

2026 PLAYERS PREVIEW SHOW - SCRIPT

A1 - TEASE

ANNC: It doesn't get any better than this!

ANNC: Scottie Scheffler makes history!

ANNC: McIlroy's got another Players title!

ANNC: Just electric.

ANNC: Let that young man cook!

ANNC: Better than most!

ANNC: One bounces in!

ANNC: Scott survives!

ANNC: Owns the island green!

ANNC: The gallery rises to its feet!

A2 - THE STRONGEST FIELD IN GOLF

THE PLAYERS CHAMPIONSHIP IS HOME TO A STAR STUDED FIELD ... THE BEST PLAYERS IN THE WORLD GEAR UP FOR ONE OF THE MOST ICONIC WEEKS IN HOPES OF MAKING HISTORY ...

FOWLER: it's one of the strongest fields, if not the strongest field we play. Everyone's there to tee it up to win.

ABERG: We all know the history of the players and it is the fifth major and there's so much cool to it. You can definitely feel like it's a big tournament vibe. And coming down the last few holes trying to win is definitely special.

RAI: There's always that pressure and intensity on every tour event that you play. The Players Championship is obviously extremely special. I think you do feel the weight of the venue, the weight of the history, the weight of everything that has gone before you.

ANNC: It's over. He's remarkable! He just does what he has to do to win. Nicklaus has won the Tournament Players title 3 out of 5 years.

ANNC: Scottie Scheffler is the 50th Players Champion and the first to go back to back!

SCHEFFLER: It's a tournament that I grew up watching people play on TPC Sawgrass for a long time and to be able to, you know, walk the fairways and finish that tournament off, it was really special.

A3 - RORY MCILROY FEATURE

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER AND RORY MCILROY ARE BOTH LOOKING TO JOIN AN EXCLUSIVE CLUB WITH JACK NICKLAUS WITH THREE PLAYERS VICTORIES - AS THE TWO HAVE ACCOUNTED FOR FOUR OF THE LAST SIX TITLES.

SPECIFICALLY LAST YEAR, MCILROY'S WIN PROPELLED HIM FORWARD TO A MONUMENTAL SEASON FOLLOWING AN EARLY WIN AT PEBBLE BEACH.

MCILROY: I feel like I got a little bit of momentum coming out of the 24' season. From there, I just rode that momentum all the way through the start of the year.

THE WIN IN HIS FIRST START OF 2025 WAS A PRELUDE OF WHAT WAS TO COME, AS MCILROY TARGETED A SECOND CAREER WIN AT THE PLAYERS TO CONTINUE TO RAISE THE BAR IN A BANNER YEAR.

ANNC: All that talent in McIlroy's body is going to end up winning this championship.

MCILROY: I've had to learn to play this golf course, adapt my game to it in some ways

ANNC: McIlroy's got another Players title! Setting the table here for what could be a very special year.

MCILROY: I'd seen it somewhere that Jack, Tiger and Scottie were the only three with multiple players and multiple majors, it's a nice club to be a part of.

FLEETWOOD: We've made a bunch of decisions, just in terms of how he worked on his game, all of that obviously leading towards the Masters.

THE WIN WAS A STRONG PIECE OF CONFIDENCE TO FINALLY FINISH HIS CAREER SLAM PUZZLE.

ANNC: Masters Champion, Rory Mcilroy!

BUT THESE PIECES OF A COMPLETE PUZZLE WERE OFTEN MIXED AROUND, AT TIMES, NOT EASILY CONNECTED ... THOUGH SOME PIECES WERE.

BY 2014, MCILROY HAD THREE LEGS OF THE GRAND SLAM ALREADY COMPLETE, NEARLY 5 YEARS INTO HIS PGA TOUR CAREER. YET, BY 2016, OTHER PIECES WERE NOTABLY MISSING. EVEN OUTSIDE OF THE MASTERS.

ANNC: No way!

