

Dow Championship

Wednesday, June 26, 2024

Midland, Michigan, USA

Midland Country Club

Cheyenne Knight

Elizabeth Szokol

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Welcome to the media center at the Dow Championship. I'm joined here by Cheyenne Knight and Elizabeth Szokol, the defending champions this week.

First to start things off, let's hop back to last year and think about your win here. What made that week so special for you both, and what are the things that come to mind when you think of the victory here? Cheyenne, if you'd like to go first.

CHEYENNE KNIGHT: It's just such an amazing memory. You know, golf's an individual sport, and just actually getting to play with one of my best friends and getting the win, I was just remember having so much fun with each other.

It was a bonus that we won, but it's always just a great week playing here because we get to play together.

Yeah, it was the highlight of my career for sure winning with Elizabeth.

ELIZABETH SZOKOL: It's so much fun. It's such a great event. The fans are always great and always great to come back to Midland and a memory we'll have forever winning together, which was amazing.

Just playing the Pro-Am today, I played that back nine, so just remembering the last couple holes, some of the shots we hit, and putts and everything. So a great memory to have.

Q. Just talking to being defending this week, Elizabeth, this is your first time doing so, and Cheyenne you've had experience doing that before. Just talk about sometimes maybe the emotions that come back to coming back and being the defending champions and maybe seeing your face on stuff a little bit more, but also maybe some of those pressures.

ELIZABETH SZOKOL: This week is just so much fun. I

think the pressure has kind of taken off, just that we're playing together and have each other throughout the whole week, which is great.

I think it's just a fun opportunity to play together. It's something different than our usual individual events. So I think that kind of helps with it. Just great memories, just playing the holes today and yesterday and remembering that and just good vibes, and really looking forward to a fun week here in Midland.

CHEYENNE KNIGHT: I agree. I think it's always special to come back to a place that you've played well and just all the memories. I don't think there's a ton of pressure just because it's such a fun week and a fun format.

We're defending champions, but we'll always be champions here. It's just always like good memories. There's no added -- like can't take it away from us, and there's no added pressure to play well.

We have a lot of fun in this format, and we played well last year, so just good memories and good momentum on this golf course, I guess.

Q. Turning to this week, the same format as last year, are you going to take the same strategy as last year, any adjustments? Clearly it worked well, but just curious.

ELIZABETH SZOKOL: I think same strategy, the same thing. This is our fourth year playing together, and we've just done the same thing every year, same tee shots for alternate shot, kind of the same strategy with who goes first, and just kind of using the momentum from last year.

I think we really just want to have a fun week. It's always so fun playing together and just enjoying that. Looking forward to that.

CHEYENNE KNIGHT: Same strategy. I feel like we play a lot of golf together, so we both know each other's games pretty well, and just our personalities. Yeah, no matter what happens out there, I feel like we'll know how to kind of like handle it and each other.



It's just fun. We're a team. It's a lot different week in and week out. I stay with Elizabeth a lot. I stayed with her last week at KPMG.

ELIZABETH SZOKOL: And the week before that.

CHEYENNE KNIGHT: And the week before that. Yeah, a lot going forward. I think our strategy is just to have fun, enjoy ourselves, no sorries, no nothing like that. Then we'll have like a birdie game between us in four balls, so it's all fun. A little bit competitive, though.

ELIZABETH SZOKOL: Dinner on the line usually.

Q. One last question. Just talk about the reasoning behind your team name and the song, how it came about. You used the same one as last year. You have the same one for this year as last year. Just talk a little bit about that, why you chose that.

ELIZABETH SZOKOL: We wanted a fun name; couldn't come up with anything. I think my fiance was the one that came up with it, kind of a take on my first name and Cheyenne's last name. Just kind of fun and different, and it worked well.

I think Cheyenne picked the song to kind of go with the medieval theme of our team name. I think we're sticking with that this year.

CHEYENNE KNIGHT: I don't think Elizabeth likes it very much, but it's iconic. Now we have to keep doing it. I've seen Game of Thrones; I really like the show. The Elizabethan Knights, I can't think of anything super like Medieval Times type of things. I was like, Game of Thrones is close enough. I don't even know if it's the same time period, but it fits.

I would play Taylor Swift, but I don't think I'm allowed.

ELIZABETH SZOKOL: She wasn't allowed.

CHEYENNE KNIGHT: It's good mojo, so I think we'll stick with it.

Q. To make the team vibe complete, you should come out in Game of Thrones apparel. Just trying to help the team a little bit. When you think back to when the two of you first decided to team up in this, what were those conversations like? It's, like you said, been a few years, and every team has an origin story. So what's yours?

ELIZABETH SZOKOL: I think we were sharing an Airbnb

in Australia in 2020 in a tournament right before COVID hit. We were at dinner together and talking about the schedule, and I think one of us just said, do you want to play Dow together?

I believe that year it got canceled because of the flooding here, and 2021 came along, and we said let's play together. We've just had so much fun and stuck with it every year.

