

AI – TEASE

ANNC: It's the 50th playing of THE PLAYERS. We are ready to settle in for some great action.

ANNC: Rory McIlroy ... 10 birdies in one round at THE PLAYERS.

ANNC: Clark moves to 14-under par! An amazing performance today!

ANNC: Pickin' up speed and Schaufele! Holes it!

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: THE PLAYERS is definitely something I want to win.

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: We put in all the work to be able to finish off tournaments and to play well at the right time.

ANNC: Oh, it might go in! Unbelievable!

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: It's nice coming out on top, for sure. It's a great feeling.

ANNC: Scottie Scheffler is the 50th PLAYERS Champion!

SHOW TITLES

A2 – 50TH ANNIVERSARY SETUP

ANNC: Golden sunshine, to begin the golden anniversary edition of the PGA TOUR's biggest event. The 50th PLAYERS.

IN 2024 – AND EVERY YEAR SINCE 1974 – THE GAME'S BEST PLAYERS HAVE FOUGHT TO THE FINISH TO CALL THEMSELVES A PLAYERS CHAMPION ...

ANNC: And Scott survives!

ADAM SCOTT: It means a lot to be a PLAYERS Champion.

NATS: Be the right club today!

FIVE DECADES OF UNFORGETTABLE MOMENTS ...

RORY McILROY: I remember watching Tiger win in 2001.

ANNC: Better than most!

RORY McILROY: The history of this event and what it means to PGA TOUR players, it feels special.

ANNC: THE PLAYERS has yet another incredible talent win it's crown jewel.

HALF A CENTURY OF GOLF'S PREMIER PLAYERS WINNING THE PGA TOUR'S PREEMINENT CHAMPIONSHIP ...

ANNC: The Scheffler victory train just keeps on rollin'!

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: It's so hard to defeat this field and this golf course. I'm very proud to have done it.

THE PLAYERS CHAMPIONSHIP IS ONE OF ONE ...

JORDAN SPIETH: Any resume, if it has THE PLAYERS on it, it means something, and if it doesn't have it, you're missing something.

AND THIS ONE – THE 50TH – IS ESPECIALLY MEANINGFUL.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: The perfect outcomes winning the golf tournament. It'd be a dream come true.

A3 – ROUND 1 PART 1

ANNC: What a day on Florida's first coast. It's day one at the 50th playing of THE PLAYERS.

NATS: To help celebrate the 50th anniversary of THE PLAYERS Championship, we are honored to be joined now by the winner of the very first PLAYERS Championship. Please welcome the one, the only, Mr. Jack Nicklaus.

ANNC: Jack is coming to say hi to this group that includes the man who won the 49th playing of THE PLAYERS, Scottie Scheffler.

WITH THE GOLDEN BEAR WATCHING ON, SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER BEGINS HIS TITLE DEFENSE WITH A RARE EARLY BOGEY ... AS DOES PLAYING PARTNER – AND 2015 PLAYERS CHAMPION – RICKIE FOWLER ...

ANNC: This is not the way he wanted to start off his round.

THEIR PLAYING PARTNER – AND 2021 CHAMP – TALLIES TWO BIRDIES THROUGH FOUR HOLES ...

ANNC: Huge step in the right direction for Thomas. He's very comfortable on this golf course.

WHILE NOTABLE NAMES WORK THEIR WAY UP THE LEADERBOARD ...

ANNC: Makes another one does Homa. Four birdies in his last five.

ANNC: Xander Schauffele ... just fly it in the hole almost. That may be the best shot of the whole entire day right there.

ANNC: Oh, look at this. Perfect read from Hovland!

THE REIGNING FEDEXCUP CHAMPION IS 1-UNDER THRU NINE ... WHILE HIS RYDER CUP TEAMMATE, RORY McILROY, JUMPS TO AN EARLY LEAD ...

ANNC: That is pretty; that is pretty. Rory may be on one today.

THE 2019 PLAYERS CHAMPION IS 5-UNDER THROUGH HIS OPENING NINE ... ONE SHOT AHEAD OF NICK TAYLOR, WHO MAKES FOURS BIRDIES IN HIS FIRST SEVEN HOLES ...

ANNC: So, Taylor in the Thursday conversation here.

WYNDHAM CLARK BEGINS HIS ROUND WITH BACK-TO-BACK BIRDIES ...

ANNC: Gotta hit the long skipper here, see if he can get it all the way back there ... oh beautiful!

HE ADDS TWO MORE ON HIS OPENING NINE TO SHOOT 33.

AND SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER REBOUNDS FROM HIS EARLY STUMBLE ...

ANNC: Bogeyed the opening hole but then rattled off three-consecutive birdies. 34 on the way out for his first nine.

ON THE HEELS OF ANOTHER DOMINANT PERFORMANCE – SCHEFFLER'S QUEST TO DEFEND HIS PLAYERS TITLE WOULD BE A RARITY.

[A4 – SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: DEFENDING CHAMPION](#)

ANNC: Scottie Scheffler is the king of Bay Hill again, with one of the great performances we've ever seen here!

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: It had been a while since I won. There had been a lot of chatter about my game and the state of where it was at. And so, I think today's round was really special for me going forward.

ANNC: Last PLAYERS Champion who won the week before ... Tiger Woods.

TONY FINAU: Anytime you're doing something where you're even mentioned in the same breath as Tiger, you're on an incredible run.

SCHEFFLER'S STROKES GAINED TEE-TO-GREEN IN 2023 WAS THE SECOND BEST OF ALL TIME, WHICH LED TO THE 7TH BEST SCORING AVERAGE ON RECORD, ONLY TRAILING TIGER.

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Tiger's really been the guy that's dominated since 1997. I just learned a lot by watching him. I don't know if we'll ever see anything like that again in the game of golf.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: He's the first person in quite some time now where there's been some significant separation from one to two in the world and from the rest of the pack. He's consistently almost winning every golf tournament he plays in.

TONY FINAU: If he keeps this up for the next few years, he's going to be the greatest player of our generation.

