

U.S. SENIOR WOMEN'S OPEN

## DePaulo Shows Resilience in Her Round, and in Life

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By Ron Sirak



*Lisa DePaulo's second-round 72 was a roller-coaster affair that has her well-positioned for the weekend. (USGA/Chris Keane)*

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**T**here is an effervescent spirit to Lisa DePaulo that puts sparkling water to shame. This woman bubbles with life. She oozes an energy that carried her through 12 trips to LPGA Qualifying School before earning a tour card for the 2000 season.

She percolates with a passion that turned the tragedy of her mother's death into a crusade to fight cancer. And she resounds with a feistiness that catapulted her up the leader board in the second round of the U.S. Senior Women's Open.

DePaulo, 53, rode a roller coaster across the extremely challenging Pine Needles Lodge & Golf Club layout to a 1-over-par 72 on Friday, putting her at 4-over-par 146 going into the weekend. That was the leader in the clubhouse when the morning wave finished.

And as is the wont with the way DePaulo leads her life, there was nothing routine about this effort as she made six birdies, five bogeys and a double bogey, bouncing back every time she was knocked down – just as she always has.

DePaulo made three consecutive bogeys beginning on her fifth hole, then rebounded with two birdies to close out the first nine. She started the second nine with a bogey, made a couple of birdies, erased that with a double bogey and then finished birdie, bogey.

“The key today was that I didn't let anything get to me,” DePaulo said. “If you hit a bad shot here you are going to pay for it and the greens are just so challenging. You can't let your guard down for one minute.”

The longest birdie putt she made was 25 feet on No. 18 – her ninth hole – when the ball clanged off the flagstick and fell into the hole. “When it went in, I kissed the flagstick,” she said. “I'm loving that new rule.”

DePaulo, who tied for 37th in the inaugural U.S. Senior Women's Open at Chicago Golf Club last year, said she's been competing anywhere she can to get ready for this USGA championship.

“My pickle ball partner and I are probably the two most-recent winners in the field,” DePaulo said. “Liselotte Neumann won a T&CP [LPGA Teaching and Club Pro Division] tournament two weeks ago and I won on the Cactus Tour the same week,” she said with the hearty laugh that ends most of her sentences.

In a stroke of perfect timing, Neumann, who was on her way to warm up for her afternoon round, happened to walk by and gave a quick “well done” to her friend. “We're both just looking for places to play,” Neumann, the 1988 U.S. Women's Open champion, said with a smile.

DePaulo, who played LPGA tournaments in 12 different years, only had her card for two full seasons, making 15 trips to qualifying school in all. From 1990 through 2001, she played in the U.S. Women's Open seven times and made the cut just once, finishing T-55 in 1992.

In 2005, a year after she made 22 LPGA starts and failed to make a cut, DePaulo created Tournament Treasures, a company she still manages that that does gift packaging for golf events.

But her life hit a serious speed bump in 2012 when her mother was diagnosed with Stage 4 colon cancer. For nearly two years, Lisa and her Mom were constant companions, sharing what she says was the most fun they ever had together before her mother died in October 2014.

“You know me, I’m a talker,” Lisa said, punctuating her sentence by slapping her listener in the chest with the back of her hand. “But it’s been hard for me since my mother died. If she had had a colonoscopy, she’d be alive today. So that’s my mission; to spread the word for people to get tested.”

While DePaulo’s playing career has been more fun than it has been successful, it’s the relationships she has built and her love of the game that keeps bringing her back. Truly, there is nothing she’d rather do.

“I just want to keep getting better every day,” DePaulo said when asked what her expectations are for the weekend at Pine Needles. “I’m hanging in it.”

That’s a pretty good description of the way DePaulo has played her professional career as well as how she’s lived her life. Lisa is all about hanging in there.

DePaulo has always made certain those around her have a good time. And now, she’s added the obligation to also make certain they take care of themselves. But there is also the matter of being in contention in a major championship going into the weekend.

“I’ve always just kept on keeping on,” she said. “I take my lumps and I bounce back.”

Indeed, that’s been the story of DePaulo’s life. It is also sounds like a good strategy to have on the weekend at a major championship.

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