

# 2015 US Women's Open Championship

Thursday, July 9

Flash Interview

## Elizabeth Nagel



### **Q. So 2-under, your first -- this is your first U.S. Women's Open?**

ELIZABETH NAGEL: Yes, and it's only my second event really here on the LPGA professional circuit. I play on the Symetra Tour.

### **Q. You have to be extremely pleased?**

ELIZABETH NAGEL: I'm very pleased. I left a few putts out there at the same token, but I'm really happy with the ones that went in. I'm stroking it really well, feel really comfortable out there. That's what matters and that's what I'll take forward for tomorrow.

### **Q. You said this is only your second event. A lot of people don't know your story about battling cancer in college. Could you tell it again, especially considering the perspective that it adds to today's round?**

ELIZABETH NAGEL: It was a couple of years ago, but I was diagnosed with thyroid cancer my junior year in college. I had surgery and went through the whole bit and I was cancer free about a year later. It kind of brings all this into perspective and makes this even more special. Everybody says it, but when you make a bogey you keep pressing on. When you've heard the "C" word and went through that whole battle really in your life, it brings everything back to even keel. So, yeah, I mean all my family is here and everybody supports me. And it's nice to know that I've been through things like that. And when you come to a U.S. Open it's very challenging, but you know you can do it.

### **Q. Was there chemo and radiation involved?**

ELIZABETH NAGEL: No chemo or radiation. It was a radioactive iodine treatment. I was radioactive for a few days and had to be on my own in my room, quarantined. So that was interesting, but it was the most bizarre experience in my life.

### **Q. Where was the treatment?**

ELIZABETH NAGEL: I actually had to go to U of M, Ann Arbor territory, for that one. But they took really good care of me. And that's where I still go and I have regular checkups. Even though I'm a Spartan, the Wolverines, they were nice.

### **Q. Did you get a lot of support from the Wolverines?**

ELIZABETH NAGEL: Yes, I held my ground and wore my Spartan clothes even the day of the surgery, so I kind of took a risk there. No, they did great and they still do. They're really there for me. They know what I do out here, so they really are adjustable with my schedule and all those things, so, yeah, it's good. They're good to me.

### **Q. I'm assuming that the team that supported you in college has continued to support you now?**

ELIZABETH NAGEL: Yes, and my coach at Michigan State, Stacy Slobodnick-Stoll, she's just been there so much for me, as much as my family, if not more. And it's just amazing to have people that believe in you and help you and know that you can get to a stage like this. But when you're going through something like cancer and sitting in a hospital bed, she texts and that's all that matters at that moment. And now that I'm here, she can be that much more proud of me. It really is a nice payoff.

### **Q. It feels kind of silly to relate this thing to golf, because it seems so trivial, but I guess staying in the moment is something that you learn?**

ELIZABETH NAGEL: Absolutely. Oh, my gosh, yeah. When you hear the cancer word, like I say, I remember that very second when I was sitting in the doctor's office and I felt like the whole world just came crashing down around me. Just like when you make a big number or whatever on the golf course, you've got to keep moving forward and keep pressing on, and take it one shot at a time. That's kind of how we approached it, one appointment at a time, one treatment at a time, just really day-by-day, because with the thyroid it does crazy things to your body. I'm happy to be here. That was great and I hope I can do it again tomorrow.

### **Q. With the diagnosis and the treatments and having to wade into Wolverine country as a Spartan and all you've been through, could you ever even envision being on the leaderboard at your first U.S. Open?**

ELIZABETH NAGEL: I don't know, I mean I try not to put any limitations or expectations on myself. As a Spartan, at Michigan State, we kind of talk about that. When I was recruited, I wasn't one of the best players

in the country. I was the best player in my town, and that was about it. So I knew that I had it in me. I have people that believe in me and I knew I could get to this stage. But as you go through it, it's about believing myself. Seeing my name up there, that's today, we have a couple of days left so we'll see how it goes. I'm happy with where I'm at.

**Q. You stepped up on the first tee, did it actually just hit you or did it take a while before you realized this particular moment that you were in it?**

ELIZABETH NAGEL: I don't know. When I qualified, actually Christina, she qualified with me and she was crying. And it hadn't hit me then and I don't think it's even hit me now, maybe when I leave on Sunday. I don't know. It's fun. You have to keep it in perspective. You can't take it too seriously and be too into it and mentally kind of get in your own way. I'm trying to take it minute by minute and just really enjoy it. It is what it is. It's so special.

**Q. Talk about your round, how you got to 2-under, the good, the bad and in between.**

ELIZABETH NAGEL: I hit a lot of greens and the greens I missed were fringe putting, a lot of fringe putting. I bogeyed the first hole. First U.S. Open, bogeyed the first hole. Got to keep pressing on. Made a couple of good putts for birdies, 10, 15-footers. I was feeling really comfortable out there. When you get to that point, you try to keep giving yourself opportunities and chances and I did. And a couple of putts went in. Made a good bunker save on the last hole, which was key for me going into tomorrow.