BUT THIS WEEK, SCHEFFLER TAKES AIM AT SOMETHING EVEN TIGER WOODS NEVER ACCOMPLISHED.

ANNC: Try to defend a title that no one has been able to do thus far in the 50-year history of THE PLAYERS. If there was ever a time to do it, this guy seems like he is poised.

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I think it's just the nature of the course. It tests you in a lot of different ways. That's why I think it's one of the best places we play on TOUR, just because it really doesn't suit one type of player.

A5 – ROUND 1 PART 2

SCHEFFLER POSTS A FIRST ROUND, 67 – TYING SI WOO KIM FOR THE BEST OPENING ROUND BY A DEFENDING CHAMPION ...

ANNC: Doing his thing again. Just slowly picking apart this golf course.

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: You can't really force it around this place, like I've said a bunch of times, you really can't. It was nice bouncing back after the rough start and just playing a really good round of golf.

SCHEFFLER'S START IS THE ENVY FOR SOME OF THE GAME'S BEST ...

ANNC: Hit very high, but right. In that bunker and it plugged.

ANNC: Try to get out of here with a five ... too many bogeys for Jordan Spieth in this opening round.

ANNC: Ooh, he caught a lot of ball there – uh oh – it just grabbed on him and turned the club over. Wow.

MAX HOMA MAKES TWO BIRDIES COMING HOME TO SHOOT 68 ...

TWO SHOTS AHEAD OF 2017 CHAMPION SI WOO KIM ... WHO'S AMONG A GROUP OF INTERNATIONAL STARS UNDER PAR ...

ANNC: Nicely done. Birdie for Matsuyama takes another step up there.

ANNC: Moving slightly to the right, and Jason Day doing what he does so well. In with 67.

ANNC: Ryan Fox ... come on down the hill. How about a little three-one. Can he do it? Three-one! No way! Ah, do it big man!

RYAN FOX: Most of the crowd probably either wants you to make a one or hit it in the water, so I'm glad to be on the right side of it.

ANNC: Perfection!

A FEW FIRST TIMERS FIND EARLY SUCCESS AT TPC SAWGRASS ...

ANNC: Hisatsune ... he is rolling along beautifully.

ANNC: Chance to finish with an eagle ... this looks really good, oh man! A round of 68 for Schmid.

ANNC: ÅBERG making his PLAYERS debut ...

LUDVIG ÅBERG: Felt like I was striking the ball quite well and putting myself in good positions and took advantage of a little bit softer conditions this morning.

ANNC: This guy has the tools to become number one in the world.

AND A PAIR OF INTERNATIONAL VETERANS SIT AT 6-UNDER AFTER DAY ONE

...

ANNC: Nick Taylor, the Canadian ... birdie effort there, pays it off!

ANNC: Fitzpatrick – this is on an aggressive line right at the flagstick – and right of the stick!

HOLDING A LEAD WITH THREE HOLES TO PLAY, RORY McILROY FINDS TROUBLE OFF THE TEE ...

ANNC: Oh, oh ... that's in the water. Oh no.

McILROY'S MISTAKE COSTS HIM TWO SHOTS ON NUMBER SEVEN ... BUT WHILE AN ERROR WITH DRIVER IS AN ANOMALY, RORY HAS STRUGGLED TO CAPITALIZE AS OF LATE ...

A6 – RORY McILROY: LOVE/HATE RELATIONSHIP

RORY McILROY: I'm not missing cuts, but at the same time, with how I've driven the golf ball the last three weeks, I should be contending in the tournaments that I've played. It's just taking advantage of the positions I'm putting myself in off the tee.

McILROY'S PEDESTRIAN RESULTS LEADING INTO THE PLAYERS PARALLEL HIS CAREER AT TPC SAWGRASS – WITH NEARLY THE SAME AMOUNT OF TOP-25s AS MISSED CUTS ...

RORY McILROY: My history with TPC Sawgrass and THE PLAYERS Championship has been a little rocky. But it's always been a tournament that I've wanted to win.

RORY McILROY: This is a tournament that I sort of struggled starting off with the first couple years I played.

RORY McILROY: I feel like over the past few years here, I've started to embrace this tournament and embrace the golf course more than anything else.

ANNC: He has been bulletproof on the back.

RORY McILROY: To finally conquer that place – win on that golf course – it meant a lot to me, for sure.

ANNC: Rory McIlroy is a PLAYERS Champion!

RORY McILROY: With everything that I have achieved in the game and that I want to achieve in the game, I would have been missing something if I wasn't able to call myself a PLAYERS Champion.

FIVE YEARS LATER, McILROY HOPES TO ACHIEVE A FEAT ONLY REPLICATED BY SIX OTHER PLAYERS – WINNING A SECOND PLAYERS CHAMPIONSHIP.

RORY McILROY: Fortunately, there's not many places I go now that I'm not a past winner, so, that's nice.

A7 – ROUND 1 PART 3

ANNC: This for birdie ... and a share of the lead ...

RORY McILROY: I didn't really have many expectations going out there today ...

ANNC: He has 10 with that one. Even with putting two balls in the penalty area off the tee today, still a 7-under par round of 65.

RORY McILROY: There's something to be said for that, just sort of lessening the expectations a little bit and going out there and seeing what happens.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE JOINS McILROY AT THE TOP OF THE LEADERBOARD ...

ANNC: Schauffele, to finish bogey-free...

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: It was nice to see some putts go in from distance today.

ANNC: 65 for Xander Schauffele, his best by two in his PLAYERS Championship career.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Just playing good golf. Yeah, pretty confident with where my game's at.

AND WYNDHAM CLARK VAULTS HIMSELF TO THE TOP WITH A BOGEY-FREE 32 ON THE BACK NINE ...

ANNC: Yeah! Wyndham Clark is tied for the lead. What a run here down the stretch; three in a row.

WYNDHAM CLARK: I'm starting to just feel more comfortable out here, and I've been working really hard, and maybe the timing is right.