BUT MONUMENTAL FIRSTS WERE AGAIN STARTING TO FILL UP THE EMPTY SPACES.

ANNC: Rory McIlroy wins the FedEx Cup!

THE MORE COMPLETE RORY WAS BEGINNING THE EMERGE.

ANNC: Rory McIlroy, is a Players Champion!

AS HE FINALLY CONQUERED HIS FIRST PLAYERS CHAMPIONSHIP AFTER MANY ADVERSE BATTLES WITH THE STADIUM COURSE, SPEARHEADED EVEN MORE MONUMENTAL ACHIEVEMENTS TO COME.

ANNC: Only appropriate that the guy with a win at the Players ends it with a FedEx Cup title!

2021 WAS THE START OF FIVE STRAIGHT YEARS WHERE RORY WON MULTIPLE TIMES WORLDWIDE - THE LONGEST STREAK OF HIS CAREER.

MCILROY: Just sort of stuck my head down and kept going. Took advantage of the opportunity that I was given.

ANNC: Rory McIlroy! With his extraordinary talents, wins a third FedEx Cup title!

MCILROY: I've been waiting a long time to win a major championship after my last one. To share two FedEx Cups with Tiger Woods, I thought was a really cool accomplishment but to get to three, I'd put that up with some of the biggest achievements I've had in the game.

BUT EVEN WHILE SUCCEEDING AROUND THE WORLD, HE ALSO HAD TO OVERCOME SOME OF THE MOST DIFFICULT LOSSES OF HIS CAREER.

MCILROY: That's just the perception, that it's just a one way path to success. You shouldn't be fearful of failure because it should make you better.

RORY ALWAYS FOUND WAYS TO GET BACK INTO THE FIGHT.

ANNC: Oh wow! An amazing finish for McIlroy! And a first victory ever in Scotland!

ANNC: Milestone win for McIlroy!

ANNC: A signature performance by Rory McIlroy!

ANNC: Rory McIlroy and JJ Spaun heading over to the 16th tee at TPC Sawgrass for the first playoff in 10 years to decide the Players Championship.

MCILROY: Standing over that tee shot on 16 this morning was the most nervous I've been in a long time.

ANNC: Great drive and a statement made by Rory right there.

ANNC: Oh yes, it's going to be an advantage here for McIlroy who gets to one under.

MCILROY: To at least be able to give myself a cushion after the first hole on 16, going into 17 and 18, I thought was big.

ANNC: McIlroy's got another Players title!

A SECOND PLAYERS TITLE, A RARE FEAT IN IT'S OWN RIGHT, PAVING THE WAY TO WHAT SOME CONSIDER UNIMAGINABLE - A CAREER GRAND SLAM.

MCILROY: The big thing for me is just how the whole journey sort of resonated with people. I've had a lot of fun this year. After the year I've had, if I can't have fun this year, I'm never going to be able to have fun.

LOWRY: Rory does Rory things and he did. I see the time and effort he puts into the game and he deserves it more than anyone.

MCILROY: I want to continue to step outside my comfort zone and challenge myself in different areas of my life, that's the goal for the rest of my life.

A4 - JJ SPAUN FEATURE

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE PLAYOFF LAST YEAR, JJ SPAUN ALSO USED THE EXPERIENCE AS MOTIVATION FOR HIS GREATEST TRIUMPH AFTER YEARS OF GRINDING AND ADVERSITY WHERE HE FOUND HIMSELF INSIDE THE WINNERS CIRCLE ONCE AGAIN IN HIS NINE YEAR CAREER.

SPAUN: I played seven, eight years on tour. It's always been my life. But I knew I made a good living. I've won on tour, accomplished a lifelong dream in doing so. And I just said, well, like, if this is how things are meant to end, whatever happens, just be happy. And I think mentally that just freed me up. It's a huge mindset adjustment that led me to the best year of my life

SPAUN: The 18th hole on Sunday in regulation. I was tied for the lead. It's been a challenging hole for me, my whole career. And to step up there and hit a really good tee shot and then hitting a really good second shot to actually give me a putt to win. That showed myself that I can come down the stretch at really big events and, and pull off the shots that I need to to give myself a chance.

