

COLD OPEN

JAY MONAHAN SOT: Gary Woodland is a constant inspiration to us all. He's an inspiration to his family. He's an inspiration to his friends. He's an inspiration to his peers. In that regard, I'd say it's hard to find a player on the PGA TOUR that's more admired and more respected. // Please join me in recognizing Gary Woodland, recipient of the PGA TOUR's Courage Award.

GARY WOODLAND SOT: It means everything for me to receive it, but it really belongs to the people around me. It's been hard for me to share my journey, but I've done it for the sole purpose of trying to help people. I am blessed with amazing family and my team around me, and even the golf world, from the TOUR, players, caddies, to you guys, the love and support I've had has been amazing.

Welcome to PGA TOUR, The Cut

GARY WOODLAND FEATURE

GARY WOODLAND: Courage for me is not giving up and there was a lot of time when I probably wanted to, a lot of time where I didn't know if I'd be able to get through it, but through the people around me that just kept telling me to believe. My wife especially, just kept telling me to believe. This is what you fought your whole life for. Seeing my kids, I couldn't give up, and I fought and I believed in myself, and that's something I hope my kids understand, that no matter your circumstances and no matter what you're going toward, you can continue to fight and you continue to believe, and good things will happen.

Walked in that place determined to walk out.

STARTER: Warm aloha for Gary Woodland!

ANNC: This has been some emotional return to golf for Gary Woodland. A popular return, one of the most liked players out here. Started showing some symptoms last year, ended up having a lesion removed from his brain and it's just nothing short of a miracle that he's out here.

GARY WOODLAND: I was really struggling in April of '23. Just didn't feel like myself. It turned very negative. I was very dark, a lot of fear. Feared death. My hands were tremoring really bad, and I called my personal doctor just to get something to calm me down. I was explaining to him what I was experiencing and he's like, Gary, I need to get an MRI and that was eye opening for me, because I didn't think it was anything that bad. Got an MRI that day, and got the text that night that I needed to call the doctor back because they found something on my brain and my life changed forever.

The love and support I've has inspired me to keep fighting. Hearing other people's stories, that seeing me gave them hope, pushed me because I realized I was having a positive impact in people's lives.

Two days ago, I'm on the putting green here, and I have a guy come up to me who's yelling my name. I went over and talked to him, and he said, I had a brain tumor, I had brain surgery, I don't know how you're doing this, but it gives me hope and it inspires me, and I've had a million of those. It's not easy, but it's not easy for everybody and there's people that are going through way worse stuff than I went through, and I want them to know that they're not alone.

Winning the Courage Award is something that you probably don't hope to ever have to accomplish, because it probably means you're coming back from something really hard, but for me, it's more about the people around me who helped push me, who helped guide me, who took care of me. I wish their name would go on the award with me, just Gary Woodland and team, because it's a testament to the love and support I have around me.

It would have been so easy for me last year to not play. It would have been so easy for me to shut it down. I've had a good career, I've had a good run, but I wouldn't have learned everything I learned last year if I wouldn't have fought through it and I'm proud of myself for fighting the way I did last year through one of the hardest stretches in my life.

Sports is all I've ever done my whole life. It's all I've ever wanted since I was a little kid this is what I dreamed of, and the thought of it being taken away was one of the hardest things for me, because this is what I've fought for 40 years of my life for.

ANNC: Good to see Gary feeling 100% again. It's been the battle even last year when he came back he still was not his self.

GARY WOODLAND: This is 17 years out here now for me on PGA TOUR. It's something I probably took for granted. You're out here every day, you just think it's always going to happen. I don't realize how much I loved it. I love everything about it. I love the travel now, I love showing up at these places, the best golf courses in the world, the people you're out here with day in, day out. We're out here trying to beat each other every day, but it is a family. I realized how close this tour is and the in the golf world, for that matter, that we're out here to support each other too, and it's pretty special.

I truly believe my best golf's ahead of me. I believe I have a second chance at this. I understand that now I don't take a day for granted anymore. I also believe I have a bigger responsibility to have a positive impact, to tell my story, to help people. I need to fight through the scar tissue of playing golf poorly for the last couple of years, but I believe I'm doing the right things that the confidence will come back and I'll be able to have a bigger and better career than I've been able to experience so far.

COGNIZANT OPEN SETUP

OPENING ANNC: Welcome to the Cognizant Classic in the Palm Beaches as the latest swing through Florida on the PGA TOUR begins again.

