

2026 PGA TOUR CHAMPIONS LEARNING CENTER SHOW #8

VO > PGA Tour Champions Learning Center.

VO > Major championship season continues on PGA Tour Champions, bringing us to Sweet Home Alabama. Greystone Golf and Country Club in Birmingham, again playing host to the region's tradition. The second of five majors on the over 50 tour.

OC > Hello everyone, and welcome to Learning Center. I'm Vince Giuliani and what a way to close out the month of April on our tour. Legends of golf, sports, music and entertainment all gathered here. As for the region's tradition itself, it's an event steeped in history with past winners like Jack Nicklaus, Lee Trevino, Tom Watson, among others. So, who walked away with the trophy and who rode away on the region's green bike? With more, a recap. Bob Papa and Paul Azinger.

VO > Thank you so much, Vince. Second major of the year. The Regions Tradition at the wonderful Greystone Golf and Country Club. Stewart Cink came into the final round with a three shot lead over Colin Montgomerie. And this is the big play for me Zinger.

VO > Early on it was. That's for sure. I mean, they really had their chances, but, they didn't really have much of a chance when he made that putt for bogey after hitting it in the water. That was huge. And then this one Bob at seven.

VO > Yeah, the two par threes. He had to really scramble after he missed his tee shot left there. So, he made the turn one under on that opening nine. And then kind of put the pedal to the metal. Used his length to have shorter clubs into the difficult 11th. And he rolls that in. And that got him the 17 under par.

VO > Yeah, he only had 95 yards there. He took advantage of the par fives this 12th hole. This was a really good putt here for Stewart. A nice little break for dead center. And he just played steady and smart. He is learning how to finish off these golf tournaments Stewart Cink now knows how to win.

VO > Yeah, this one after the bogey at 14 gets him to 18 under par. And he holds off the charge of Scott Hend who had posted the number. Cink taps in is par putt shoots 18 under, shared the lead after round one and then cruised on through to victory. And Stewart Cink has won four of his seven starts so far this year on the PGA Tour Champions. And he's just handling every situation perfectly.

VO > Yeah, he's embraced the leadership role here on the Champs tour. And Stewart is now week in and week out the man to beat.

VO > A great week for Colin Montgomerie, his first top five since 2023. But let's hear from our champion.

VO OC > I could get used to this. It's not, ever going to get old, you know, age is an important factor on PGA Tour Champions, and right now I'm still on the younger side. It won't last forever, but for now, we're going to ride and enjoy it. I got a lot to be grateful for right now. You know, we got Lisa, has got a big appointment with, in the Anderson coming up tomorrow and the next day. So, everything's good is good thing, but, still, I one of for bigger appointments in the last, bunch of years. So, we're conscious of that and praying. And we got a lot to be grateful for. You know, golf's important to me, but it's not the only thing. And winning these terms is awesome. It feels great. I appreciate you, your kind words. And it's been a lot of fun.

VO > Stewart Cink's early season March can be measured in wins and the season as a whole. Cink pushes his lead to over a million in the Charles Schwab Cup point standings in front of Zach Johnson. The top five remain the same while Scott Hend jumps into the top ten. And guess who defends at next week's Insperity Invitational? That's right, Stewart Cink.

VO > Cink also made headlines off the course, as he will join Justin Leonard as U.S. vice captains for Jim Furyk at the 2027 Ryder Cup in Ireland. Thought to be in the running for captain. Instead, Cink will return to the vice-captain role, which he also held under Zach Johnson in 2023, in Italy. As for Justin Leonard, he'll make his Cup debut in that role. Both Cink and Leonard are past Ryder Cup winners as players together in 2008, and Leonard famously before that in 1999.

VO > Stewart got an unscheduled lesson on the 18th tee at Wednesday's pro-am not a golf lesson, but rather a step by step in eating crawfish. There is definitely a technique involved in our tour leader was like a sponge soaking up directions and sinking his teeth into a new challenge.

OC > Crawfish. Wow, look at that. Yeah. You know. So, I don't do that. Yeah. So, you got to soak the head, right? And pull the tail right out of it. Like that didn't go right in there.

OC > Well, yeah, well, that's where the meat is. Okay, y'all know how to do this. I thought you were going to go. You go sideways.

OC > So what do I do?

OC > Pretty much turn sideways. See what interesting. There you got there. Exactly. Go for it. Hey, there you go.

OC > Like a shrimp. Make the crab. Yeah. Yeah.

