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LAMORINDA SPORTS

Acalanes Golfer Qualifies for U.S. Women's Open

By Hunter Hewitt



Elizabeth Schultz celebrates qualifying for the U. S. Women's Open
Photo provided

Before entering high school in 2010, Elizabeth Schultz had a difficult decision to make.

The soon-to-be freshman was a lifelong swimmer, but she had recently started playing golf and quickly grew fond of the sport. During her final year of middle school, she split time between the pool and the golf course.

As Schultz prepared to enroll at Acalanes High School, however, it was time for her to make a choice. She knew she wanted to focus on one sport, but she wasn't sure which one.

"When I was growing up, I did year-round swimming, and then [in eighth grade] I was doing swimming and golf," Schultz said. "But going into my freshman year, I had to decide whether I wanted to pur-

sue swimming or golf, and I ended up choosing golf."

After three all-league selections, two league MVP awards and a qualification for the 2013 U.S. Women's Open, it sure seems like she made the right decision.

Schultz wasted no time making a name for herself at Acalanes. She began her high school golf career by making the varsity team in the fall of 2010. As if that wasn't enough, she was named to the All-Diablo Foothill Athletic League first team that year.

And she was just getting started. Schultz followed up her freshman year with even more impressive sophomore and junior campaigns. Not only did she earn first-team honors again in 2011 and 2012, but she was also named the

DFAL MVP both years.

Once Schultz had established herself as a force in the Northern California preps scene, it was time for her to start swinging for the national stage.

On May 20, Schultz played in a tournament at Lake Merced Golf Club in Daly City, to qualify for this year's U.S. Women's Open, one of the five LGPA major championships. There were 72 women competing, and the top three finishers would earn a spot in the prestigious event.

Fearless of the challenge at hand, the 16-year-old Schultz went toe-to-toe with several collegiate and professional golfers.

"I was one of the youngest girls there, so it was different for me," Schultz said. "It was also my first time playing 36 holes in a one-day event, and I was a little worried that I would be tired after the first 18 holes. I just wanted to go out there and do my best."

Her best was better than most. Schultz finished with a combined score of 147, good for third place and a spot in the U.S. Women's Open. The upcoming tournament, which takes place from June 27-30 at Sebonack Golf Club in Southampton, N.Y., features a field of 156 golfers - mostly LGPA professionals - from all over the world.

"I'm really excited," Schultz said of the tournament. "I'm trying to go in with no expectations. My goal is to make the cut after two days."

The field typically cuts down to around 60-70 golfers after the second day, and Schultz has been vigorously preparing in hopes of ultimately achieving her goal.

"I've been working on my putting a lot," she said. "I know the greens are going to be fast and tough there, so I'm trying to work on my short putts and get those dialed in. I'm also working on my chipping."

As for future goals, Schultz, who will enter her senior year in the fall, says that winning the 2013 North Coast Section championship in October is next on her list. She also plans on playing collegiately, and with several schools recruiting her, she has another tough decision approaching.

"I don't know where I'm going yet but I want to stay on the west coast," said Schultz, who has talked with several top-tier west coast schools like Cal and Oregon. "I'll probably make a choice towards the end of the summer."

For Schultz and her family, there is nothing to worry about. With a proven track record of making smart decisions, it's safe to say that she will pick the right school.

The U.S. Women's Open will be televised nationally on ESPN2 on June 27 and 28, and on NBC on June 29 and 30.

To read more about Schultz start with golf, check out our story: www.lamorindaweekly.com/archive/issue0416/Passion-Helps-Drive.html.



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