

Lexie's Love

The 14-year-old daughter of famous golfer Davis Love III excels in a sport of her own.

By Summer Best

If you're a golf buff, you're familiar with Davis Love III, one of the most consistently top-ranked golf pros in the world. Davis has a killer swing and a famous smile, and he's surprisingly approachable – always friendly and willing to sign autographs for his fans.

Lexie

But when Davis sets his clubs aside and steps away from the greens, he's a private family man. Comfortable as a competitor, he's also an excellent spectator, especially when it means watching his daughter, 14-year-old Lexie, ride at a horse show.

"My dad doesn't try to coach me on how I should ride, specifically," Lexie, "Lexie," says. "But he gives me little helping words of advice like, 'Don't get nervous. Keep your mind on what you're doing. Stay confident and you'll do fine.'"

Whatever Davis tells his daughter, it seems to be working. Though Lexie doesn't play much golf herself, she is known in the Paso Fino realm as a top brass youth rider, whose gifted riding skills have earned her premium awards, such as high-point sub-junior rider and high-point overall youth rider at the 2001 Paso Fino Grand National Horse Show.

"Lexie is such a talented rider, it's unbelievable," says Alei Ortiz, Lexie's trainer in Summerfield, Florida.

"Nothing rattles her. She never looks nervous. And she's a great sport because whether she wins or loses, she's fine with it."

Lexie, of Sea Island, Georgia, has a penchant for Paso Fino show horses – the proud, flashy and refined breed with a rich history as the preferred mount of the Spanish Conquistadors. The high school freshman loves Pasos for various reasons, but mostly because of their characteristic gait.

"They're so smooth, it just boggles your mind," she says.

Lexie's show horses stay in training with Edgar and Alei Ortiz of United Paso Fino Show Horses in Summerfield, but she keeps a few additional horses at her home in Sea Island, where the family maintains a seven-stall barn. Davis is Lexie's main chauffeur, shuttling her back and forth between Florida and Georgia and to horse shows.

Lexie began riding several years back with Sheila and Bob Spence of

Fairway Farms in Morriston, Florida, after Davis and Bob became partners on a golf course architecture business.

In the future, Lexie plans to ride hunter-jumpers, but she can't say for sure which career path she'll choose after high school and college.

"I don't know if I'll be involved with horses professionally, but I know I'll always have them," she says. "I might even have a breeding operation."

In the meantime, the up-and-coming megastar has two stunning Paso Fino colts to watch for. One, *Nativo*, which is Spanish for "The Native," is a hot one, according to Lexie and her trainer. And you'll hear more about the other one, too, which is appropriately named *Golfisto* for "The Golfer."

So next time you see the human golfer, Davis Love III, on television, putting a great score on the charts, remember there's another top competitor in the family. And if you're smart, next time you see her, you'll be asking for her autograph.