

# Nagy approaches his comfort zone

By Ron Green Jr.

[rgreenjr@charlotteobserver.com](mailto:rgreenjr@charlotteobserver.com)

704.358.5118

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Ron Green Jr. writes about golf, football and other sports for The Charlotte Observer.

Blog: <http://green-side.blogspot.com/>



Nagy

After his freshman season with the Charlotte 49ers, Corey Nagy was frustrated because he felt he'd wasted a couple of chances to win golf tournaments.

It wasn't so much how he played but how he thought his way around the course that bothered Nagy.

It led Nagy to Dr. Louis Csoka, the man behind Apex Performance in Charlotte, and the difference, at least in Nagy's mind, is dramatic.

"I'm so much more calm and happier on the golf course now," said Nagy, who begins play in the U.S. Amateur championship Monday at Southern Hills Country Club in Tulsa, Okla.

"We talk all the time about making the situation smaller than it is. Golf is hard enough. Why make it harder?"

Csoka spent more than 20 years on the faculty at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, developing a program now used on nine Army bases to help train cadets.

Csoka's work has expanded to include a focus on corporate executives and, recently, golfers including Nagy and Charlotte-based PGA Tour pro Johnson Wagner.

Essentially, Csoka helps golfers – and others – put themselves closer to the so-called 'zone,' that place where athletes perform their best. It's done through a systematic training of the brain, basically exercising the mind the way you would your body.

"The zone is nothing but a very relaxed state of mind. You can train people to approach that. Not get in it but approach it," Csoka said.

Csoka can't help your golf swing, but he can help you feel better over each shot.

Nagy, a senior, had the physical skills to play college golf. He's tall and strong with enormous power. But he would get distracted watching leader boards or letting go of a bad shot.

It's the same thing many golfers deal with, but Nagy opted to be aggressive in changing his approach. Csoka's program has helped him.

This summer, Nagy has tied for fourth in the Sunnehanna Amateur, made the final 16 in the North & South Amateur and had a top-20 finish at the Western Amateur.

He goes to Southern Hills with a goal of being one of the 64 players of the 312 to survive the 36-hole stroke-play qualifier today and Tuesday to reach the match-play portion of the championship. Nagy made match-play last year at the U.S. Amateur at Pinehurst before losing his first match.

Csoka's program helps balance heart rate, breathing and brain waves to produce a more positive mindset. Through a series of exercises (they can be done with a laptop or in Csoka's south Charlotte office), it eventually becomes second nature.

He uses biofeedback and neurofeedback to show clients how close they're getting to the zone.

“With feedback, you're reinforcing what you need to do and you stick with. There's no magic,” Csoka said. “Once you understand what you need to do, it's a matter of practice.”

The program also helps golfers to “learn how to pay attention,” Csoka said.

Over the course of a 4 1/2-hour round, it's difficult to stay mentally engaged. Csoka has taught Nagy how to let his mind wander between shots then quickly focus when it's time to play.

“The less you're thinking, the more instinctual your actions will be,” Nagy said.

Nagy's instincts tell him he's onto something.

## **U.S. Amateur**

**WHEN:** Today through Sunday

**WHERE:** Southern Hills Country Club and Cedar Ridge Country Club in Tulsa, Okla.

**FORMAT:** The top 64 players in a 36-hole qualifier will advance to match play. The champion will receive exemptions into the 2010 U.S. Open, British Open and Masters (provided they remain an amateur).

**LOCAL PLAYERS IN THE FIELD:** Corey Nagy (Charlotte); Robert Burrow (Charlotte); Logan Harrell (Huntersville); Will Collins (Salisbury); Drew Weaver (High Point); Terrance Stewart (High Point); Robert Riesen (Pinehurst); Grayson Murray (Raleigh); Ben Kohles (Cary).