

# **Former NCAA and U.S. Women's Amateur champion retires from professional golf at age 30**

Emma Talley, a well-liked LPGA golfer, is retiring at age 30 to start a family.

Talley found success at every level of amateur golf, including winning the U.S. Women's Amateur, but struggled to replicate that on the LPGA Tour.

Despite never winning on the LPGA Tour, Talley was known for her positive personality and genuine interactions with fans and fellow competitors.

Talley plans to stay involved in golf through coaching and mentoring.

Every day, Emma Talley writes down a new idea of what she might do

with the rest of her life. What started as a daunting exercise has become invigorating over the past year.

"I kind of shocked myself with how much I enjoyed other things," said Talley.

"I'd never had a job."

In 2024, 30-year-old Talley, while competing on the LPGA, worked for the tour in a variety of media roles, from social media to podcast host. She also started working with the Western Kentucky University women's golf team and took a few juniors under her wing.

And then, while her husband Patrick Smith was caddying in Asia, she found out she was pregnant, calling him at 4 a.m. to share the happy news. Smith choked on his dinner to the point his companions almost had to do the Heimlich. The incident was coincidental, Talley said, but it makes for a better story that he was worked up with excitement about the idea of becoming a dad.

"I did have to finish out my season pregnant and I was very sick," said Talley. "I'm pretty sure half the tour already knew I was pregnant, because I was eating pretzels, laying down on the tee box in Hawaii."

Talley, the pride of Princeton, Kentucky, was the [last player in a long list](#) to announce that 2024 would be her final season on the LPGA. She's due to give birth to a baby girl in June.

While many players on the LPGA mix motherhood with tour life, Talley has always known that wasn't for her.

When Talley says she'll miss everything about the tour, from the

volunteers to the sponsors to her close friends out there – she means it.

If only the LPGA could bottle Talley's personality and pour it out like sunshine at every tour stop.

Professional golf is a grind. Many players put on blinders at the office and go from task to task without making much eye contact. Even simple greetings are rare.

Which is what made Talley stand out so much all these years.

When Talley won the 2013 U.S. Women's Amateur at age 19, the local Subway manager came out to watch after she'd bonded with him while ordering her daily turkey sub, no cheese.

"I've only known y'all for a week," Talley told the crowd at the Country Club of Charleston during the awards ceremony, "but I feel like I've known you my whole life."

It would become a theme of a career.

Two years later, Talley became the fifth player in history to win both the NCAA Championship and Women's Amateur. (In 2022, Rose Zhang became the sixth.)

Expectations grew.

Just before Talley turned pro, former World No. 1 Stacy Lewis took her out to dinner and told her not to change anything about her game for the first three years.

After Talley enjoyed a solid rookie campaign in 2018, she changed

everything in a quest to gain more distance.

"My game kind of fell apart after that," she admitted.

There's something else, too, that Talley only recently came to realize while looking at the tour from the media side of things. She'd won at every level of the game, but didn't know how to thrive when not winning.

"I think you have to fall in love with the process," said Talley, "and I was so obsessed with winning that I kind of lost track of the process a little bit."

Talley is eager to stay involved in golf in the long-term and share what she's learned. Her husband Patrick will continue to caddie on the LPGA for Gabi Ruffels in 2025, and Talley will focus on motherhood.

Talley was 12 when she first attended an LPGA event in Nashville with her father and announced on the way home that she wanted to play on tour one day. The journey would take their family around the world.

"Yeah, I wish I would've won more trophies, but I think in 50 years, I'm not going to be thinking about the trophies," said Talley. "I'm going to be thinking about all the memories I've made with friends and my parents, especially."

Every morning before Talley went to school, her mother would tell her, "Be good. Be kind. Be smart. Make a difference today."

That mantra carried on in Talley's head and heart throughout her professional career. Talley never won on tour, but there's no doubt that she had countless interactions over the years that resulted in lifelong

LPGA fans.

The tour needs more Emma Talleys. She makes the game shine brighter.