

The ANNIKA driven by Gainbridge at Pelican

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Belleair, Florida, USA

Pelican Golf Club

Elizabeth Szokol

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: All right here with Elizabeth Szokol. Just finished up your round and announced you're retiring following this event. Can you just describe the emotions you're feeling right now?

ELIZABETH SZOKOL: Yeah, it's crazy? It's hard to believe it's been nine years playing, which is pretty crazy. It was great to retire at home, a golf course I'm a member at and had so many family and friends out today. So it was pretty special.

Would've liked one more putt to go in, but that's all right. I can look back at a successful career.

Q. When thinking about your journey was there a specific moment where you kind of said, you know, this is my time or this is the moment that I want to kind of leave and retire?

ELIZABETH SZOKOL: Yeah, I would say I've been thinking about it the last couple years. The win at Dow probably extended my career a little bit more. I've had a lot of lingering injuries and the travel got a bit old for me and just kind of missed being home.

Kind of this year I would say in July I pretty much made my decision, but knew probably the last two years it was likely going to be my last year playing. But really probably in July kind of solidified it.

Q. And looking over the time you've been on Tour what are some of the things that kind of will stick with you?

ELIZABETH SZOKOL: I mean, I would say the friendships and all the experiences. I made some of my best friends out here and that's pretty amazing. They'll be friends forever, and I would say that's definitely the best thing.

And just looking back at all the places we've traveled and all the amazing places we've been, it's pretty incredible, so



I definitely think those two things.

Q. Touch a little bit too on the win at Dow as well. I'm sure that's something that will be with you forever, and that trophy you'll always have. Can you just touch on that and what that meant to also get a win out here on Tour?

ELIZABETH SZOKOL: Definitely. I think just to always be an LPGA Tour winner is pretty special and amazing, and to wrap up a career with that is pretty successful to me.

To do it with one my best friends, Cheyenne, was pretty great and nice to have that win. Feel really good and accomplished about my nine years.

Q. Last question from me. Kind of do you know what's next? Do you have any fun plans ahead?

ELIZABETH SZOKOL: Going to figure it out on Monday I think is the plan. Have some stuff in the works and hope to still be around a little bit and going to take a little time and figure it all out.

Q. Walking the round today so you knew this in your head. Was there any added pressure on today since you were hovering around the cut line for the day today?

ELIZABETH SZOKOL: I think as competitive golfers we always put a little adding pressure on wanting to play the weekend. I always want to play well here. Just a home event and I love this tournament, so I think that alone is kind of enough pressure. I was just trying to enjoy it and have fun.

Definitely a little bit of added pressure but was just trying to enjoy it and soak up every moment.

Q. Naturally the putt on 18 is not what you wanted, but tying a bow on your career here at your home course in front of your familiar, Justin was here watching, how -- I don't know if special is the right word -- but basically wrapping up your career here at your event at Pelican.



ELIZABETH SZOKOL: It is pretty amazing and special. Tampa has been home for me for about seven years now. Once I got on the LPGA Tour I moved to Tampa, and Justin has been my coach since '19 and they've been so good to me here. My husband is from Tampa and all of our extended family came out and my mom and brother and a lot of friends.

So it's home and definitely extra special and amazing to be able to retire here with so many family and friends in what's my home now.

Q. What was that emotion like, those hugs on 18 after play finished?

ELIZABETH SZOKOL: I was good until I saw Caroline and Bri crying, to be honest. So I think it kind of hit me more than I expected. I was pretty calm about it. I think I would say I let most of the emotions out when I made the decision this was going to be my last year in July.

But definitely it was kind of crazy that, okay, this could be my last putt, which was pretty wild. I would say more so playing with Caroline and Bri was pretty amazing, two of my best friends out here. It's also Caroline's last event so she's retiring as well, so I was also rooting for her hoping she had two more days.

Same with Bri. She is fighting for her card. Definitely a lot of emotions hoping they would play well and then just the tears and just that I won't be doing this every week next year with them is a bit different, but I also excited for what's next for me.

Q. It was a competitive juices out there, but you guys were fighting for each other today, right?

ELIZABETH SZOKOL: We absolutely were. We were trying to have as much fun as possible. We were all a little closer that cut line than I think we all would've liked, but we were all rooting for each other. We're such good friends. Been amazing friends for pretty much nine years, since we been playing.

And so always root for them and probably be out they're weekend to root for them. Too.

Q. You served as a player director on the LPGA board. Talk a little bit about your experience doing that and what legacy you would want to have on the Tour.

ELIZABETH SZOKOL: Defensively. I loved doing it. It was amazing the last three years, and just to see how the Tour has progressed and how big our purses have gotten

and all the great things that Craig and the team have going on.

I actually said in our board meeting, our final one on Tuesday, that I was bummed and jealous of whoever was next just because of all of the amazing things. The LPGA has so far to go and I think we're on the right path and I was just happy to be a little part of it.

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