ANNC Florida Swing: The Champion Course at PGA National Resort and Spa has kicked off the Florida swing.

ANNC: How about in?! Oh! Nick Dunlap now with an ace!

ANNC: Austin Eckroat has broken through at the Cognizant Classic!

ANNC: Kirk steps in and for the first time in 8 years is a winner on the PGA TOUR!

PLAY YELLOW FOWLER FEATURE

NATS: Lucy,

yeah, hi.

How are you?

Hi, Ricky, nice to meet you.

Heard you were coming out today.

Yeah.

Look how cool.

I hear you have a special relationship with the Nicholas children's

Yeah, yeah, I do. I love them. I was, I was, like, a patient of theirs too. So I did, like, a leg lifting surgery under them too.

How old were you when you did that?

14, and then, like, 15, you had to have a surgery to, like, put in the mouth, like the device that actually, like, lengthens your leg. And then you had, and then you had to wait till that heals, and then you had to have another surgery that takes it out, and then you had to heal again.

How long would you say from when the procedure of stuff, where you felt like yourself?

probably like after I was able to, like, walk again, because I was still gonna walk through my leg, but I would just it was like the first time I was able to walk around. So I feel like that was kind of the degradation. Revolutionary. I always walk with a limp, or like to have like step behind.

Yeah, that was your normal before.

Exactly so feel like just that itself felt like really crazy. And I felt like, wow. Also really involved resource for teens who would undergo the surgery, because it's not really common surgery. So, I

wanted to make a resource that's like peer to peer, and then they took it and they deliver it protocol. So that's also something great.

I'm sure, I'm sure, like, obviously, that being specific is a leg length, but a lot of stuff probably incorporated and used a lot of other situations and procedures. Yeah, times that kids go through that's great

thanks for coming up. Love hearing your story.

I'm gonna hang this in my room.

Perfect.

BEAR TRAP FEATURE

ANNC: The Florida swing off and running, the Cognizant classic in the Palm Beaches. It's the bear trap. The three hole span, 1516, and 17 redesigned by Jack Nicklaus about a decade ago.

TODD FLEMING SOT: We wanted to make sure that the course played a little bit differently for the players this year. Wanted to get people closer to the greens and to the tee boxes. I think you'll see as we get through the weekend and the course starts to really have its teeth kind of come back when the wind kicks in.

ANNC: It really is scary, but you just don't get to even take a breath. It is definitely a tough stretch of golf.

GRIFFIN BEAR TRAP

Seeing the bear trap redesigns is one thing, but for Ben Griffin and his Caddie, experiencing them firsthand is a completely different challenge.

NATS: Again, we're trying to get it this pin to be 13. So this pin is gonna be right around here. We're gonna try to get it just right of it, maybe a step pass it into the fat of the green

178 yards.

Wind is Northwest today, so we'll be straight across, if anything, a touch of perk.

Yeah, I like a seven-iron.

You got this nice over seated ride. It looks a little bit like you're along at home.

If I hit it over here on this left side too, just about every 10 it's not a bad spot. All right, let's roll a putt in.

Oh, wow, good putt there.

We just try to keep it a little short of that bunker. It's 265 with our downhill. All right. 190 191, front and 204, hole, wind still Northwest, so you still have some hurt.

Okay, I need to hit this probably 210 yards to get it there, maybe a little more.

A little mud on it. Just short, this is an important hole on Sunday coming down the stretch.

So you have 164 to the hole, 151 to the front.

If in the mix on Sunday. It's gonna be a really important shot. So I've got to trust our line that we just went through up today and hit that right tower for that right pen, back right pen. And if I par this hole every round, we're in great shape. I know we're gonna pick up shots on the field

Absolutely.

Hopefully give it a good run.

And you would take that tap into that par, then par would be great.

MULLIGAN MOMENTS

THE CUT PRESENTS...MULLIGAN MOMENTS

ANNC: Hideki has got to cut the legs out from under this one. Hideki at full damage control. It looked like four all the way.

ANNC: Difficult shot here for Cantlay. Big swing and hit it five yards. What a way to fight back! Yes sir! Patrick Cantlay makes his par at 11.