**Q. How did you play? Arkansas was your first event, is that right?**

ELIZABETH NAGEL: Yeah, two weeks ago in Arkansas, I was actually in Escanaba in the UP, ready to play in a Symetra Tour event and I got an email Wednesday night at 7:00 p.m. that I was going to tee off on Friday morning in Arkansas. So I had to figure out a way to kind of shoot down there and I got a flight. Luckily I have some supporters that are willing to help me with those flights, which was great, because I flew out of a tiny airport and into a tiny airport. I was there in time for lunch the next day. I got to walk the course with a caddie friend of mine, so that was really helpful. Couple over the first day, but I shot 1-under the second day. So again, going and doing that and feeling comfortable in that environment in Arkansas was a great first event. Big crowds, a lot of volunteers, a lot of nice people. I kind of talked to Kelly a little bit and talked to a couple of people at the LPGA that were at the Symetra event and they really encouraged me to go. And I couldn't say no, even though I was thousands of miles away. I made it work. Everything kind of aligned at that moment. I said, Liz, you have to

give yourself an opportunity to feel comfortable on the big stage before you go to The Open. And now playing in front of these people, which is incredible, I actually have a sense of just calmness about it, which is really special because that's what I was most nervous about coming into this is the crowds and the hype and all the people.

**Q. The rushing into it I guess like you did, and playing and qualifying and getting here, does that take the nerves off a little bit more than if you are trying to do it from a year out?**

ELIZABETH NAGEL: A little bit, because everything has happened so fast. I've been playing every week on the Symetra Tour, so I've been just going and going. I squeezed in the Michigan Open last week. I've just been going all over the place. I slept in my own bed finally the first time in a few months last week. Coming here, I knew that it was going to be -- Liz, you've been playing a lot of golf. I keep saying to myself you've been doing a lot of things, and it's time to come together, and it actually did, so that's really exciting.

**Q. How much time passed by from the diagnosis until the remedy?**

ELIZABETH NAGEL: I was diagnosed in November of, I think, 2012, just after Thanksgiving. I had my surgery just after Christmas, two days after Christmas, kind of a rough holiday season for my family. I was cancer free just before the following Christmas. About a year.

**Q. How much did you go without playing?**

ELIZABETH NAGEL: Luckily I was diagnosed in November, when we were already in the off-season. And then I had my surgery -- since it was in December, I had January and some of February before we had our first tournament at Michigan State. So coach and I kind of had this goal of getting back by the spring break trip, which is like the end of February, beginning of March, and I actually came back a little bit early. I probably jumped the gun a little bit, if you ask some of my doctors, but I was really anxious. And at that point I had a team that was really depending on me. And I'm the kind of person that wants to be out there. I only missed one college event and I played in my first one in Florida. Didn't play well, but I knew it was going to take time and it was a good time to get started. And I had a pretty good rest of the season.

**Q. How did it affect your body? Were you weak?**

ELIZABETH NAGEL: We wrote a book about it. The thyroid is your control center for your body. I didn't have any temperature control. I still sometimes even when it's this hot and muggy, I get the chills. Your hormones, your emotions, your temperature, all sorts of different things. A lot of people don't realize how important your thyroid is for your body. When you don't

have one anymore, when they take it out, all of your facets are -- your levels, is what they call it, are all over the place. And then they give you medicine and you have to regulate which takes up to a year. And I finally, finally am feeling better. So it's really good. Coach stuck with me through that. We refer it to Liz's basket case stage. I was a mess. I would cry and I would laugh. And my friends were like, Liz is a disaster. But you put up with it. It's part of the thyroid process, and the doctors even don't know what to tell you. That's the hardest part is they say, Liz, you're going to be feeling a lot of different things, but everybody is different, so we can't tell you what you'll be feeling. That was hard for me, because I want somebody to tell me what's going to happen. That's the day-by-day mentality, really.

**Q. You went on medication?**

ELIZABETH NAGEL: Radioactive iodine treatment, I was put in seclusion in my house, couldn't be around women or children, and I was radioactive. Then I traveled with the team and I was worried I was going to set the bomb sensor off, so I had to get a special note. So it's kind of a funny story. It was just one treatment, and that treatment lasts in your body quite a while.

**Q. That treatment was when, in January?**

ELIZABETH NAGEL: That treatment was in February, the beginning of February, yeah.

**Q. Tomorrow, what do you do to improve on 2-under?**

ELIZABETH NAGEL: I think I just continue with the same mindset, one shot at a time, one hole at a time. Stay in the bubble. My dad and I are making a good team right now. Keep going through the right process, really. And just have fun, enjoy it.

**Q. Dad is on the bag?**

ELIZABETH NAGEL: Yeah, dad is on the bag.