



**Pre-Tournament Transcript
Thursday, March 5, 2026**

BEN CRANE –

Q: We have Ben Crane joining us. Ben, this is your second day out here. What's it been like so far?

CRANE: Yeah, I mean, everyone says it's the best tour in the world, and I can see why. This is a lot of fun. The guys are relaxed. Everyone's grinding, but also they're different stages of life, and they're just a lot of good friends out here. We spent a lot of really hard years together, and now this is kind of a wonderful reward and just an amazing thing to be able to come out here play the game we love in these kind of conditions with these sponsors. This is a gift. So I'm pretty excited to be here with some of my best friends, Zach Johnson, Stuart Cink here, Doug Milne is here, you know, just a lot of good friends. And so it's just great to be here.

Q: Happy early birthday!

CRANE: Yeah, Tomorrow's my birthday, 50 years so get to tee it up on my birthday. Yeah, just a lot to be thankful for.

Q: Speaking of your friends. So earlier, we spoke to Zach today, and he was just saying how happy he was that you're out here with him. Kind of just doing it together both being new. Do you feel like it's like a first day of school type thing? Kind of learning from all the guys that have been out here?

CRANE: 100% it's like the first day of school, you're just like, kind of looking around, okay, I do know some people. I know a lot of people, and it's golf. We was the game. We loved, what we've worked so hard at, and to be able to come out here and compete against our friends and all that. Like Darren Clark said, you know, Monday through Thursday, everyone's just having the best time, you know, it's a little bit of a grind. And then Friday, you know, when the cameras turn on. Everyone's like, you know, getting after it. So pretty fun and excited to Yeah, just play my first one and just take it step by step.

Q: Since your birthday is tomorrow, we got you a cake.

CRANE: Yeah, golf boys. Golf boys cake for my 50th. I didn't see that coming pretty strong. So super grateful for the cake. I'm not a big cake eater, but I might have to break the cake fast for for that one. So, yeah, thanks.

Q: You know, when did you start really thinking about Champions Tour and pursuing this? You know, how long ago to really think about this coming up.

CRANE: I'm, yeah, getting ready, yeah. So I stopped playing the tour, maybe full time, maybe six years ago. Injury wasn't playing as well, and really made the commitment to get my body healthy over the last five or six years and raise my kids wonderful family. My wife and I have had an amazing journey at home with our kids, and they're all thriving in their own way, super thankful for that. But about five years ago, someone would say, like, how old are you? And I'm like, and I would just chose, like, I got four years, you know, 246 days and three hours till we get going. You know, just make up some whatever. Like, I'm counting down the days because I want to be out here on the Champions Tour, because I know it's so much fun you get to compete again. So worked hard to get in good shape, keep club head speed up practice a lot. I hired my caddy a little over a year ago, and so he's been doing a lot of practicing with me flying in to do that. So just playing some KFT events, playing some mini tour events, just try to be ready so but I've been aiming at this for probably the better part of four or five

Q: Coming into this week, you feel confident about your game?

CRANE: I would say I'm just taking it step by step. I'm excited that my game has been improving over the last few years, and you know, I'll be nervous tomorrow, just first day of school. So excited. Don't have high expectations, but don't have low expectations either. Just want to go out there and just try to run my process the best I can and see how I stack up. Have you gotten any specific advice from some of the guys that have been out here a while? I have Darren Clark gave me some great advice. He just said, you know, it's three rounds out here, and I know that sounds silly, but if you go out here and you shoot 72 or three the first day, it's hard to get back in the golf tournament, right? You have four days. You have that extra time. And so out here you got to play from the first stage. So I was like, yeah, it's right. You really can fall behind out here. You don't have time to make it up. So, yeah, that's something that's interesting. And I think a lot of guys are playing pretty aggressively out here, because you do want to win.

Q: Are we going to see the red jumpsuit and the helmet at any point?

CRANE: I mean, I do come out early in the morning and find the low point. I don't know if you've seen that video, but yeah, you never know when it makes an appearance. Bubba Watson and I have been talking about golf boys 3.0. We're kind of old geezers now, but you never know. Yeah, well golf boys three is not out of the question.

Q: Two quick questions for you. Are you the type to come out with expectations or question marks in terms of what you hope, plan, and intend to do out here?

CRANE: I think I'm really competitive, mostly against myself. I really want to play my best, and so I'm looking to do that, and then just see how that, how that stacks up and how I need to continue to improve to have success out here. So I think that's kind of what I'm doing, is really wanting to run my process really well. I have some swing keys and some process goals with my caddy, Nate, and so we're just wanting to work through that to the best of our ability and see how it goes. It's a tough golf course. Really good test. Winds are gonna be blowing about 20 for three days. So firm greens, you got to play golf. There's a lot of really critical shots you're gonna hit out here. So there's exposure a lot of places, and you gotta play well, you gotta distance, wedge it well, drive it well – so it's a very good test of golf.

Q: You enjoyed a really nice career on the PGA Tour. So too, did Steve Stricker? Look at what Steve Stricker did when he came out here to the champion tour. Do you look at something like that and think, Well, you know what, if he can do it, why can't I?

CRANE: I mean, I certainly look at a lot of my friends who have come out here and played well, but there's also some of my friends who have come out here and not played well. So it's not, it's not a given that if you had a good PGA TOUR career, you deserve to come out here and play well. You see some guys who did not have great PGA Tour careers and come out here and played amazing golf. So it's all about how you're playing now. And so I recognize that, and that's further inspiration to me to try to get my game in a really tidy place and to be able to compete.

Q: Great. Thank you so much, Ben.