



## Playing with Nancy Lopez...Priceless

*By Terrie Marshall*

WOW, WOW, WOW! Just having an opportunity to meet Nancy Lopez, shake her hand and maybe even get an autograph makes me very happy and excited. BUT to play 9 holes with her, get lessons and a hug from her at the end...PRICELESS!

I still can't believe it happened, but thanks to the EWGA Foundation it did happen and it happened to me. I was one of four EWGA members lucky enough to place winning bids to have a once-in-a-lifetime, 9-hole experience with Nancy Lopez on the Golden Horseshoes' Gold Course on Sunday, April 24, in Colonial Williamsburg, Va.

Here is how the day went...

At Nancy's request, the four of us met her for breakfast at the conference, at our own table. The others in the lucky foursome were Stacey Baba, San Francisco Bay Area Chapter; Debbie Kandel, Canton, Ohio Chapter; and Janie Tischler, Metro Detroit, Chapter.

We all introduced ourselves and then the conversation started. I know this might be hard for some to believe, but I thought I carried the conversation. It was just Nancy and I. I kept on asking questions (I hate silence) and she kept on answering them. We talked about where she was from, her business ventures, her kids and, of course, the ace-in-hole question...her grandkids. She's a very proud mother and grandmother. We sat for about an hour-and-a half just talking. It was great. This is definitely a great way to break the ice and to get the nerves out before playing golf.

When it was time for golf, we walked across the street to course and were met by the staff. It was funny to watch the staff approach Nancy and to respectfully take care of all of us. They escorted us to the golf carts, where we found "Nancy Lopez" brand shirts (in our sizes) and visors waiting for us. It was so cool. Something that we will have to remember the day. Then we went up to the driving range to warm up and take pictures. We did group pictures and then individual pictures with Nancy. I almost had to remove my hat because the shade of the brim was covering Nancy's face. We all got a chuckle from that one. What was I thinking!!! I moved to the other side of her when it was time for our individual pictures. lol



On to the first hole. Since we were all in carts, Nancy suggested doing a scramble so we could all hang out together on the course instead of being scattered. Perfect format. I teed off first...having played this same course for the past two days I knew where to hit it, which I shared with the others. I CRUSHED IT!!!

Let's just say they used my tee shot on the first hole...and a few others. On the 8th hole, I got another good one away and while we (the other EWGA members) were keeping our carts on the cart path, Nancy and Leann Finger (EWGA point-of-contact and a friend of Nancy's) were on the course moving (kicking/throwing) Nancy's ball ahead of mine. But I already knew I out-drove her again. She was too funny! Leann got a picture of it.



Throughout the nine holes, Nancy gave us individual lessons and encouragement. She even gave us "knuckles" on good shots. After we got done and got hugs all the way around, one of the marshals came up and suggested talking a group picture overseeing their signature hole. Nancy was on top of her game making sure we had the best time ever, and suggested that we lie down for the picture. The result is below. Chalk up another great idea to Nancy...You would think that she's done a few of these before.



When we got back to the clubhouse, we had another surprise waiting for us. The photographer and AHQ printed out the individual pictures of us with Nancy and already had them framed. Nancy took the time to autograph each one and then present them to us, sealed with another hug.

What a great lady! If you get the opportunity to meet her, please do. You won't be disappointed. She is the Arnold Palmer of the Ladies game...One of a kind!

*Editor's Note: Since her record-setting rookie year in 1978 when she won five straight tournaments, Nancy Lopez has won three majors and 45 other LPGA events, for more than \$5.2 million in career earnings. Among her many accolades, she was the first woman to win the Frances Ouimet Award for Lifelong Contributions to Golf, played on and later captained the U.S. Solheim Cup Team, and is a member of the PGA World Golf Hall of Fame. She was the first golfer to play all four rounds in the 60s at a U.S. Women's Open, here at Pumpkin Ridge in 1997. She continues to play on the Legends Tour and oversees Nancy Lopez Golf, which makes a full line of women's golf clubs, clothing and accessories.*