I can control. Right. And the exercise stuff I do and, and all that. But that and I focus on my mental side to a lot. So, you know, I, I meditate a lot and all that fun stuff. So, but yeah, I think it's the diet is really changed a lot.

OC > It must do your heart well to see the outpouring of support you've gotten from fans and the tour. What can you share with us about that?

OC > Well, it just means a lot. I mean, just this morning, Darren Clarke came out to me to ask how he's doing. And and I get that and it means a ton, you know, I mean, I kept it to myself last year and, and, but just to have the support from friends and family, even people that met me saw the interview from Hawaii. They've reached out. And just to say, hey, how you doing? And then folks back home and it's just nice, you know, that the people are aware and they care and and they reach out to you.

VO > Unfortunately, we have another cancer revelation this week. 11 time PGA Tour Champions winner Scott McCarron discovered in late March he was dealing with throat cancer. His stage two diffuse large B-cell lymphoma resulted in chemotherapy treatment the week of the Mitsubishi Electric Classic. The 2019 Charles Schwab Cup winner is attacking this head on with his medical team, family and friends. It has been an emotional time.

VO OC >Right after Boca, had a little scratchy throat and, kind of looked in my throat with a flashlight to see what it was. And there was a little white spot about about a size of a little eraser. I didn't like the looks of it, so I called my doctor and, Doctor Jodi Stutz. She said, come in the next day. So, I went in the next day. She didn't like the way that look at me to, ear, nose throat specialist Doctor Barnes. He took a biopsy, and then I left for Tucson. Didn't really think anything of it. I thought maybe a bacterial infection or something like that. Played good in Tucson, finished 15th and then drove to Newport for the Hoag Classic. And on Monday morning, Doctor Barnes called and said, you have cancer. So, at that point he didn't know exactly what kind. Then on Tuesday said it was, B-cell lymphoma and kind of a fast acting so wanted me to come home immediately. Get me with, oncologist. Doctor Ariel met with him on Friday and, found out it was, diffuse large B-cell lymphoma and stage two. So, I had to go through about two weeks of, blood and Pet scans and, you know, ten different doctor's appointments. And that was the kind of final determination of what it was. And we've been fortunate, got a great care there at Novant Health with duct aerial. But he's also consulting with MD Anderson. Stewart and Lisa Cink helped me get in with M.D. Anderson, which is, I'm very grateful for, they're the best in the country. And my doctor and there's doctors have been consulting and came up with the same diagnosis and the basically the same treatment plan. So, I started chemotherapy, on Monday, Tuesday here of Atlanta, went through six hours, both days of chemo. When I got the phone call, Monday morning, it was complete shock. I mean, when, you know, you look at someone like myself who stays in shape, eats right, gets sleep, but does everything you're supposed to be doing, doesn't drink too much and all sudden gets a diagnosis of cancer. It's kind of shocking. So, you know, you start thinking how why, why me? Those type of things. And then then trying to put a team together to find out how can we beat this, you know, is it curable? You know, those are the things that you're really going through your head, and then, you know, you after you do that Pet scan, you don't know if it's spread throughout your whole body. And that was probably the scariest thing was the Pet scan. That night before, I didn't sleep hardly at all. Did the Pet scan? My wife Jenny and I drove home from downtown Charlotte, went to the grocery store and also. And boom, I get a, you know, text that your results are in. And so, we're reading the results and it's, you know, saying basically that what we thought was, pretty located, but then it says, psychological activity in your abdomen and your stomach and your gut and your pelvis. And I'm thinking, oh my gosh, you know, it's it's spread everywhere. And at that moment, I kind of said, well, first of all, what a

psychological activity mean. That's so my wife's huge into ChatGPT and she popped it in there and it said normal activity. So, for about five minutes I was I was pretty worried we were in there to go to a cry and pretty much, but you know, it's pretty localized, and in a couple of lymph nodes. So, it is stage two. But again, we've caught it early and it's very curable. You know, if you have a sore throat and you have something going on, go to your doctor, find out what it is, don't be stubborn and wait. If I would have waited six months, it would not have been a good outcome for me from what my doctor says. So, early detection is the key for any of the cancers.

VO > The fact that Stewart Cink jumped into action to help Scott says so much about Cink as a person, and PGA Tour Champions as a whole. This is a fraternity and age has softened the sharp, competitive edges of years ago, when winning was first and foremost among players. Just another example of why the over 50 tour is a very special place.

OC VO > On the PGA tour champion. Let's face it, we're in a little different stage of life than we were out there. We're trying to choke each other to death at age 28, you know? Now we've got ailing parents, we've got people getting diagnosed with stuff. We've got just, you know, we got real stuff happening out here and golf matters to all of us. But that other stuff matters as much or more than what we do on the course. Probably more because I know when when, when something happens, everything drops. We've been through a lot, you know, luckily, with, M.D. Anderson, my wife got the same type of thing happened with her. Now, we were on the regular PGA tour then, but Amy Mickelson basically did the same thing for Lisa. Hooked her up with the right people and got her connected to, a great care team. We just want to pay it forward. And it just seems like there's been, a little bit of an increased run this year of people getting diagnosed with cancer. And it's sad. And it's it's really concerning. But we're just trying to do our part helping out. And that's just our thing. That's just one family. Everybody out here is that way. I just I just want a tournament recently. Right? I can't walk through the dining room without people stopping me. Other guys like, hey, great job, fist bump. You know, on the PGA tour. Yeah, I mean, there's some of that, but it's a little bit more like jealousy or, you know, there's envy and rightfully so. It's the very top of the game professionally. So, but out here the the group is close knit. They care about each other. We know each other. We got a lot of logged miles together.