ANNC: And that's a story of cream rising to the top. You got Rory, number two in the world. Xander, number six in the world. Clark is fifth in the world. And you've got Scottie Scheffler there just two back, number one.

B1 – FRIDAY MORNING AGRONOMY

NATS: Good morning. Good morning.

JEFF PLOTTS: It's been a long week. We've got to finish strong here, guys. Can't thank you enough for all the hard work you've been doing.

EARLY BEFORE SECOND ROUND PLAY COMMENCES ...

NATS: Catch me if you can!

THE HARD WORK BEGINS AT TPC SAWGRASS ...

NATS: That dude knows how to mow right there.

195 DILIGENT MEMBERS OF THE AGRONOMY STAFF, MANICURE A CHAMPIONSHIP-LEVEL GOLF COURSE FOR A CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT.

NATS: 17 tee looks good.

JEFF PLOTTS: I think the team has done a great job; that's the biggest thing. I think it's gonna be a great championship.

B2 – ROUND 2 PART 1

ANNC: Just getting started for our second round here at THE PLAYERS. Scottie Scheffler gets the quick turnaround to continue his title defense this morning.

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER MAKES TWO BIRDIES IN HIS FIRST FOUR HOLES, DESPITE AN ACUTE INJURY ...

ANNC: He's actually getting – his left shoulder and neck area – getting worked on behind the tee. Whatever's going on, there hadn't been the relief.

DEALING WITH A STRAIN IN HIS NECK ... THE REIGNING CHAMP FIGHTS TO POST A 34 ON HIS OPENING NINE.

ANNC: There you go. He's battling through this adversity. So impressive.

MEANWHILE, PLAYING PARTNER JUSTIN THOMAS GOES OUT IN 37 ... AND RICKIE FOWLER SHOOTS 34, BOTH ONE SHOT OUTSIDE THE PROJECTED CUT LINE AS THEY MAKE THE TURN ...

ANNC: Time to consider things as they make that long walk to the first tee.

AS IS JORDAN SPIETH ...

ANNC: Spieth birdies it. Cut still at 1-under. So, Spieth will continue to work his way toward that number he hopes.

WHILE A FEW OF THE GAME'S PREMIER BALL STRIKERS ARE IN GOOD STANDING EARLY IN THE SECOND ROUND ...

ANNC: Picked it cleanly ... uh huh, uh huh, oh do it! Oh wow! Hideki with a laser beam!

AS STRESS SURROUNDS THE CUT LINE, STARS ASSEMBLE ON THE FIRST PAGE OF THE LEADERBOARD ...

ANNC: Matthew Fitzpatrick at the 16th ... almost jars it. So he'll get to join that big group at the top.

ANNC: Ah well done Schauffele! Is he gonna breakthrough in this championship?

ANNC: McIlroy ... come on in! How 'bout that!? Wow! Finished off with a birdie! An eventful 35.

ANNC: Jason Day gets underneath this one and delivers a gorgeous shot.

ANNC: 2-under, 34 first nine for Nick.

CONTINUING THE MOMENTUM FROM AN OPENING ROUND, 66, NICK TAYLOR IS PREPARED FOR THE PRESSURE THAT COINCIDES WITH THE PLAYERS CHAMPIONSHIP ...

B3 – NICK TAYLOR: READY FOR THE MOMENT

NICK TAYLOR: As time has gone on, I've embraced the adrenaline.

ANNC: He's done it!

NICK TAYLOR: Embrace the pressure.

ANNC: Are you serious!? Oh my goodness! Glorious and free!

NICK TAYLOR: It's where you want to be.

ANNC: Nick Taylor has done it again!

NICK TAYLOR: It's an uncomfortable feeling, but you also want to be in there every week.

ANNC: Absolute unreal stuff in the desert for Nick Taylor!

NICK TAYLOR: When I get inside the ropes, get inside my comfort zone of playing golf, I just feel confident of where the adrenaline can take me. Phoenix is an example where, that tournament I didn't have great results until the last couple of years, so that gives me confidence in a sense of, I like this golf course, I've had a lot of great rounds here, I've never really had a great tournament, I've had one pretty good finish, but I feel like I'm a different player than even two years ago. So, my confidence level is there; the shots that I want to hit.

ANNC: Wow! What a shot by Nick Taylor.

NICK TAYLOR: Being able to kind of back that up, it's nice. It's just the start here.

ANNC: He puts himself on that first page of the leaderboard!

NICK TAYLOR: So, I'm hopefully reaching that level where I can be consistently contending more often.

ANNC: Just eight putts in six holes for Nick Taylor.

NICK TAYLOR: This golf course is very hard and it can bite you quickly, but if I can use my experience in the last year of where my successes are and narrow that in, I think I can do a good job here.

B4 – ROUND 2 PART 2

TAYLOR'S PREMONITIONS PROVE TO BE ACCURATE AS HE MAINTAINS HIS STELLAR PLAY ...

ANNC: For birdie. Beautiful, up the slope; and that gets him tied for second.

NICK TAYLOR: It's a very visually intimidating golf course. It doesn't matter, honestly, how well you're swinging. You've got to really commit to your targets. So, I need to keep doing that.

THE CANADIAN CARDS A SECOND ROUND, 68 ... AS DOES GERMANY'S BUDDING STAR ...

ANNC: Matti Schmid pours one in for an eagle from off the green!

BACK AT THE CUT LINE, BIG NAMES ARE BATTLING TO MAKE THE WEEKEND ...

ANNC: That's a bigtime birdie at 15 for Viktor Hovland. He goes back to 1-under on that cut line.

ANNC: Uphill here, should slide to the right for Rickie ... very aggressive and Fowler walks it in! 1-under goes Rickie!

ANNC: Long two-putt here for Min Woo Lee ... let that young ... man ... cook.

MIN WOO LEE: I knew I needed to make a couple birdies towards the end and made some on the back nine. 17 was really sweet.

FOR SOME, IT'S A SOUR TASTE AT THE END OF A FRUSTRATING FRIDAY ...

