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## Nagy headed for the turn as 49ers' career nears end

Charlotte senior takes game, optimism to the NCAA regional with pro days on the horizon.

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When Charlotte 49ers golfer Corey Nagy was asked to list 10 things he wants to accomplish in his life, they weren't all related to golf.

They do, however, provide a window into Nagy's perpetually upbeat nature.

He wants to meet Tiger Woods and he wants to beat Woods in a tournament. He wants to win the U.S. Open, win all four of golf's major championships and he wants to be the No. 1-ranked golfer in the world.

Nagy also wants to fly an airplane, travel the world, save a life and appear in a rap video.

"That would be cool," Nagy said of his video dream.

Nagy's teammates call him "Hollywood" because everywhere he goes, people seem to recognize him and he's too nice not to spend a few moments with them.

After four years that reset the 49ers' golf record book, Nagy is nearing the end of his college career. He and his teammates will begin play in the NCAA golf tournament Thursday at Yale Golf Club in New Haven, Conn., one of six 54-hole regional tournaments.



Charlotte 49er golfer Corey Nagy is nearing the end of his college career. JEFF SINER - jsiner@charlotteobserver.com

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The top five teams from each regional will advance to the national championship tournament next month near Chattanooga, Tenn. The 49ers are seeded eighth. The top individual at Yale whose team doesn't advance also will move onto the national championship at the Honors Course, where Nagy played his first college tournament.

It would be a nice way to bookend a career.

"I remember (former coach Jamie Green) saying he didn't think my game was ready four years ago, so I played as an individual, not part of the team," Nagy recalled. "I saw the signs then for the 2010 national championship and thought it would be cool to start and end at the same place."

Nagy, a Charlotte native who attended Vance High, graduated last weekend, having compiled a 4.0 GPA during his final semester.

It's one reason Nagy was a two-time winner of the Atlantic 10 golf student-athlete of the year and why he's one of six finalists for the Byron Nelson Award, given annually to a college senior who best combines golf and academics.

In addition to his academic achievements, Nagy has won three individual titles and has seven top-five finishes in 11 events this season. He made the eight-man Palmer Cup team that will match the top U.S. collegians against the best from Europe. He also won his second straight A-10 individual championship.

"As impressive as he is on the course, he's even more impressive off the course," said Andrew DiBitetto, Nagy's former teammate and now assistant to Charlotte coach Adam Pry.

In a sometimes blurry world, Nagy has maintained a sharp focus. He began playing golf with his family before he was a first-grader and hasn't wavered in his intention to make golf his career. Nagy attended the 2000 Masters, got Woods' autograph and decided then he wanted to pursue a professional career.

At some point this summer, after he plays in Northern Ireland with the Palmer Cup team, Nagy intends to turn pro. He's doing his homework, preparing for his move. It's a different environment.

Nagy has talked with former Charlotte teammate Trevor Murphy, who's chasing the same dream on golf's minor-league tours. He's also watched his contemporaries as they've moved from amateur to professional golf.

He paid close attention to Rickie Fowler when he was at Oklahoma State and has watched as his PGA Tour career has unfolded.

"Knowing he was probably going to make it big, I watched him when we played, something I don't usually do," Nagy said. "He is completely fearless and that mentality is huge."

"Wherever it goes, he can accept it. It's something Rory McIlroy has and something Rickie has. (Fowler) is doing it his way, and you have to know how to do your way."

Physically, Nagy has the necessary skills to be successful. He's tall at 6-foot-3, thin and long, even by college standards. Scott Lefevre, director of instruction at the Club at Longview and a 49ers' assistant, helped Nagy shorten his swing, bringing more accuracy without sacrificing power.

The two haven't worked on Nagy's swing in more than a year, choosing to focus on the short game. Nagy finished among the top five in total short game stats in Division I golf this season.

"I've been around a lot of great players and I've never seen anyone who hits it as long and straight as Corey does," Lefevre said. "I've seen people hit it longer and people who hit it straighter but not with that combination."

A psychology major, Nagy has been fascinated by the mental side of golf. He's worked closely with Dr. Louis Csoka at Apex Performance. In a game that can breed negativity, Nagy has leaned the other way.

"I'm a really positive person and any negativity, I try to stay away from," he said. "It's funny, when I was a kid and saw people throwing clubs or cursing, I just laughed about how ridiculous that is. You're out playing golf. You could be doing something else."

Nagy's life wish list is filled with things he wants to do.

He's already started.