OC > You know, I feel that first ring. Yeah. And then you get the juice out of there. Yeah. Now, the last. Oh, yeah. Right there. And then you feel the first ring off. I tried it. Oh, I see the ring. See? Yeah, yeah, yeah. You know what? I don't get down on the sauce. It's all right. I got one hole left. And they have. They have the dry cleaning in the locker. So,

there's the right. Yeah. And then if the rest of it like that, pull and then pinch that and pinch the back of it, okay. And then it comes the rest of it. Yeah. Well, that's a pretty good five. Yeah. That's right. I had to do mean way. That was right. One more. Yeah. Right there. All right. So, we're going to start by going twist twist for the lime. Pull it out there. Yeah. Right. Yeah. And now we're to take the ring off. Yeah. And give it a little bit hole in the back here. And then when you, when you do before when you do it like that you never catch that on the bottom. Oh, so you're going to switch it about. Yeah. Yeah. Simple. No, it's not. Do it for you. Oh yeah. How about that? Amazing.

VO > And while Cink was crushing crawfish Rod Pamplung was taking things in smaller bites. Pamplung was coming off his second start of the season. The two time winner debuted with a tie for seventh at the Chubb Classic but then took time off due to a scheduled knee surgery. The 56 year old takes us through that process and getting back in the swing.

OC > Played Naples and then, it was about maybe a week, two weeks off, that every 23 I went into the Andrews Institute at, Pensacola. Doctor, Doctor Steele and we went in, had partial knee replacement. So it was, long overdue. It was about, five years from the meniscus tear to finish off the walk properly. And, Yeah, it's been great. As they say, it's two months, so a little bit earlier than expected, but everything feels great. Ready to play and to be out for a couple of months was a bit difficult, but I'm sure everyone else was happy that I wasn't here.

VO > When Learning Center returns a star studded pro-am in Alabama, great college football minds meet again. We'll chat with the top dog, the Tide coach rolling, and of course the goat when we return.

VO > The Regions Tradition tradition each year as a very special pro-am featuring celebrities with deep connections to the state of Alabama. Beyond golf, this event helps raise millions of dollars for several charities, including the primary beneficiary, Children's of Alabama, which provides specialized medical care for ill and injured children. Deep in Southeastern Conference country, we were able to visit with two college football head coaches offering equal time to sic'em and Roll Tide.

OC > I know you recruit and you coach a lot of five stars. How many stars in your golf game right now?

OC > Oh, not enough, not enough. Played a little golf here recently, and I'm excited to get out here today.

OC > You turn 50. So that means you're eligible for PGA Tour Champions. You know, if you just take it side work.

OC > Absolutely not. I saw Cam who I am playing with today who is 51, and I thought, golly, I'm finally Champions Tour eligible. But a long way from good enough.

OC > At the University of Sioux Falls, you were a, two sport athlete baseball and football. Where did golf in it? I mean, how's golf?

OC VO > I never touched a golf club it out of college, and it shows, right? But I love the game. It's awesome being out here. It's amazing being with Ernie Els here, just watching him hit it and learn more about his, you know, pass. And it's an awesome game. And I love it because it's something I, you know, can do for a long time.

VO > You worked with Coach Saban and you guys are friends. And I was just wondering how this guy attained legendary status but still kept me for his golf game all these years. What was his secret?

OC > His secret was practice. He had a lot of golf balls when he wasn't on the phone with the recruits or, working on Alabama football he was hitting golf balls. He enjoys it a lot. He's got good mobility. He gets the ball well.

VO > Any side bets going on with Coach Smart at all?

VO OC > No, I've actually I've even seen him here. I mean, he's doing his thing. I do my, it's you know, you're just busy, out here kind of going about your day. So, I'm sure he's the out in front. Yeah, he's I think is. Okay. There we go.

VO > Coach Debord, do you have any side golf action with him? Because he's good for it. Now, I know you heard about that.

OC > No, I don't I don't I don't know if he's a good golfer or not. I don't compete against compete. Goldens throwing some numbers out there. He's he's bragging about his eight handicap. So, we'll see how he does today.

VO > Congratulations on the New deal. Extension. I'm just wondering how you manage, you know, expectations of that, the job, things like that. How does that balance out?

VO OC > Yeah. I mean, when it comes to the the contractors appreciate the university and our, our athletic director, Greg Byrne, our president, you know, and that board of trustees, just for their confidence in me and you know, that we're heading the right direction with everything we're doing in the program. And so, looking forward to doing it here for a lot longer.

VO > It's one thing to be here in April. And playing some golf. It's another thing when you're here October 10th on the sideline at Bryant Denny and I know all the games are important, but that that one's got to kind of jump out a little bit on the schedule coach.

OC > Yeah, they all do. They really do. And that one, when you come back here, you better be ready to play. It's a hard place to play. They got a great environment. Caleb done an incredible job. Got a really good football team. And we'll have to strap it up for that one.

OC > Give me some goals this year. Give me a kind of a thumbnail. What we can expect from the Tide.

OC VO > I mean for us it's always been just keep it as simple as possible. Just be our best, you know. And I'm excited about the mindset of the guys because I think that's where it's at. They're they're hungry. They want to take the next step. Anything short of championships I know is a disappointment. But, for us, it's about just, to be, you know, the best. Every Saturday.