ANNC: This for the PLAYERS Championship....

SPAUN: I think in the past I've just kind of been afraid of being in that spotlight, being in that pressure, being worried about failure. It's hard to win, and you have to fail multiple times in order to win.

ANNC: The very first Monday playoff at TPC Sawgrass.

SPAUN: The range was dead quiet. There were maybe 10 or 15 people watching us warm up. So I was assuming, people are at work, they have things to do. And then we literally walk over to the 16th tee and there are about 10,000 people just waiting for us. So it was like a huge gladiator arena. Super fun, very nerve wracking. But, you know, at that time, it was like mano y mano. The best man is going to win.

ANNC: Flew it! Straight into the water. Shocked.

SPAUN: I've always feared outcomes whether it was failing or succeeding. I was too worried about the outcome instead of sticking to my process. As long as you go down swinging, all you got to do is know that you gave it all you had,

ANNC: Even though this is a bitterly disappointing playoff for JJ Spaun, what he can get out of this week is immeasurable.

SPAUN: Even though I lost, I knew I would have another opportunity and hopefully something really big would come from it. And, you know, just a few months later, I was back in that position and was ready to actually get it done this time.

ANNC: J.J. Spaun, now forever known as a major champion.

SPAUN: I knew at the U.S. Open, I didn't have to get to a fiery start. It felt like I was maybe playing for like a top 10 at the time, but the weather delay where we stopped play, that was pretty big. The same thing happened to me at THE PLAYERS this year on Sunday. Now looking back, I don't see how I couldn't have won.

B1 - INT PLAYER SUCCESS

THE SUCCESS OF THE INTERNATIONAL PLAYERS AT THE PLAYERS CHAMPIONSHIP IS NO SECRET ... IN THE LAST 25 STARTS THERE HAVE BEEN 11 WINNERS FROM ALL OVER THE GLOBE ...

SCOTT: To be a players champion means that you've beaten one of the best fields in golf and test, you know, over the final three holes which is some of the most demanding and testing in all of championship golf.

ANNC: Adam Scott survives!

ANNC: It couldn't have been much better for Stephen Ames!

ANNC: Tim Clark, the wait is over! The players champion in 2010!

ANNC: 21 year old Si Woo Kim from South Korea ... he is the youngest Players Champion ever!

MCILROY: I'm super happy, super proud to win this event for a second time. Not a lot of people have done that over the 51 years of THE PLAYERS. I've been coming here since 2009, 10 year old Rory would think this was really, really cool.

B2 - SEGUE TO HAOTONG LI

CHINA'S HAOTONG LI IS TAKING ON A UNIQUE CHALLENGE ON THE ICONIC ISLAND GREEN IN PREPARATION FOR HIS SECOND APPEARANCE AT THE PLAYERS CHAMPIONSHIP ...

B3 - CAN HAOTONG LI MAKE A HOLE IN ONE?

LI: Hi, I'm Haotong Li. Let's see if I can make a hole in one in fifteen minutes ... probably not.

LI: We are on 17 of TPC Sawgrass, 136 to the hole.

NATS: It's got a chance ... oh my gosh.

LI: Close! Close! Spin! No.....

LI: Tell you what, I could be here the whole day trying to make a hole-in-one.

NATS: Looks good...

LI: I seriously want to drop some F-Bombs.

NATS: You're so close!

LI: This machine doesn't like fricking Chinese, man!

LI: Last one?

NATS: Last one.

LI: Spin! Spin! OHHHH!!!!

LI: Is there any bonus for that?

LI: Drive me nuts man! Last ball as well.

NATS: That's crazy!

LI: This year at PLAYERS, repeat.

