

sports

Young stars on the rise for Eagles

Future shines bright for women’s golf sophomore duo



AU sophomore women golfers Sophie Hemleben (left) and Hannah Lemons (right) line up for shots during a tournament in their fall 2018 season.

AU ATHLETICS

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Sophomores Sophie Hemleben and Hannah Lemons have eminently expanded what the Ashland University women’s golf team is capable of achieving.

As only sophomores, they hold the lowest average scores of the team by more than five points. Lemons has an average score of 79.09 and Hemleben has an average score of 79.64.

Lemons, a Hospitality Management major, has been golfing for 11 years. Hemleben, an Exercise Science major, has been golfing for eight years. This sport has played a huge role in both of their lives.

“I have lived and breathed everything that has to do with golf,” Lemons said.

Lemons’ father, Doug Lemons, is a professional golfer and the reason for her love of the sport.

“I tried everything else I could before golf, but I liked it the most,” she said.

Hemleben’s father has influenced her golf career, as well.

“My dad is why I got into the sport and then throughout high school, he tried not to burn me out with the sport,” she said. “But he’s always been there for me if I want to do something golf related.”

Both Lemons and Hemleben attribute golf to being the teacher of many life lessons.

“I’m able to move on and not react over small things because of golf,” Hemleben said. “The mental side of my life is a lot better.”

Lemons has learned personal skills from the people she has played with. There are many different types of people and you learn how to handle that, she said.

“I also like how golf was kind of seen as a gentleman’s sport and then women came into the game and just started dominating,” Lemons said.

Despite some financial issues that still arise among men and women in the sport, there is female mastery all around the world.

Together, Lemons and Hemleben are creating a dynamic that is unstoppable through a sport that is very unique.

“It’s definitely different than any other sport,” Hemleben said. “We are playing in different conditions everyday, in all types of weather,

where every course is different.”

Nonetheless, these women turn to golf to clear their minds and have fun.

“I feel free when I’m on the golf course,” Hemleben said. “It’s so open and all you have to do is worry about yourself.”

Lemons feels at peace and relaxed when she golfs.

“I’ve been playing for so long that if ever I have a struggle in life, academically or socially, I know that when I go on the golf course I won’t think about anything,” Lemons said. “I just swing and have a good time.”

Although Lemons and Hemleben have seen great triumph in their golf careers, they have had to overcome some obstacles, just like

consistency.

“They have been very competitive from the start,” Torda said. “It has helped our team a lot, scoring wise, because they always play well.”

Torda acknowledges Hemleben’s low round of 71 and recognizes how much she has grown as a player since last year.

“They both work very hard and they showed that as freshmen,” Torda said.

Lemons’ and Hemleben’s scores have been taken for tournament play since their freshman years. Although they are competitive, they know how to have fun.

Torda’s favorite thing about Lemons and Hemleben is their sense of humor.

my life.”

There is no denying that these women have had success over the past two years. However, they have remained humble throughout their collegiate career.

“Honestly,, when it comes down to it, each tournament I try to play and focus on myself and just play the best I can,” Lemons said.

There is a big difference between team play in golf and team play in other sports.

“You can’t really do anything about other people on the team but you can do something about yourself,” Lemons said. “I know if I do my best, it’ll help everybody else.”

Hemleben grants the importance of minimizing damage while playing.

“We all go out there and shoot our own scores, but then come back together and have a team score,” Hemleben explains. “So, you could win the tournament individually but come in last as a team.”

Lemons and Hemleben also try to be role models for others on the team.

Lemons’ high school golf career involved bullying and harassment from the upperclassmen on her team.

“When I went through that struggle in high school, I told myself I would never treat someone with that much disrespect,” Lemons said. “I don’t make people put my things in the van, I do that for other people.”

Hemleben focuses on including everyone and making her teammates feel that they are appreciated and cared for.

“I just want everyone to be the best person they can be, no matter if they are shooting 100 or 70,” Hemleben said.

Lemons hopes the team stays close after graduation.

“We have been through so much already and I know we are going to go through two more years of a bunch of stuff,” Lemons said. “I don’t want this whole experience to just end.”

The close bond of the AU women’s golf team is noticeable to anyone who knows them.

“Sophie is one of my favorite players on the team,” Lemons said with a smile. To which Hemleben responded, “Hannah’s up there for me too.”

Torda said it best, “It’s crazy to think they are just sophomores and to think what they will be able to do in the years to come.

These two women are truly just getting started.

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- Monica Torda

many other athletes.

Lemons broke both of her legs over the summer of 2018 and was unable to play for 8 weeks.

“Going into this season, I was worried,” Lemons said. “It was hard mentally and emotionally because I didn’t know how I was going to play.”

Lemons’ injury did not jeopardize her talent, as she reached a season-low of 73 on Oct. 17, receiving the GLIAC Women’s Golfer of the Week Honor.

Her and Hemleben have bounce-back attitudes that are fierce.

When it comes to moving on from a bad hole, Hemleben does not see the purpose in being upset over it.

“Nothing is going to change it, so from there you just have to see what you can do to improve on it and not do it again,” Hemleben said.

This outlook does not go unnoticed from their teammates.

Senior golfer and Finance major, Monica Torda, counts on Lemons and Hemleben for their skills and

THROWERS,

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Toth will compete in his final season of indoor but will have another year of eligibility for outdoor.

The women’s side of the team will be led by two of their top returners in seniors Natalie Helenthal and Mackenzie Leigh. Both Helenthal and Leigh boast two All-American honors a piece.

Baker is set to have her first legitimate collegiate season as she ended both indoor and outdoor seasons last year as a freshman.

Baker was a redshirt in the 2017-2018 season but she accomplished an achievement that no Eagle her age has done.

Over the summer Baker traveled to Tampere, Finland and represented team USA in the women’s U20 shot put. Baker placed sixth in the world and is considered top three in the world for her age.

“Understanding the goals that I have for my future, it was really awesome to accomplish this milestone. I was put into an atmosphere at age 19 that I will hopefully see in the near future,” Baker said. “Placing sixth at World’s was one of the greatest feelings in the world because I know there is so much more left in me that the world hasn’t seen yet. They just got to see a snippet of what I am capable because I know there’s more to come.”

To keep her motivated, Baker always reverts back to a quote that has stuck with her from coach Logan.

“Good. Better. Best. Never rest until your good is better, and your better becomes the best.”

In 24 years, Logan has coached 265 All-Americans and 49 National Champions in throws alone at AU.

Jud Logan and his band of throwers at AU are looking for another historic season as it slowly approaches.