JORDAN SPIETH AND JUSTIN THOMAS BOTH MISS THE CUT ...

ANNC: Those are massive misses that you don't normally see out of a guy like Justin Thomas.

WHILE A SECOND-ROUND 75 SQUANDERS MAX HOMA'S CHANCES ... AND PROVEN CONTENDERS FALL TOO FAR OUT OF CONTENTION ...

ANNC: This is way up in the air. It's gotta hold on. Uh oh. It's hooking. Uh oh.

ANNC: For the bogey is McIlroy ... and this day just got even more frustrating in a hurry. He's got four pars, and a lot of other stuff going on.

MEANWHILE, SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER PERSEVERES THROUGH PAIN ...

ANNC: 3-under for the day. You can see a lot of the movements have been obvious discomfort since his fifth hole of the day, but somehow, he is 8-under par.

AND SHOOTS 69 ...

AS DO MATT FITZPATRICK ... AND HIDEKI MATSUYAMA ...

ANNC: Well Hideki has got it on go here as of late. Thrust him back into the conversation.

WHILE XANDER SCHAUFFELE FINDS TROUBLE ...

ANNC: Ooh that's right; lookout water. Wow, that is a huge miss.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: To go backwards on a par five is never what we're trying to do. So, happy to birdie the next and then it was a bonus to make that eagle on 16.

ANNC: And I'll tell you what this has been a nice comeback since that double-bogey.

WYNDHAM CLARK CONTINUES IN RED NUMBERS WITH AN OPENING-NINE, 35 ... IN SEARCH OF ANOTHER SIGNATURE WIN.

B5 – WYNDHAM CLARK: NEW & IMPROVED

ANNC: Victory for Wyndham Clark as he wins the Wells Fargo Championship! He is a winner on the PGA TOUR!

WYNDHAM CLARK: Winning at the Wells Fargo Championship really catapulted my career. If I didn't win that, I don't know if I would have won the U.S. Open.

ANNC: And he's made his family proud!

WYNDHAM CLARK: It's a testament to all the hard work that I've done in these last five, six years, and also a testament to myself of just sticking through all the tough times in golf and the adversity that I've been dealt. It's so rewarding because in golf, very few do you actually feel like you had success and not just winning a tournament but had like a winning year and this was one of those years. And I'm hoping it's one of many to come.

CLARK HAS TURNED HOPE INTO REALITY, ALREADY WITH A VICTORY IN 2024 AT AN ICONIC VENUE ...

ANNC: He's got the all-time 18-hole round at Pebble Beach, 60 for Wyndham Clark.

AND REAFFIRMED HIS PLACE AS A PRIMETIME PERFORMER A WEEK PRIOR AT THE ARNOLD PALMER INVITATIONAL ...

ANNC: You just gotta starting getting accustomed to seeing his name on top of these big time leaderboards.

ANNC: Good looking putt by Clark to end it! Jumps into solo second.

CLARK ULTIMATELY FINISHED RUNNER-UP TO WORLD NUMBER ONE, SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER ...

WYNDHAM CLARK: He's the barometer right now and I've got a lot of room to catch up and get better.

LEAVING HIM HUNGRY FOR ANOTHER BIG TIME TITLE ...

WYNDHAM CLARK: It's a great prep for THE PLAYERS and it's just a testament to where my game's at and how much I've grown.

B6 – ROUND 2 PART 3

ANNC: Four in a row, five out of six, and he's 12 deep.

CLARK ADDS TO HIS LEAD WITH TWO MORE BIRDIES IN THE FINAL FOUR HOLES ...

ANNC: That's a little exclamation point on a great round right there!

AND BECOMES THE FIRST IN PLAYERS CHAMPIONSHIP HISTORY TO OPEN WITH CONSECUTIVE ROUNDS OF 65.

WYNDHAM CLARK: I've been really focused at what I'm trying to do. And so, I haven't really been focused on anything else. I haven't been seeing any of the other noise.

ANNC: Wyndham Clark, the four-shot lead over Schauffele and Taylor. Matt Fitzpatrick a good round. Some good scoring. All those rounds in the 60s putting themselves in position for the weekend.

C1 – RYO HISATSUNE ROUND 2 FINISH

ANNC: Two days in the books at TPC Sawgrass. Play was suspended on Friday evening at 7:30 with a couple guys still on the golf course.

ONE OF THOSE PLAYERS IS RYO HISATSUNE, WHO NEEDS A BIRDIE ON THE PAR 5, NINTH TO MAKE THE CUT ...

ANNC: Now playing his third ... needs to just play a nice, aggressive shot here to the center section.

ANNC: Ryo Hisatsune ... this putt, a little pace in it.

RYO HISATSUNE: It's frustrating to miss out by just one shot. But also, it's just one shot. Therefore, I want to maintain confidence and keep moving forward.

WITH THE SECOND ROUND COMPLETE, THE CUT IS MADE, AND 73 PLAYERS ADVANCE TO ROUND THREE OF THE PLAYERS.

C2 – ROUND 3 PART 1

ANNC: It's a spectacular Saturday at the home of the PGA TOUR. It's one of the most anticipated weekends of the golf season.

STARTING THE THIRD ROUND SIX SHOTS BACK, SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER CONTINUES HIS QUEST TO DEFEND HIS TITLE, DESPITE A NAGGING NECK ...

ANNC: His overall movement just looks a little stiff. He can definitely get through the golf shots just fine. You know he's fighting through it.

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Just battling, you know, doing my best to just maneuver my way around the golf course. Basically, when I get the club to about halfway back, I start feeling a lot of pain in my neck.

ANNC: That's so classy. That's gonna be a tap in birdie for Scheffler to move to 9-under.

SCHEFFLER SCORES EARLY IN HIS ROUND ... AS DOES WYNDHAM CLARK ...

ANNC: Oh my! The strength of Wyndham Clark!

ANNC: Third-straight day with a birdie at the first!

WITH CLARK STRETCHING HIS LEAD TO FIVE, XANDER SCHAUFFELE KICKS IT INTO GEAR ...

