WOMEN'S GOLF COACHES ASSOCIATION

NEWS *release*

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LAUREN THIBODEAU RECEIVES WGCA DIVISION I KIM MOORE SPIRIT AWARD

CORAL SPRINGS, Florida (May 19, 2022) –University of Louisville senior Lauren Thibodeau has received the 2022 Women's Golf Coaches Association (WGCA) Division I Kim Moore Spirit Award.

This award is dedicated to Kim Moore, who played golf for the University of Indianapolis (1999-2003). Kim was an inspiration to all as she persevered through many physical challenges while playing collegiate golf. Her positive outlook and dedication toward the game was only out done by her sense of humor and passion for the game.

The purpose of the award is to recognize and honor a student-athlete or coach who exemplifies a great spirit toward the game of golf, a positive attitude on and off the golf course, a role model for her team and mental toughness in facing challenges.

Acceptance Video: https://vimeo.com/710347210

Following a successful rookie season, which included carding the lowest round ever for a freshman in school history, Lauren was diagnosed with Celiac Disease. She managed the condition throughout her sophomore season, going on to appear in five events and finishing fourth on the team in stroke average. However, early into her junior season in the fall of 2020 she began experiencing severe stomach issues. Thinking it was related to her Celiac, she powered through the pain until she went home for Thanksgiving break. Lauren's parents decided to take her to the E.R., unaware that the trip would turn into a 55-day stay at Boston Children's Hospital.

Lauren's first diagnosis was severe Ulcerative Colitis, a type of inflammatory bowel disease. None of the treatments provided worked and the suggestion was made to remove her colon, which would mean the rest of her life with a colostomy bag. During the last treatment option before having to remove her colon, Lauren began to experience severe neurological symptoms and was diagnosed with medical Catatonia. Catatonia presents as a motor disturbance, occurring when the chemistry in the brain is thrown off and leads to slowed movements along with many other neurological symptoms. There were times when Lauren would get stuck in certain positions, not remember simple tasks such as brushing her teeth, and even not remember who she was or who her family was. Her doctors were stumped, and after numerous failed tests and treatments the suggestion was made to try Electric Convulsive Therapy (ECT), an alternative treatment that involves passing a mild electric current through the brain.

After just one treatment, Lauren miraculously woke up and was back to her normal self. After being discharged in late January, she continued treatments throughout the spring of

2021. However, in March she began feeling more fatigued and noticed that her heart was racing. After another trip to the E.R. she learned that her red blood cell count was dangerously low, likely caused by an adverse reaction to medication. She was also experiencing memory issues from the ECT and other medications. The decision was made to pull her from school and golf activities for the rest of the spring to allow her to recover.

After a long recovery process Lauren returned to golf competitions in June of 2021. In August, she broke a course record to win the New Hampshire State Amateur Championship. She competed in all five events for Louisville in the fall 2021 season with a scoring average of 74, her best fall scoring average of her college career. The highlight of the season came at the Illini Invitational where she shot -6 (74, 68, 68) to tie for third place, her best career finish, and led the Cardinals to a team victory. Off the course, Lauren maintained a 3.93 GPA as an Economics major.

About the Women's Golf Coaches Association

The Women's Golf Coaches Association, founded in 1983, is a non-profit organization representing women's collegiate golf coaches. The WGCA was formed to encourage the playing of college golf for women in correlation with a general objective of education and in accordance with the highest tradition of intercollegiate competition. Today, the WGCA represents over 650 coaches throughout the U.S. and is dedicated to educating, promoting and recognizing both its members and the student-athletes they represent.

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