NATS: Now you know what shots you have to hit.

LI: Yeah, gap wedge, hard one, little cut. Let's go!

LI IS LOOKING FORWARD TO TRY TO REPLICATE THIS FEAT AT THE 2026 PLAYERS, ADDING TO THE FOURTEEN ACES CARDED ON THE PAR-3 SEVENTEENTH IN TOURNAMENT HISTORY.

C1 - NOTABLE ANNIVERSARIES

THE PLAYERS CHAMPIONSHIP HAS PRODUCED MONUMENTAL VICTORIES OVER THE DECADES ON THE GAME'S GREATEST STAGE ... 2026 IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO CELEBRATE SOME NOTABLE ANNIVERSARIES, BEGINNING WITH THREE TIME PLAYERS CHAMPIONSHIP JACK NICKALUS' SECOND PLAYERS TITLE IN 1976...

ANNC: He's marvelous! Jack Nicklaus with a round of 65!

ANNC: He does it! Raymond Floyd ... Tournament Players Champion!

ANNC: Look at this ... he has it! The birdie at 18 for Steve Elkington!

ANNC: 36 year old, Fred Couples, arguably the most popular golfer on the circuit and he is greeted by a standing ovation!

ANNC: Couples for eagle ... oh man!

ANNC: This to force a playoff at 17 ... and here we go, back to the island green!

ANNC: And KJ Choi is a PLAYERS Champion!

ANNC: And he's got it! Incredible.

ANNC: Wire to wire champion, Jason Day! 2016 Players Champion!

DAY SOT: I just wanted to win this so bad. I'm so glad and honored to be a players champion

C2 - SEGUE TO TIGER WOODS

AND NO RECOUNTING OF THIS CHAMPIONSHIP'S HISTORY WOULD BE COMPLETE WITHOUT ONE OF THE GAME'S GREATEST ICONS - TIGER WOODS ...

C3 - TIGER WOODS IN STUDIO

ANNC: A look down from above and I have seen a number of players putt from the beach part of this green. The results have not been good. The ball wants to break left, up on top. Once it comes down the slope, it moves hard right and it picks up speed.

ANNC: Johnny, that's better than most. How about in? That is better than most ... better than most! Johnny, I think it's safe to say you could hit that putt 50 times and maybe make it once. That was just a Tiger moment, one of the greatest long putts I've ever seen.

NATS: It's been almost 25 years, when you see that, what are your thoughts?

WOODS: That putt broke more at the end, that was the old green. So, they've since changed it since then. But it had a lot more movement, guys used to spin the ball off the green easily from the drop area and it would spin back into the water and make big numbers. The funny part was, when Johnny said, 'How about in?', right about that time, from the back camera view, you see my putter go through the lens, that was something that was pretty funny. I just remember celebrating. I just wanted to get the right speed and get out of there. That putt is quick, the group in front of us, I believe it was Fred Funk, might have four putted from just above the ridge. And it ran quite a bit behind so I knew it was quick. It was moving, I don't think it would have been within 8 or 10 feet if it didn't hit the hole. You don't see putts go in at that speed on the low side very often. But it's by far the best long putt that I've ever hit. I've had success in three different time frames and in March, May and then the Amateur in August. All very different conditions, one in rye, two in bermuda, and August at the Amateur, no rough. So I've won in different ways, it's a neat challenge throughout the year to try and figure it out. Given the hole,

this iconic hole as it is in itself, to make that putt on that green with that much movement, at that particular time with that much on the line trying to make it into the final group, it meant a lot.

D1 - COURSE PROPS FEATURE

THE PLAYERS CHAMPIONSHIP IS DEFINED BY UNFORGETTABLE MOMENTS AND ICONIC VICTORIES — BUT IT WOULDN'T BE WHAT IT IS WITHOUT ITS ULTIMATE TEST... TPC SAWGRASS.