ANNC: Making it look easy – Xander Schauffele, with his third birdie in the first six. To within two of Clark.

FOLLOWING A SECOND ROUND, 65 ... BRIAN HARMAN KEEPS IT GOING WITH FOUR BIRDIES IN HIS FIRST EIGHT HOLES ...

ANNC: Just incredible turnaround! And Harman is making a move here.

BUT NOT EVERYONE IS MOVING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION ON MOVING DAY ...

ANNC: Fitzpatrick is addin' 'em up.

ENGLAND'S MATT FITZPATRICK MAKES A DOUBLE BOGEY AND A BOGEY IN THE MIDDLE OF HIS OPENING NINE ... WHILE CANADA'S NICK TAYLOR'S PURSUITS DISSOLVE BESIDE HIM ...

ANNC: Two bogeys and a double for Taylor.

TAYLOR'S BID FOR A PLAYERS CHAMPIONSHIP IS ALL BUT OVER, FOLLOWING A FRONT-NINE, 40.

MEANWHILE, CLARK SNAPS A STRETCH OF FIVE-CONSECUTIVE PARS ...

ANNC: Birdie putt ... at the 7th ... looks unstoppable. And the lead is three.

WITH CLARK SETTING THE PACE, LUDVIG ÅBERG KEEPS WITHIN STRIKING DISTANCE ...

ANNC: There's another birdie!

ANNC: Birdie on five of the first nine.

THE SCANDINAVIAN SENSATION IS 8-UNDER THROUGH 45 HOLES – AN OUTSTANDING START IN HIS FIRST PLAYERS CHAMPIONSHIP.

C3 – LUDVIG ÅBERG: FIRST TIMER

ANNC: Five under in this third round. He's on the front page and making some noise.

LUDVIG ÅBERG: It's such a cool place. It demands a lot off the tee, into the greens and it's a treat to play.

ANNC: No need for a driver for Ludvig ÅBERG. Hits it a mile.

LUDVIG ÅBERG: I know my capabilities and hopefully I'll be able to pull off some of these shots that you need to pull off here and see where that takes me.

SO FAR... SO GOOD FOR ÅBERG, WHO MAKES HIS PLAYERS CHAMPIONSHIP DEBUT AS THE 10th RANKED PLAYER IN THE WORLD, ALREADY A WINNER ON THE PGA TOUR ...

ANNC: Another goal reached for the 24-year-old Swedish sensation. You are now a PGA TOUR winner!

ÅBERG HAS ALL THE TOOLS BEFITTING OF A PLAYERS CHAMPION, AS WELL AS COMPETITIVE EXPERIENCE AT TPC SAWGRASS ...

LUDVIG ÅBERG: 2018, I played the Junior PLAYERS. I was a little bit smaller, so I didn't hit the ball quite as far, but it definitely helped me this week.

AND A SEASONED VETERAN BY HIS SIDE ...

LUDVIG ÅBERG: My caddie Joe won here in 2015 with Rickie.

ANNC: Rickie Fowler owns the island green and the 2015 PLAYERS Championship!

LUDVIG ÅBERG: He knows what it's like to play well here. So, I trust Joe with everything that I have.

C4 – ROUND 3 PART 2

ÅBERG IS USING EVERY ASSET TO HIS ADVANTAGE IN HIS MAIDEN PLAYERS CHAMPIONSHIP AND CARDS A THIRD ROUND, 67 ...

ANNC: One of the best young players anywhere.

MEANWHILE, CLARK OFFSETS HIS BIRDIE ON SEVEN WITH A BOGEY-PAR FINISH TO HIS FRONT NINE ...

ANNC: And that's his first bogey in 21 holes. Schauffele now within two.

WYNDHAM CLARK: If I make the par putt on eight and make the birdie putt on nine, could have been a totally different round.

CLARK CARDS 35 ON HIS OPENING NINE ... AND SCHAUFFELE TAKES ADVANTAGE ...

ANNC: Just can't tell you how good that is!

ANNC: A terrific up-and-down and four birdies. 32 the first nine.

WITH CLARKS' LEAD EVAPORATED, THE CHASE IS ON ...

ANNC: 4-under round of 68 for Matsuyama! He came home strong. 3-under on his second nine.

ANNC: Harman on a roll ... Brian Harman! What a run he is on!

WHILE THE ACTION HEATS UP AHEAD, CLARK MAKES A MISTAKE ON THE DRIVABLE PAR 4, 12TH ...

WYNDHAM CLARK: It's a pretty demanding shot ...

ANNC: Oh boy, this is left guys, dangerously left.

WYNDHAM CLARK: If you miss it way right, then it's really hard to get up-and-down, so you kind of have to take the shot on and I tried and just hit it left.

ANNC: Right in the middle of the water.

CLARK SALVAGES PAR TO STAY AT 16-UNDER ... BUT SCHAUFFELE MAKES BIRDIE ...

ANNC: Curls around and in for Schauffele! And that's his sixth birdie of the day. Game on, on this Saturday at THE PLAYERS!

NOW TIED AT THE TOP, THE FRUITS OF SCHAUFFELE'S RECENT LABOR IS PAYING OFF.

C5 – XANDER SCHAUFFELE: SMALL CHANGES

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I feel like I've been on a path of really small changes. Trying to get faster. Hitting the driver a little bit further. Trying to get incrementally better in each category, which is very hard to do.

NATS: You can drop the right foot a little bit further back if you want to.

NATS: Yeah, I know.

NATS: Yeah, it's perfect.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: My dad, from a very young age told me, happy that I can be your coach, but there might be a time where, you know, in order for you to take it to the next level you may need to go see someone else. He said those words to me when I was a kid and he'll still say them now.

ANNC: Lots of change with Xander. Sidestepped away from his dad and doing some work with Chris Como.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I've always liked Chris, and he's in West Palm, and I just moved over there. Looked at my swing from 2017 up until now. What he liked then and what he likes now and vice versa. He understands my release pattern and kind of wants to unlock that potential.