VO > In the mid 90s, if we had nil and Kirby smart play and defensive back to the dogs. You go to Coach Donovan. What would you ask for from him?

VO OC > A scholarship. That's all I want is a scholarship. So, so many of these other sports, you know, at our place, women's golf, men's golf are doing good things each year. We got so many guys on the tour that you want all the sports to be able to enjoy the luxuries of the NIL.

VO > Cameron Percy was a product of Australian rules football growing up down under, but golf was common ground, with Kirby Smart giving coach a lesson on squaring up his club at impact, one that could help him when playing near Athens, Georgia, at the new Rose Golf Club private championship course founded in part by ex-Bulldogs like Bubba Watson. Let's see if this dog can hunker down off the tee.

OC > All right. Oh, this is we've been working on his posture. There we go. Let your arms hang. Nice.

OC > Ready? Go.

OC > All right. That was on plane with the clubface a little open. So, what we're going to do now, I want you to swing up this, which will be perfectly on play. And so, you set up on the ball for me. So, I'm going to put it in. So, we're going to go here set up to it. So, this. I want you to swing that set up to it. I want you to swing back. It's square. That what you're doing at the moment? You're cutting across like that. And that's where we're going to be cut. So, I want you to swing and feel like it's swing up that stick with that square. All right? That's it. Just trust me, you're not going to hit it. So, I took off on line with the clubface open. But your path is actually pretty good. Clubface is open.

OC > You can't fix what's broke.

OC > Thank you.

VO > Then there was the living legend of Alabama football coach Nick Saban, a seven time national champion in the college ranks and current ESPN college football analyst. Saban drew the biggest gallery of gray stone and makes a point to play in this program to give back. Coach gives golf the same attention to detail he did on the sidelines in Tuscaloosa.

OC > The region's tradition pro-am pairing sheet reads Nick Saban then Goat right after that. Which which sums it up. But I want to ask you, with all the championships, coach, how did you find time for golf to make sure that was a part of the piece of the pie?

OC VO > I always loved to play golf. You know, that's the one thing that you can do when you get older. And I always played all the sports basketball, baseball, football, whatever was in season. So, we make golf and season year round.

OC > I know you get asked this. How's your game now that you've stepped away from coaching? Not playing right today, but I've been playing a little better. I got a little bit better at chipping and cutting and getting the ball in the holes. But inconsistent hitting it.

VO OC > I heard you tell a story on a national talk show about your Augusta National experience. Can you share some of that with us?

OC > You mean the last time I played there, being nine over on the front, one over on the back, that's about how I play. So, it's a little frustrating, but I think golf's a metaphor of life. And if you can, you know, keep focusing on the next shot and try to make the, you know, hit a good one. You got to deal with it about, and you got to deal with it. And that's the only way you can play this game.

OC > Would you ever consider trading one of the seven national championships for a masters green jacket?

OC > You know, it wouldn't be fair to all the guys on the team. You know, you win a championship. It's a great feeling that everybody on the team sort of bought into the principles and values and the standard. And, you know, it's such a great feeling when you win in team sport. So, I don't have to worry about a green jacket, I can promise you that. But I love watching it. And I think, you know, Augusta National is my favorite place to play.

OC > I can tell your passion for the game. If football wasn't a path, a great path for you. Do you think golf might be in your life in some capacity?

OC VO > You know, when I grew up in West Virginia, we didn't we didn't have much many places to play, you know, so I never learned until a later age. But, you know, it's the love of my life, really, when it comes to sports now. And just happy that I can still play at my age.

OC > Well, lastly, are you more forgiving of yourself for a bad round or hole or a coaching miscalculation?

O C> You know, I think when you're a competitor, you're always trying to close the gap on perfect. So, no matter what mistake you make, they all feel about the same in terms of what you need to do to try to fix them.

OC > Well coach is great to see you looking good. You enjoy your day.

OC > Appreciate it.

VO > Also, in the region's tradition, pro-am lineup was country music star and heartthrob Riley Green. He of the Billboard country chart toppers and occasional acting role. A native of Jacksonville, Alabama, Green is a regular on the celebrity golf circuit and currently touring across the southeast. There were no sad country songs on this day.

OC > Well Riley Green can play not only music, but golf. How long have you had the bug for golf?

OC VO > My granddaddy played golf. I think he played it. If he wasn't fishing, he was playing golf when I was a kid, I used to walk 18 holes every day, him and his brothers, and I've just always loved being outside and being out on the course. And now it's a great way for me to get off the bus and, you know, get out from backstage and go out and do something.

OC > I was going to ask, do you get to play on tour? I mean, you find time to play.

OC > Quite a bit is Turkey season right now, so I don't play as much. But during the summer, yeah, I get out and play and, you know, really fortunate. We could play a lot of nice courses, too.