ANNC: Daniel Berger loves playing here. That one a little too wide right. He does not like this. We're going back to the tee, apparently the ball never came down. Got stuck in the top of one of the trees. That couldn't be a worst start for him. Daniel Berger ready to play. His fourth, he can still make par here. This wouldn't surprise me if he chipped this in right here. That is awesome. Yes.

LUKE CLANTON FEATURE

ANNC: That kid has a ton of game. He is hot right now, blazing hot

During the second round of the Cognizant classic in the Palm Beaches, amateur Luke Clanton's dreams were about to become a reality.

ANNC: Luke Clanton is going to get his PGA TOUR card. What a special moment. This kid's unbelievable. That is so cool. The Clinton family celebrating. Celebrate tonight. Luke Clanton, you have a PGA TOUR card. What a way to do it, too. It's not like he limped it. And hey, this guy is in the contention in the golf tournament, which is also not shocking.

RHONDA CLANTON SOT: Pure Joy, your joy, not happiness, joy. And one that comes from down deep. And I'm so glad, because we can stop talking about points. We can like play golf now and enjoy it and stop talking about the points.

DAVID CLANTON SOT: That's how I just been a blessing.

COGNIZANT WINNER FEATURE

Clanton would keep it rolling into the weekend finishing tied for 18th while another young player would climb the leaderboard, thanks in part to his putting that put him over the top

ANNC: To share the lead at 11 Highsmith, there he is beautiful putt, some golf yet to be played

JOE HIGHSMITH SOT: I've putted really honestly pretty well for a majority of the year and this weekend was ridiculous how many putts went in

ANNC: With authority, went down quickly there

JOE HIGHSMITH SOT: I don't know what it is about this thing, but it feels way better than any of the other. this one has a special feeling to it, and I guess now it's the one I'm definitely going to stick

ANNC: makeable putt for sure, he got it. What a time for that. Two shot lead now playing the 18th. not done yet, just incredible what's he's done through the bear trap

JOE HIGHSMITH SOT: I never really try to think about winning. All that stuff is just kind of a little abstract. You're just trying to hit one good shot at a time.

ANNC: that is the second straight 64 on the weekend for Highsmith that's the low round each day and it's the lowest 36-hole finish in the 53-year history of this tournament

ANNC: Signing scorecards, now signing autographs and that man is the winner here at the 53rd edition of the cognizant classic Joe Highsmith

JOE HIGHSMITH SOT: it's all a little bit of a whirlwind. That was the last thing I was expecting at the start of the day was a win. it's incredible. It feels really nice to just play a round of golf like that.

WITH HIS WIN, JOE HIGHSMITH JUMPS 113 SPOTS TO ROUND OUT THE COMCAST BUSINESS TOUR TOP 10 THANKS IN LARGE PART TO HIS CONSISTENT AND RELIABLE PLAY

ANNC: His schedule has changed dramatically

JOE HIGHSMITH SOT: the schedule changes will be great. It's an extreme advantage to be playing in those elevated events for how much money and points those guys get to play for. Fortunately, was able to get into those for the rest of the year, and hopefully I can play well

HIGHSMITH BECOMES ONLY THE 3RD AMERICAN TO WIN ON TOUR THIS SEASON, HE NOW SITS 10TH ON THE FEDEXCUP POINTS LIST

AON NEXT 10/SWING 5 FEATURE

With his win in Palm Beaches. Joe Highsmith will make his first appearance at the Arnold Palmer Invitational presented by MasterCard. veteran Daniel burger returns to Bay Hill for the first time since the 2019 season, after stellar finishes at the WM Phoenix open and the Genesis Invitational

ANNC: that is a tasty burger,

Berger earned his way in thanks to the Aon next 10, which awards starts to the top 10 players Not already exempt from this season's FedEx Cup standings. Meanwhile, rookie Aldrich Potgieter (ALL-drick POT-gee-tur) finds himself in the field via the AON swing five.

ANNC: What a great turnaround.

The AON swing five rewards the top five FedEx Cup point earners who are not already exempt from their strong performances from the Mexico open at vidanta world and cognizant classic in the Palm Beaches.

BAY HILL PROFILE

ANNC: There's just so much history here at Bay Hill offered by the king himself. So Arnie's place has never looked better. This beauty, Bay Hill welcomes the best in the game to Arnie's place.

ARNOLD PALMER SOT: I enjoy creating things to this day. That's still part of the scene here

ANNC: Arnold Palmer's beloved Bay Hill club and lodge.