Q. So is it more fun or more pressure, because you do have somebody else relying on your game? I know you said there are no sorries, but in your mind, there might be some sorries here or there. So is it more pressure?

CHEYENNE KNIGHT: I think we kind of had this conversation maybe last year. I think you get like a little bit more maybe nervous for like alternate shot just because you're normally out there by yourself and you don't want to put your partner like in a bad position or mess up.

I think with us for like alternate shot, we're like no sorries. We're going to -- we're going to play aggressive. We're going to try to make birdies. We're not going to try to just survive. We're going to keep being aggressive, try to make birdies, hit the fairway, hit the green.

I don't know, I think we just kind of talked about it. I mean, it's okay. We're both probably going to hit a bad shot or miss a putt or whatever. So it is what it is type of thing. You can't make it a bigger deal than what it is.

Q. This event, it's similar to several other events on the LPGA Tour, where it's a really big community-focused event. Similar to Meijer a couple weeks ago where the community comes out in droves. Just talk about playing in events where just the crowds are here and you have the whole community support and just the entire city coming out to support you guys at a tournament like this.

ELIZABETH SZOKOL: That's probably one of our favorite parts of this event. There's such great crowds over the weekend, and even just playing the back nine, remembering people cheering for Cheyenne making a putt on 17 for birdie and just remembering that.

It just feels like the whole community is behind us. Even the whole week, how involved everyone is here. It's such a great feel and makes it feel like such a special event.

It's amazing to be here and see that.

CHEYENNE KNIGHT: Two years ago we did a junior

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

clinic, and there's still kids that went to that junior clinic that come out and follow us. One of the kids' moms, his name is Caleb, messages me every week and says, Caleb is still playing golf and rooting you on.

We've done a lot of things in the Midland community, and even just walking around the past few days, people are like, oh, defending champion. Good luck this week. It's just an amazing community here and a great golf course, and just the staff here is great.

It's amazing how many people come out. And just like the whole setting, on 18 and the last few finishing holes, it's a great arena to finish.

Q. You all are sitting right next to the brand new trophy. I asked Elizabeth when we were in the parking lot, when you walked on the grounds today, just how does it feel just to be here as defending champions?

ELIZABETH SZOKOL: It feels amazing. It feels great to be back. Just so many good memories, and I feel like a little confidence comes with that too, which is really nice. So really happy to be back.

The trophy looks absolutely amazing. I saw it earlier; quite a bit different from last year. It's great. Really exciting to see how the event has grown every year and continues to. Amazing that Dow is doing that for us.

CHEYENNE KNIGHT: It's just cool. Time goes by so fast. I feel like it was last month that we won. I don't know, it's crazy. I just remember it like it was yesterday.

Yeah, just like being back and just so many good memories. We stay at the same place. I feel like we hit the same restaurants. It's like *deja vu* all over again. It's really awesome to be here. The trophy looks great.

All that Dow is doing, I remember the first year that I played in 2019, it's just like continued to grow. More people come out. All the new things that they have and just like supporting us in women's golf. It's just such a unique format, and I think it draws everyone's attention.

But it's a great purse that we play for and just really setting the tone on the LPGA.

Q. You mentioned the purse. On that last day, there's tens of thousands of dollars on the line per shot. Obviously you're on the Tour, so you accept that reality. How do you kind of stay present and try to execute versus like get overly consumed with the fact that you guys are playing for a good amount of money?

ELIZABETH SZOKOL: We do it every week, and we're competitors, and we want to do our best on every shot every day. I think just really getting into the moment of that and not looking so far ahead to that.

I think we're competitors and we want to do our best, and I think that's how we do that.

CHEYENNE KNIGHT: I think our sport is not contract driven. You play well, you make money. It's pretty straightforward. I think, yeah, we do it every week.

Yeah, kind of process over result. If you're thinking about the result, thinking about winning, stuff like that, like you're not committing to your process and the shot at hand. It's kind of a mental reset.

I think we started the day with a three-shot lead last year. Of course it's in the back of your mind. You've got to stay present and then control what you can. At the end of the day, just kind of accept it and kind of control what you can.

Q. What are your thoughts on the evolution of Dow becoming kind of that signature team LPGA Tour event, similar to Zurich Classic? How do you think it's grown, and how much do players or colleagues look forward to competing in something unique like this and continue to grow?

CHEYENNE KNIGHT: I think all of us talk about our team event at Dow. The team names and the songs, it's so much fun. I think it's just like girls who have decided to maybe not play in years past and are playing this week, we always tell them it's such a great tournament, it's a great community. The golf course is great. Like you'll really enjoy it.

I think it's out of people's comfort zone to play a team event because it's very unique and not what we do week in and week out. Dow's commitment to the LPGA -- yeah, this is my sixth year playing in this?

ELIZABETH SZOKOL: Five, because it was canceled in 2020.

CHEYENNE KNIGHT: Yeah, it's just grown a lot. It's just like getting better every year, and just seeing the new things they've done with the mascot. I feel like there's more people out today normally than we have on a Pro-Am day and just everyone's really committed.

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