OC > It's interesting. Athletes want to be musicians. Musicians want to be athletes. You were both as quarterback at Jacksonville State. We just had the NFL draft. So, if I asked you for a scouting report on Riley Green, the quarterback, what would you tell me? Man, I think if I was going to give you any advice on me as a quarterback, I'd send one of those ads with you, make sure I went to class. That was that was my big problem. I could throw it pretty good, but I can show up for 9:15 class to save my life.

OC > How about golf? Give us a scouting report for your golf.

OC > Oh man, if I can get my driver straight, it's a good day. You know.

OC > What's more difficult? Is it breaking par or writing a really, really good song?

OC > Breaking par. It's not even close. I've been on a lot of stages in front of a lot of folks, and I don't even get nervous. But sitting in front of a gallery about to tee shot, that's rough.

OC > And lastly, playing alongside John Daly. If John Daly were a country star from any era, who do you say John Daly would be?

OC VC > George Jones. I was called a hell. He might be. He still might be. Before it's over with.

OC > Before it's over with. Rile. Great to see you.

OC > Good to see you.

VO > Still to come on Learning Center, catching up with former Masters champion Mike Weir celebrating an anniversary on this tour and looking to get back in the winner's circle. The lefty drops by next.

VO > This week, the one True invitational on our tour, the Insperity Invitational at the Woodlands Country Club near Houston, Texas, for over two decades, a gem on the schedule, just over 7000 yards and a par 72. Lake views and natural tree lines. The Woodlands will be a stern test for our legends.

VO > Five years ago this week, Mike Weir captures his first PGA Tour Champions event, winning the Insperity Invitational, outdoing John Daly down the stretch, his first win since the 2007 Frye's on the PGA tour. He became the fourth Canadian to win on the 50 and over circuit. This came in Weir's rookie season but remains his only PGA Tour Champions victory. Mike spoke about that win and what's ahead.

OC > You know, it's coming off the time where my 40s weren't too good to me in golf and, you know, to get out here and, you know, show some signs and then, you know, it was it was a great battle is very memorable with J.D., you know, making a charge that day and that was a fun back nine.

VO > You know, it was interesting because kind of Covid threw everything out of whack at that time. How do you feel it affected you and your run for more wins on PGA Tour Champions?

VO OC > Oh, I don't know if it did. I mean, it was slow getting started. You know, I was supposed to start in May, I guess when I turned 50 and it didn't get started, but I think yeah, maybe it maybe it stalled things, maybe a little bit, but, yeah, not too much, I don't think. Yeah.

VO > So at this point, you had some close ones coming up. What does what do you feel like It's, it's going to take to, you know, continue on and and get number two?

VO > Yeah. I'm motivated. You know, I haven't been real happy with, my performance out here. So, you know, I'm motivated to play better and play well, and I'm trying to do all the things to to stay healthy so I can continue on playing and play at a high level. So, I'm working hard. I haven't had had the results. I wanted, but I'm working hard on it.

VO > And it's interesting because we get this new wave, this influx of players that come in and all of a sudden some more 50 year olds come in, which changes the landscape. Yes?

VO OC > For sure for sure it does. And, you know, you know, the game change has changed on the regular tour with power. And I assume out here that that will continue to

be the trend that, guys that get out here probably will have a little bit more speed and a little more power. So that's probably the trend going forward.

OC > It's still fun though for you.

OC > Yeah. Oh yeah, I love it. I love the grind. I love working hard. I love the game. You know, I still, passion for it. And, you know, I'll keep doing this until that goes away. But I'm still motivated to get up every day. Get up here early in a pro-am. 7:20, up at 4:30. You know, working out, kind of trying to get ready for the day. I still enjoy that. So, it's fun.

VO > Ben Crane has played the PGA Tour's Texas Children's Houston Open 15 times in his career, including once at the Woodlands Country Club back in 2002 as it stands now, Crane is in the top ten in the Charles Schwab Cup standings and the top 15 in driving distance. So, with that in mind, we put Crane to work cranking things up to help you lower your scores.

OC > All right. Hey, my name is Ben Crane, one of the PGA Tour Champions players, freshly 50. Very thankful to be here. And one of the things I think people struggle with on tee shots, especially hitting a long iron for a fairway off the tee, is they fall back on the back. So, one of the things you want to do is as you're turning back, you want to put good pressure into your right leg so that you don't fall back and you don't drop behind it, because we want to make sure that our divot is slightly in front of the ball. So, watch here as I pressure that right leg so I can stay forward and hit this thing should be something like this.

Money.

OC > And that was going to help you make better contact.

VO > Thanks to Ben Crane and all of our great PGA Tour Champions players. Another major is in the books and off to the Lone Star State we go this week for all of us. Learning Center I'm Vince Cellini, as always. We thank you for stopping by.