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Player-caddie conversations highlight latest Fan Forward initiative at Arnold Palmer Invitational presented by Mastercard

In partnership with Mastercard and NBC, commercial units repurposed to bring fans closer to conversations between TOUR athletes and their caddies

PONTE VEDRA BEACH, Florida – As part of the PGA TOUR’s ongoing Fan Forward initiative – a data-driven, audience-centric approach to accelerating innovative solutions that give fans more of what they want – viewers will notice fewer commercials within the Arnold Palmer Invitational presented by Mastercard broadcast, with time repurposed for live golf segments focused on the player-caddie interaction. Storytelling elements and statistics highlighting what a player is facing in the moment will be delivered via graphics as opposed to announcers to maintain the focus on the player and caddie conversations and their point of view from the field of play. This broadcast initiative debuts thanks to NBC/GOLF Channel and the TOUR as sponsored by Mastercard, and is one of many examples of the TOUR working to respond to fan feedback in creative ways.

The TOUR launched the initial Fan Forward survey in 2024, with more than 50,000 diverse respondents providing data guided decisions to help create the best version of the PGA TOUR. When asked about enhancements that would most likely increase fan engagement with PGA TOUR broadcasts, “Showing more conversations between players and caddies” was one of the top responses from both the casual and core fan segments. Fans also noted that, where possible, they wanted to understand the strategy behind a certain shot, especially when there is access to an additive on-course conversation between competitor and caddie.

Arnold Palmer’s Bay Hill Club & Lodge places a premium on accuracy from the fairway, as the course is the only venue on TOUR over the last 15 seasons to be ranked inside the top 10 toughest proximity from the rough (51 feet, 5 inches), including four seasons as the most difficult. On average, players that find the rough at Bay Hill lose 0.38 strokes to those who find the short grass,

the second-highest cost of finding the rough versus the fairway, behind only Muirfield Village (0.40) since 2021.

“In addition to wanting more live golf action, fans are telling us they are more entertained when they can see and hear a player’s pre-shot process in the heat of the competition, and we are excited to work with Mastercard and NBC/Golf Channel to step back and allow fans to experience those intimate, real-time interactions during the telecast this week,” said PGA TOUR Commissioner Jay Monahan.

“Through Fan Forward, our fans are providing a roadmap for innovation and experimentation across every area of the TOUR – and while there is no single enhancement that will change everything for the better – the ability and willingness to test new features, in concert with our players and partners, is key to giving fans more content choices and deeper access to the PGA TOUR and its stars.”

“It’s all about bringing fans closer to their passion for golf, giving them even more access to the players, their caddies and the strategies that are defining the course of play. Fans can also drive the conversation through a new social-first initiative, connecting them to their favorite golf personalities,” said Raja Rajamannar, Chief Marketing and Communications Officer, Mastercard. “Together, we’re taking the viewing experience to the next level.”

“We are always going to support initiatives that enable the viewers and golf fans to see more live golf shots, and this is a creative way to work with our partners at the PGA TOUR and Mastercard to do that at the Arnold Palmer Invitational,” said Tom Knapp, EVP, Golf, NBC Sports.

Monahan will provide additional context around Fan Forward findings and the TOUR’s areas of focus for innovation tomorrow in an interview on GOLF Channel.

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About PGA TOUR

By showcasing golf’s greatest players, the PGA TOUR engages, inspires and positively impacts our fans, partners and communities worldwide.

The PGA TOUR, headquartered in Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, co-sanctions tournaments on the PGA TOUR, PGA TOUR Champions, Korn Ferry Tour, PGA TOUR Americas and administers PGA TOUR Q-School presented by Korn Ferry and PGA TOUR University. TOUR members represent the world’s best players, hailing from 28 countries and territories. Showcasing the biggest moments in

the sport with history and legacy on the line, the PGA TOUR has long-term domestic distribution partnerships for broadcast coverage on CBS, NBC and Golf Channel and video streaming service on ESPN+. Internationally, PGA TOUR coverage is available across 200+ countries and territories in 30 languages via 39 broadcast and digital partners. Virtually all tournaments are organized as non-profit organizations to maximize charitable giving, and to date, tournaments across all Tours have generated more than \$4 billion.

Fans can follow the PGA TOUR via: the PGA TOUR app and PGATOUR.COM; social media channels, including [YouTube](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) (in [Spanish](#), [Korean](#) and [Japanese](#)), [LinkedIn](#), [TikTok](#), X (in [English](#), [Spanish](#) and [Japanese](#)); the PGA TOUR Channel on Free Ad-Supported Television (FAST) platforms such as the Roku Channel, Samsung TV Plus, PlutoTV, Xumo, LG Channels, Tubi, Amazon's Freevee, FireTV and Alexa devices; and WhatsApp (in [English](#) and [Spanish](#)), [WeChat](#), [Weibo](#), [Toutiao](#) and [Douyin](#).