



## Crystal Balling The Future

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Normally when college students reach their senior year, they have a very good idea of what kind of career they want to pursue after they graduate.

But for former Hernando High and current Embry Riddle University golfer Tara Allen, the decision on what type of career she is going to go after once she graduates maybe something she decides after this next school year.

After placing second in the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics Tournament this year and getting second in this month's Florida Women's Amateur Golf Association Stroke Play Tournament, Allen has two paths in which she can go on.

The first is as an architect, something she has studied for in her three years at Embry Riddle. Or she can try to qualify for the LPGA Tour next December.

Allen shot 18-hole rounds of 73-70-71 to finish second in the state tournament and had a birdie putt on the last hole to force a playoff.

"I played in the Florida State Women's Gold Association Tour when I was in high school, so I wanted to play some tournaments over the summer and signed up to play," she said during a break from her summer intern job at 4Frontiers, an architectural company in New Port Richey.

With the results and improvement she has shown over the past year, Allen now has two possible careers to choose from.

"My main goal was to get my bachelor's degree and now that I've got that, I'm going to continue my education and get my master's degree," she said.

But Allen also wants to try and see just how good she can get her golf game and maybe sometime down the line, try and become a pro golfer.

"I've discussed this with my family," she said. "My swing coach (Rick Kelso) and my college golf coach (Maria Lopes), so I'm only going to be taking three courses this semester, and look into my options."

This summer, Allen is interning at 4Frontiers, a company that is designing the living quarters

for a planned trip to Mars.

"They had an overall concept and theory for it, but they haven't had someone come in and determine the building sizes. You have to be creative to come up with something that people want," Allen said about the design of the Mars living quarters.

"They will be a million miles from Earth after traveling for a long time and be confined to tight spaces," explained Allen about how designing the living quarters of the people who will live on Mars is very tough. "You want to make sure that they have a place to get together for psychological reasons. You don't want to have bedrooms that are so self-sufficient that they never have to come out of their rooms."

The future?

While that is a promising career, Allen also says that for her senior year at school, she wants to concentrate on golf and see how far she can go. When asked about becoming a pro golfer, the former Hernando High player said that when she went to Embry Riddle, being a pro golfer was far down on her list of things to do.

"Academics always have been a little more important than golf because getting my degree and graduating was the ticket to getting a job after college," she said.

Then last year Allen led the NAIA National Championship Tournament for three rounds before she finished second. Then in July, Allen shot a two-under-par 214 on the LPGA International Golf Club.

The reason that is important is not only is the golf club the home of Embry Riddle golf, but it also hosts the LPGA Final Qualifying Tournament. That is where golfers try to earn LPGA tour cards.

"If I want to become a pro, I want to see what my practice and work schedule would be like and see how my senior year goes," she said. "Before you go out and spend a bunch of money and learn the hard way you're not cut out for it, trying to go pro is definitely taking a chance."

The Embry Riddle senior also has problems with her back, something that almost caused her to withdraw from the state amateur.

"I went over to Daytona and tried to play a practice round, but my back hurt so much I couldn't finish the round," she said.

Instead she went to a chiropractor who told her she shouldn't play in the tournament. But Allen said she had never withdrawn from a tournament before and didn't want to start now.

"My sophomore year, I had an MRI and found out I have a bad back," she said. "I need to focus on strengthening my back."

The 5-foot-2 Allen also admits that turning pro is not a certainty. "There's no guarantee I would be successful in golf after college. I could turn pro after college and be unsuccessful, but it's really important to have a degree to fall back on."

## Allen 101

Allen graduated from Hernando High in 2005 after being named all-conference, all-district and all-region four straight years. She won the Gulf Coast Athletic Conference girls' tournament three times and was named the North Suncoast Junior Golf Association's Player of the Year in 2002 and 2005.

As a freshman at Embry Riddle University she was named ERU's Most Improved Player and was named to the NAIA Region XVI All-Tournament Team.

As a sophomore Allen was named NAIA 1st team All-American, 1st team Academic All-American, was named ERU's Most Valuable Player and finished ninth in the NAIA National Women's Golf Tournament.

This past season, she was again named to the NAIA 1st team All-American and Academic All-American Team, finished second in the NAIA National Championship after leading the tournament for three rounds; made the ERU Dean's list and finished second in the Florida's Women Amateur Stroke Play Championship. Her career match record through three years is 1213-185.

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