VO > And this news Jim Furyk will return as the U.S. Ryder Cup captain for 2027. Furyk was chosen by the Ryder Cup committee after Tiger Woods removed himself from competition following a DUI arrest on March 27th. Furyk captain the U.S side in 2018, in a losing effort to Europe in Paris. He was also an assistant captain to Keegan Bradley in last year's Ryder Cup. The 17 time PGA tour winner did lead the US to victory as captain in the 2024 Presidents Cup.

VO > When Learning Center returns, Aloha means goodbye for the PGA TOUR, and it could mean hello to the PGA Tour Champions. A possible schedule expansion in our 50th state, to which we'd say Mahalo.

VO > Stewart Cink won the 2026 Mitsubishi Electric Championship at Hualalai. Like to kick off the season, but could that soon just become the first of two events in the state of Hawaii to begin the campaign? Turns out, island time could be extended time for the over 50 Brigade.

VO > Last week, the PGA TOUR confirmed plans to end its tournament presence in Maui and has begun to explore options to transition the Sony Open in Hawaii into a PGA Tour Champions event. PGA Tour Champions president Miller Brady gave us the latest on a possible extended Hawaiian stay.

OC > The PGA TOUR made a hard decision that they're not going to continue their events in Hawaii. Fortunately for us, we have a great partner and Mitsubishi Electric, so we're, we're locked and loaded in July through 2030. So, for us, it makes sense to try to add a second event in Hawaii. So we are in discussions, on trying to do that, with, with Sony. And we hope that we have something special to announce here in the near future.

VO > We asked a few PGA Tour Champions players about their thoughts on possibly saying aloha to a new event. If one Hawaiian island is fun two islands is even better and there were few objections.

OC VO > Sign me up, I think, everybody be excited about that. It's, it'd be a shame to have that one go away. It's perfect venue. Perfect, set up for a champions event. And think of it as a very, very successful week.

VO OC > We played on the North Shore, of Oahu after whole a few years when I was had just turned 50. And it was kind of nice going over there for two weeks. And it has been for the PGA tour guys, you know, going to Kapalua and then going to walleye. You know again two weeks over there. Go over there. Why not. So, I think everybody should be all in.

OC VO > It's good because of the fact that I think the golf course suits us a lot better, rather than the younger guys who hit the ball so far, so. And also, the fact that it's it was a great spot, a wonderful place to start the year off at. So, I'm looking forward to it. If it does happen.

OC VO > The golf course is terrific. It's a massively underrated golf course. I think it's really good. It ends up favorite anybody. Whoever plays well long or short of good slice. It doesn't matter. It's a golf course. Everybody can play. It's an iconic golf course on our tour. That tournament's been around for a very long time. I think the thing Hawaii's always been a part of the PGA TOUR, and I'll take a good, I think, a good part of the PGA TOUR. And I think it's a boon for the Champions Tour.

VO OC > Hualalai I was my 200 start on the PGA tour when I won. So that was kind of it was kind of enjoyable. Not waiting 200, but man, I mean, just a dream to be able to go back there. I wanted to go out there and still play with the young guys, but I, I'm, I'm past that. So, to be able to go out and our capacity here, I don't think anything. Yeah. That would be the top for me. Completely over the top. The best that I can imagine in my career. Just being able to play that one again with these guys.

VO > If the PGA Tour Champions does visit Oahu for an additional event, it won't be the first time they played on that island. The last time the tour competed there was 2014 at the Pacific Links Hawaii Championship held at Kapolei Golf Club and won by Paul Gross. However, that tournament was played in September. The Sony Open has been held in Wailea Country Club in Honolulu since 1971.

VO > Still to come on Learning Center another week, another major Regions Tradition brings a native son back to Alabama. Stewart Cink is rolling just like the time.

VO > Next up, Greystone Country Club and the second major championship of the year. The region's tradition. Birmingham, Alabama brings out the tour's best and just might be the setting for back to back major titles for standings. Leader and Alabama native Stewart Cink, who shared his thoughts on The Regions and what have been keys to his success.

OC VO > We don't get a chance to play near our homes like our roots that often. And, at, TPC Sugarloaf in Atlanta, I get to play there, you know, I'm the host of the tournament, and that's great. But that's not my birth roots, you know, and I'm really an Alabama native and growing up in junior golf program in Alabama, you know, most of the kids are in Birmingham. They won't travel anywhere else. So, they have to have the tournaments in Birmingham. So, I played all the golf courses in Birmingham growing up. And I feel like it's it's my roots and I don't know a ton of people in Alabama anymore, but a lot of them know that I'm from Alabama. And so, I feel like the hometown guy when I go there and get a chance to compete for another major. It's a lot of fun, and being back at home, it's a great combination.

VO > Was the region something that you paid attention to as a kid? Was that a big deal?

VO OC > First of all, the golf course didn't exist when I was growing up. It came on the scene around the time I went to college, so I never played there growing up. I never really played Graystone until I started playing in The Regions. The fact that it's probably the longest running pro golf event in Alabama that I can think of off the top of my head, being there in Birmingham always paid a little bit more attention to it because it was my area, you know, and I wanted to check out like, what's the course? You know that 18th hole looks like a lot of fun. Looks a little scary. I remember that. I remember the guys that came through that gantlet and performed on that last hole. You know, I always had a lot of respect for that because that that second shot, it's no, no pushover.

VO > I'm trying to picture you on that green bicycle that you have to ride away there have to get a seat there. You have they have to raise that seat a little bit, I think.

OC > Well, I suggest they get an e-bike for me, too, because I'm not much for pushing this heavy body uphill. I'd rather get that electric motor on there.

VO > With that, we say goodbye from Georgia and offer hearty congratulations to our Mitsubishi Electric Classic winner. We'll see you next week in Birmingham. Until then, I'm Vince Cellini. As always, we thank you for watching learning center.