ANNC: Working on the golf swing trying to get back to some swing patterns that Xander had four or five years ago.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: There's a lot of intent behind sort of my small changes and small improvements as well. I think things have been going pretty well.

ANNC: You gotta get it in the fairway ... this is down the left side, cutting towards the right. Good looking tee shot here for Xander.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: There's so much I want to accomplish in the game, so anytime I can check off a really big box in this game is special to me and my team. The PLAYERS is definitely something I want to win.

C6 – ROUND 3 PART 3

WITH HIS GOAL WITHIN REACH, SCHAUFFELE GETS ONE STEP CLOSER ...

ANNC: 14, Schauffele, coming across the green ... it's straight downhill this last half ... pickin' up speed and Schauffele holes it! 58 feet away for Xander!

WHILE SCHAUFFELE TAKES THE OUTRIGHT LEAD FROM CLARK ...

SCHEFFLER KEEPS HIMSELF IN THE MIX WITH A STRONG FINISH ...

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Standing on 16 tee, I was pretty significantly out of the tournament ...

ANNC: Scheffler for birdie ... and Scottie Scheffler, guttin' it through! Not feeling his best, but it's a great 'hangin' in there' round, again.

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: To birdie the last three holes, I think I'm still within shooting distance.

ANNC: ... World Number One showin' us again why he's on every single leaderboard, every single week!

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I'm not one to ever really give up, and so, to finish the round the way I did and still give myself a chance in this tournament is very good, and I'm definitely going to use that momentum going into tomorrow.

MATT FITZPATRICK HOLES FOUR BIRDIES IN HIS FINAL FIVE HOLES ...

ANNC: Brings it home for a round of 68.

MATT FITZPATRICK: It's fantastic to hole a few. I've been playing well so far this week, felt like I'm comfortable with the course.

BUT THE ROUND OF THE DAY BELONGS TO BRIAN HARMAN ...

ANNC: Nine birdies, one bogey. 8-under round of 64. The best of the week.

BRIAN HARMAN: I think, if you go out and you execute a bunch of golf shots and think your way around this place, you can shoot a low number.

BACK AT 16, WYNDHAM CLARK GETS BACK ON TRACK WITH A BIRDIE ...

ANNC: He's back up there at the top with Schauffele and now he heads over to one of the biggest mind games in golf – the island green.

ANNC: It's the third easiest 17 has played in a round since 1983. 24 birdies out of 71 guys. Five balls in the water. Co-leader on the tee.

WYNDHAM CLARK: It was probably a perfect sand wedge. He thought if I nuked it, it could get on top. As we were walking to put the ball down, he was like, 'hey, let's take a little off a full sand wedge.'

ANNC: Ohh ... very short! Wow! Very short!

WYNDHAM CLARK: As I was over the ball, I kind of got to the top and I was like, take a little off and then I just deiced and chunked it.

ANNC: He hit two or three inches behind it ... 20 yards short!

CLARK REGAINS HIS COMPOSURE AND MAKES A CLUTCH PUTT FOR BOGEY ... HELPING TO SALVAGE A THIRD ROUND, 70 ...

BUT CLARKS BLUNDER SENDS SCHAUFFELE TO THE FINAL HOLE WITH A ONE-SHOT LEAD ...

ANNC: If he can get this shot pin-high, it's amazing.

ANNC: 13-of-14 in up-and-ins this week. That'll get it done around this place.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: When you make 58-footers, get up-and-down on holes like 18 from the front rough, it takes a little bit of stress off certain parts of your game.

ANNC: Schauffele with a 54-hole lead. Can he hang on for the biggest win of his career?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: When you hit a lot of fairways out here you can get some scoring clubs in your hand, and with the greens being receptive you can definitely fire at some pins. So, I'm going to go to the range right now and try and clean up some of those missed fairways on the back nine. It could be low tomorrow, but a steady drip caves a stone and that's what we're going to do.

D1 – FINAL ROUND SETUP

ANNC: Another beautiful day in Northeast Florida. TPC Sawgrass – perfect setting for the final round of THE PLAYERS Championship.

ANNC: Scottie Scheffler still has a chance to become the first to ever repeat at THE PLAYERS.

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I'm definitely on the outside looking in, but a hot day could go a long way.

ANNC: Brian Harman is in position for another big-time title.

BRIAN HARMAN: This is my favorite PGA TOUR event of the year. I've been close a couple times.

ANNC: Wyndham Clark is chasing the lead.

WYNDHAM CLARK: I'm hoping I'll have an awesome round and a great finish here.

ANNC: Which belongs to Xander Schauffele.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: No one is going to lay over here and play dead. Guys are aggressive at all times.

ANNC: There's a lot of pressure on Xander today.

NATS: First on the tee, Xander Schauffele!

WYNDHAM CLARK: I have a lot of respect for Xander's game. He has the upper leg right now. I'm hoping we can have some fireworks and play some great golf.

NATS: Next on the tee, Wyndham Clark!

D2 – FINAL ROUND PART 1

ANNC: Beautiful start for both these players in the final group.

SCHAUFFELE AND CLARK BOTH BEGIN THEIR QUEST TO BECOME PLAYERS CHAMPIONS WITH PARS ON THE OPENING HOLE.

ANNC: Curious to see if somebody can make a charge here and challenge the guys in the last group.

ANNC: Fitzpatrick looking to get to 15-under ... Matty made everything on the back nine yesterday and seems to be continuing here in the fourth round.

ANNC: Back at the fourth, Scheffler, from 82 ... gotta get it going after three-straight pars. This one ought to be dancing around the hole. Kinda like that? Unbelievable!

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I was hoping to make some early birdies, and I parred the first three, and then the hole-out really got me going there on No. 4.

ANNC: Scheffler trying to go eagle-birdie here ... ay! Here comes number one in the world! Scheffler, tied for third.

WITH THE DEFENDING CHAMPION HEATING UP, SCHAUFFELE GETS TO 18-UNDER WITH A BIRDIE ON THE PAR 5, 2ND ... AND CLARK STAYS ONE BEHIND WITH A TWO PUTT FROM INSIDE FIVE FEET ...