WILL ZALATORIS SOT: It's one of the fairest tests that we play out on tour, in my opinion, just because great golf shots are always rewarded, but mediocre golf shots, you're gonna have to scramble.

PATRICK CANTLAY SOT: It's a golf course that historically particularly difficult. And I think this year will be more of the same.

WYNDHAM CLARK SOT: It is so difficult out there, and the wind gusting and the greens, there's not much turf on there. They're rolling so fast.

ANNC: The Kings event at Bay Hill, best in the world are on display at Arnie's place, and a lot of those guys playing homage to the king on the grounds of his beloved Bay Hill, the legend lives.

Arnie's signature legacy stands strong today, testing the PGA TOUR for nearly 50 years, even though he's gone, his vision dares the world's best, to play like the man himself.

ANNC: Arnie wants this place to play tough. He doesn't want it to play easy. The rough is as thick as we have ever seen it, so Arnie would love that aspect of it toughest Test every year. to be a champion at Arnie's place requires traits that befit the man himself, be confident, be bold and handle the pressure. Tiger Woods has got to win number eight at Bay Hill. What a finish by McIlroy.

RORY MCILROY SOT: I don't know if I can find out the vision to buy a golf course and obviously turn it into what Arnold has done here at Bay Hill like that's a pretty cool legacy to leave behind.

ANNC: There are reminders, memories of him everywhere where none more vivid, vivid than his beloved golf course. This was his world, and it will always be.

BAY HILL DIFFICULTY FEATURE

ANNC: Certain golf courses, just get your attention on the schedule, whether it's the difficulty or the drama. Year after year, Bay Hill is near the top of that list.

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER SOT: It's really uncomfortable down the stretch. I just don't ever really feel like you have it won until you basically get it to 18 green.

RORY MCILROY SOT: You start chasing on this golf course, it can bite you pretty quickly.

ANNC: It's always gonna be a good test at Arnie's place,

WYNDHAM CLARK SOT: it's just so difficult and almost too hard to go out there and run away with it.

ANNC: It's a place that, at times, demands players to take chances, makes them go for broke. That's just Bay Hill. It's a different mindset than any other week.

WILL ZALATORIS SOT: Everyone's always kind of joking about how Arnie smiling from heaven, you know, watching the carnage.

RORY MCILROY SOT: You just know that you make the weekend to Bay Hill. You're just gonna have to hang on a little bit.

SHANE LOWRY SOT: That's what this, course, is like. Yeah, you just have to roll with punches and keep going and keep fighting as hard as you can, and y'all see where it leaves you the end of the Day.

ANNC: what else would you want at Arnie's place?

BE SURE TO TUNE IN AS LIVE COVERAGE BEGINS STARTING ON THURSDAY WITH WORLD NUMBER ONE SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER LOOKING TO WIN HIS THIRD RED CARDIGAN IN FOUR YEARS AT THE ARNOLD PALMER INVITATIONAL PRESENTED BY MASTERCARD

ANNC: this beautiful Sunday at Bay Hill, Scheffler in complete control by five the headline at Arnie's place. Scheffler dominates.

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER SOT: That was a big week for me. Putter switch and the way I put it on the weekend, especially in the final round,

ANNC: he's first in putting. It's the most amount of feed he's made four strokes gained for the round. With this putter, it's going to quiet a lot of critics. It has been 51 weeks since number one in the world. Scottie Scheffler has won a PGA TOUR event. He could be on his way to changing that today,

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER SOT: Felt like one of the first tournaments in a while that I really kind of ran away with walking up 17,18, having it pretty much one was always pretty good.

ANNC: And Scottie Scheffler is the king of Bay Hill again, with one of the great performances we've ever seen here around difficult Bay Hill. He was 7.1 shots better than the field today.

TED SCOTT SOT: He's like, all right, you know, you did it, man. You stuck through the tough times. All sudden, now we're back, you know, we're back doing the thing we love to do, and that's competing at the highest level.

ANNC: And it's just crazy to think how confidence can change like a light switch for Scheffler,

winning breeds confidence, and just like Tiger Woods, Scheffler has it in spades, dominating the difficult Ball Hill greens last year in a rout at Arnie's place, entering as the favorite again with no signs of slowing down. The world number one looks to take another step towards Tiger

TED SCOTT SOT: greatness, honestly, all the hard work and preparation and now it's his belief is starting to match it. Here he is. Been pretty amazing.