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: It's not really a bombers paradise, it doesn't really favor shorter hitters, and that's why you don't see a ton of repeat winners because it doesn't suit one style of play, you just have to play great golf.

THOMAS: The par 5s are great in terms of the risk reward, you can make 4 just as easily as you can make 6 on any one of them.

SHANE LOWRY: TPC Sawgrass is not your typical, stand up and hit driver on every hole, you need to move your ball. It can get windy, so it's a tricky golf course. Maybe it's a little but different in its style of golf that American golfers aren't used to.

MORIKAWA: I honestly think it's one of the best golf courses we play all year. Not just from the conditions, but how it tests your game. You have to be on at all aspects from the tee to the green, putting, nothing's easy. You just have to play really really good golf if you want to finish up on top.

D2 - CHAMPIONS HOLE

EVERY YEAR, THE BEST FIELD IN GOLF DESCENDS UPON TPC SAWGRASS TO COMPETE FOR THE PLAYERS CHAMPIONSHIP... DESIGNED IN 1980 BY PETE DYE, THE STADIUM COURSE OFFERS A SIGNIFICANT 18-HOLE CHALLENGE... BUT WHICH OF THOSE 18 IS MOST IMPACTFUL? USING HISTORICAL DATA AND STATISTICS, WE'VE IDENTIFIED THE CHAMPION'S HOLE...

THE SIGNATURE HOLE IS THE 17TH – BUT THE 462-YARD, PAR-4 18TH HOLE IS WHERE CHAMPIONS ARE DEFINED...

SINCE 2003, THE FIELD AVERAGE ON 18 IS A THIRD OF A STROKE OVER PAR... BUT THE WINNERS AVERAGE 4.01... THE DIFFERENCE OF 0.32 STROKES IS THE LARGEST DISPARITY OF ANY HOLE ON THE COURSE BETWEEN THE FIELD AND THE EVENTUAL CHAMPIONS...

ANNC: Ricky Fowler! With an incredible run down the stretch!

BIRDIES ON 18 ARE RARE – AS THE WINNERS STILL HAVE A SCORING AVERAGE OVER PAR... SOMETIMES WINNING IS AS SIMPLE AS AVOIDING BOGEYS... THE 18TH HAS THE HIGHEST BOGEY OR WORSE PERCENTAGE OF ANY HOLE SINCE 2003... WINNERS ARE OVER TWO TIMES LESS LIKELY TO MAKE BOGEY OR WORSE WHEN THEY PLAY THE FINAL HOLE...

ANNC: What a sunday for Tim Clark! Bogey free!

RORY MCILROY NEVER HAD A BOGEY PUTT ON 18 IN 2025 WHEN HE WON HIS SECOND PLAYERS... WITH 3 BIRDIES AND A PAR, HE PLAYED THE HOLE BETTER THAN ANY CHAMPION IN THE HISTORY OF THIS EVENT...

IT WAS AN INCREDIBLE STANDARD TO SET... AND TO ILLUSTRATE HOW CRUCIAL THIS HOLE IS IN DECIDING THE WINNER – 9 OF THE NEXT 10 PLAYERS ON THE LEADERBOARD WOULD HAVE WON OUTRIGHT OR JOINED THE PLAYOFF IF THEY HAD PLAYED THE CLOSING HOLE AS WELL AS MCILROY...

ANNC: Incredible. Incredible birdie there.

RAZOR-THIN MARGINS TYPICALLY COME DOWN TO THE WIRE... 20 OF THE LAST 40 CHAMPIONS AT THE PLAYERS WERE DETERMINED BY 1 STROKE OR IN A PLAYOFF... 80 PERCENT OF THEM PLAYED 18 BETTER THAN OR EQUAL TO THE SECOND-PLACE FINISHERS...

D3 - ROLLOUT

ANNC: The greatest amphitheater in all of golf, the stadium course at TPC Sawgrass. The drama of the final three holes with water and nerves in play for every shot, who joins that great list of champions at the players?