ANNC: Good chance there for eagle, but Schauffele ... keeps ... that lead.

UP AHEAD, LUDVIG ÅBERG PUTS THE FINISHING TOUCHES ON A SUCCESSFUL PLAYERS CHAMPIONSHIP DEBUT ...

ANNC: He's gone eagle-birdie.

LUDVIG ÅBERG: I enjoyed it. I tried to soak it all in. It's a privilege to be able to play these events. It's really cool.

ANNC: He's the future here. This guy's got all the tools.

ÅBERG CARDS A 5-UNDER FINAL ROUND – HIS THIRD 67 OF THE WEEK ... AS DOES HIDEKI MATSUYAMA ...

ANNC: Made that look easy. Matsuyama, a 5-under round, 15-under.

WHILE 2017 CHAMPION SI WOO KIM TIES THE BEST ROUND OF THE CHAMPIONSHIP WITH AN 8-UNDER, 64 ...

ANNC: For three on 16 ... big putt there for Kim.

WITH THE PLAYERS AHEAD SHOWING THAT THE GOLF COURSE IS SCORABLE, MATT FITZPATRICK NEUTRALIZES HIS BIRDIE-BIRDIE START WITH BOGEYS IN THE MIDDLE OF THE FRONT NINE ...

ANNC: He is droppin' like a rock after looked like he was gonna challenge Schauffele, Clark and company.

FITZPATRICK NEVER GETS BACK IN CONTENTION, AND FINISHES SOLO 5TH AT 16-UNDER.

AND THE BOGEY BUG BITES XANDER SCHAUFFELE, WHO MAKES HIS FIRST MISTAKE IN THE LAST 29 HOLES ...

ANNC: First bogey for Schauffele comes at the 4th.

WITH SCHAUFFELE FALLING TO 17-UNDER, SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER SEIZES THE OPPORTUNITY WITH BACK-TO-BACK BIRDIES ...

ANNC: What a front nine for Scottie Scheffler! 5-under, 31, and he has jumped to a tie for the lead!

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I felt like if I could go out and shoot a good round on the front nine, I could put myself in it.

AS DOES BRIAN HARMAN, WHO ALSO REACHES 17-UNDER FOLLOWING THREE-CONSECUTIVE BIRDIES TO CLOSE HIS OPENING NINE ...

ANNC: You don't forget, ever, about Brian Harman on a golf course like this. He's heatin' up.

BUT SCHAUFFELE REGAINS MOMENTUM WITH A BIRDIE ON THE 7TH ...

ANNC: Right back to the top of the board at 18-under.

AND ANOTHER ON THE PAR 5, 9TH ...

ANNC: 2-under for the first nine.

WHILE WYNDHAM CLARK BREAKS THE STREAK OF SIX-STRAIGHT PARS ...

ANNC: Big one! After Schauffele pours one in ... birdie right back by Clark! And it is right where we started – a one-shot lead for Schauffele over to Clark. Off they go to the back nine here at THE PLAYERS with a great leaderboard.

E1 – FINAL ROUND PART 2

ANNC: Schauffele is 19-under. Clark's 18-under. Scheffler and Harman at 17.

FRESH OFF A 5-UNDER FRONT NINE, DEFENDING CHAMPION SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER HOLES BACK-TO-BACK BIRDIES EARLY ON THE BACK NINE ...

ANNC: Scheffler has ... tied Schauffele at the top again!

AND BRIAN HARMAN NEARLY TIES THE LEAD WITH AN EAGLE OPPORTUNITY ON 11 ...

ANNC: Four birdies the last five holes for Harman!

AS THE CHASERS CLOSE THE GAP, BOTH XANDER SCHAUFFELE ... AND WYNDHAM CLARK BOGEY THE 14TH ...

ANNC: Clark drops back to 17-under.

AND SCHEFFLER TAKES ADVANTAGE AHEAD ON THE PAR 5, 16TH ...

ANNC: This incredible comeback for Scheffler. Was seven back after the 15th hole yesterday. Look what he's done today – 8-under, two holes left in regulation.

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Being at the top of the leaderboard, it's a real test mentally and physically. This week was a physical test, as well, just with how my neck was Friday and Saturday. And so, I put a lot into trying to win this golf tournament.

AT 20-UNDER PAR, SCHEFFLER IS JUST A COUPLE OF HOLES AWAY FROM MAKING HISTORY THAT HAS ELUDED EVERY PLAYERS CHAMPION BEFORE HIM.

E2 – SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: CHASING HISTORY

ANNC: Scottie Scheffler wins the 49th edition at THE PLAYERS.

IN 2023, SCHEFFLER CRUISED TO HIS FIRST PLAYERS CHAMPIONSHIP ... ONE YEAR LATER, HE'S IN THE DRIVER'S SEAT TO DEFEND HIS TITLE ... A FEAT THAT'S NEVER BEEN ACCOMPLISHED AT TPC SAWGRASS ...

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: It's such a good golf course in a sense that it doesn't really suit one type of player. You don't really see the same guys year-in-year-out at the top of the leaderboard. It's really the guys that are just playing the best at the time.

EVEN THE GREATEST PLAYERS OF ALL TIME WERE UNABLE TO DO SO ...

INCLUDING THREE-TIME CHAMPION JACK NICKLAUS – ALTHOUGH HE DEFENDED A TITLE ON 10 DIFFERENT OCCASIONS...

AND TWO-TIME CHAMPION TIGER WOODS, WHO DID SO 23 TIMES ...

JASON DAY: It's just very difficult to go back-to-back because it brings a different golf course every single day. There's a lot of pressure.

RICKIE FOWLER: It's the strongest field we play and then with the way the golf course plays, it helps if you can move it both ways. It's very much a shot makers golf course.

A FULL ARESNAL OF SHOTS AND GREAT BALL-STRIKING IS A RECIPE FOR SUCCESS AT TPC SAWGRASS ... AND THERE'S NO ONE BETTER SUITED THAN SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER – THE TOUR LEADER IN STROKES GAINED TEE-TO-GREEN BY A WIDE MARGIN ...

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: When you're hitting it good, you can score low. But the minute you start getting offline, the golf course gets really difficult, really fast.

E3 – FINAL ROUND PART 3

ANNC: Here he is with a chance to go back-to-back weeks on TOUR winning against stacked fields and back-to-back at THE PLAYERS.

ANNC: Three is a really good score here right now.

ANNC: Scottie's got a highly difficult two putt.

ANNC: Really good putt by Scottie Scheffler to get out of here with a three and the lead.

CLOSE BEHIND, HARMAN CLOSES THE GAP ...

ANNC: Birdie putt at 15. How big is this!? To get within one ... BRIAN HARMAN! He will not go away!

BUT IT'S A DIFFERENT STORY FOR SCHAUFFELE ...

ANNC: Errant tee shot ... pulled second. And the first back-to-back holes bogey or worse the entire week for Schauffele comes at the worst time.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: When you're trying to win a tournament, you've got to make those sketchy nine-footers, and I missed a few of them on the back nine. Just untimely mistakes.

AHEAD ON THE 72ND HOLE, SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER HAS A PUTT TO POST 21-UNDER ...

ANNC: In my opinion, this putt right here is for THE PLAYERS Championship title.

NATS

ANNC: Scottie Scheffler – who will see if 20-under is good enough – saves his best for last!

DESPITE BACK-TO-BACK BOGEYS ON THE PRECEDING HOLES, SCHAUFFELE HAS A CHANCE TO TIE THE LEAD WITH AN EAGLE ON 16 ...

ANNC: Didn't hit it ... thought you'd be more aggressive with that putt. So, Schauffele will head over to 17 one back of Scheffler.

CLARK MATCHES SCHAUFFELE WITH THE WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITES DWINDLING ...

ANNC: It's a birdie for Clark. To 18-under. And he's gonna need some bigtime magic coming home.

AFTER CLUTCH TEE SHOTS ... BOTH CLARK AND SCHAUFFELE GIVE THEMSELVES FAVORABLE LOOKS AT BIRDIE ...

ANNC: Six feet, eight inches ... for back-to-back birdies after back-to-back bogeys and this for a tie at 20-under par.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I gave myself a realistic chance. It's such a small stroke with some wind, and I felt like I started it a little bit left of my line. Just a poor execution.

ANNC: So he's one back with one to go and now Clark can join him there.

ANNC: And Wyndham Clark shows some guts and has a chance on 18!

WITH HARMAN, SCHAUFFELE AND CLARK ALL TIED AT 19-UNDER AND ONE-SHOT BACK, SCHEFFLER HEADS TO THE PRACTICE GROUNDS TO PREPARE FOR A POTENTIAL PLAYOFF ...

AND HARMAN HAS THE FIRST OPPORTUNITY TO JOIN HIM ...

ANNC: This is a guy that wants the ball in the big moments ... this is as big as it gets.

BRIAN HARMAN: It's just a tough putt. I'm wanting to give it enough speed.

ANNC: This is what you practice all those hours for; right here.

NATS

ANNC: Scheffler dodges one.

BRIAN HARMAN: I'm bummed. I wish there was a couple I could have back. But I played some great golf, especially the last three days, so I'm proud of that.

ANNC: So just two players now for Scheffler to escape to become the first ever to win this title back-to-back.

ANNC: Trying to draw something in there ... I think he loves it. Same putt we just saw Harman have. Yeah, pretty much the same.

ANNC: Xander now has 165 total. The lie is ok in this pine straw. He can make clean contact.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I tell myself all the time, if you're trying to win you've got to walk through the fire, and if you're able to walk through unscathed, then you're going to win the tournament.

ANNC: Schaufele is 61 feet away.

ANNC: That is a beautiful putt, but two-putt par there is not gonna get it done for Schaufele.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: My dad told me a long time ago to commit, execute, and accept. I'm swallowing a heavy dose of acceptance right now, but I tried to commit, I executed poorly on some shots, and here I am accepting it.

ANNC: So one more to dodge for Scheffler.

ANNC: Can Clark make his third-straight birdie?

WYNDHAM CLARK: I want to try to make the putt. I didn't really care about the second putt. So, I went for it.

ANNC: Make, he's in a playoff ... miss, and Scheffler makes history.

ANNC: Unbelievable! How did that not drop!?

WYNDHAM CLARK: I don't know how that putt doesn't go in. It was kind of right center with like a foot to go, and I knew it was going to keep breaking, but it had speed and I thought it was going to go inside left, and then I thought it would lip in. So, I'm pretty gutted that didn't go in.

ANNC: That ball was almost all the way down below the entire surface of the hole. It looked in the entire way. Never thought it was missing. Neither did Wyndham. It didn't drop ... but that's as close as you can come.

WYNDHAM CLARK: I've always dreamt about making a putt to either force a playoff or win a tournament. I'm still shocked that putt didn't go in.

E4 – TROPHY CEREMONY & AFTER THE FINAL PUTT

ANNC: Scottie Scheffler is the 50th PLAYERS Champion ... and the first to go back-to-back!

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: It's something you don't really get the opportunity to do very often. It's tough enough to win one PLAYERS, and so to have it back-to-back is extremely special.

ANNC: A 64; he ties the lowest final round by a champion.

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: It was a hard-fought week. A lot of guys played some really good golf this week. A few of them finished at 19; I finished at 20. That's some really good golf around this course.

MONAHAN NATS: We talked for the last year about this being the 50th year and what a historic year it would be. Well, he helped make it even more historic.

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Those moments of victory are always really special. I'm just very thankful to have such a great support system not only at home but have a great team around me as well.

NATS: You're back.

NATS: Hello!

NATS: Congrats, buddy. You know the drill here.

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I put a lot into trying to win this golf tournament. It's very satisfying to be walking out of here with the trophy.