

GOLF

# Question finally answered: LPGA is back in Midstate

By **JOE BIDDLE**  
*Sports Writer*

**FRANKLIN**—LPGA Commissioner Ty Votaw heard it everywhere he turned. Every conversation he had with a player.

Every time he ran into one of them at a tournament.

"Are we going back to Nashville?" was the question they all asked.

Thirty-eight days ago, Votaw had no answer.

Yesterday, he stepped to the podium and announced the Electrolux USA Championship — hosted by Vince Gill and Amy Grant. While it's not

## ► Golf report on 11C

Nashville, they did get Franklin, a vibrant community south of Music City.

Votaw and LPGA Deputy Commissioner Jim Webb had been trying to sell Nashville since the day they learned the Sara Lee Corp. was pulling its title sponsorship of the Sara Lee Classic after 12 years at Hermitage Golf Course.

Time was of the essence. The LPGA had usually released its tournament schedule for next year by now.

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# LPGA: Deal was put together fast

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It was 38 days ago that Webb was sitting on a golf cart with Raycom Sports Executive Vice President Ken Haines at the AFLAC tour stop in Mobile, Ala.

Raycom Sports already sponsored two LPGA tournaments, but Haines mentioned his company wanted to expand its role.

"Have I got a place for you," Webb said he told Haines.

Haines flew to Nashville to have lunch with tournament director Clyde Russell and Vince Gill.

He thought they would meet at some fancy, wine-and-cheese restaurant.

"I had on a suit and tie, looking for something really nice and they took me to some shopping center," Haines joked yesterday.

It was the City Cafe, a meat-and-three in Brentwood.

"I could tell this was going to be a down-home tournament," Haines said.

Raycom Sports located Electrolux, which recently became the official floor care company of the LPGA. It signed on as the title sponsor.

"It was a lot of people pulling together to

## Electrolux USA Championship

► **What:** 72-hole LPGA tournament.

► **When:** May 8-14.

► **Where:** Golf Club of Tennessee (Kingston Springs) and Legends Club (Franklin).

► **Purse:** \$800,000 in 2000, \$900,000 in 2001, \$1 million in 2002.

► **TV:** CBS.

## SCHEDULE

► **May 8:** The Vinny, Golf Club.

► **May 9:** LPGA pro-am, Legends Club.

► **May 10:** Vince Gill-Amy Grant pro-am, Golf Club.

► **May 11-14:** Electrolux USA Championship, Legends Club.

make it happen in a short period of time," said Mike Gundy, vice president of marketing for Electrolux.

"The last several months, we thought it was too late, that we weren't going to get it to happen," Gill said.

"Hindsight is always 20-20, but I wished we had talked to Raycom three months ago," Votaw said. "To be completely frank, I don't think anyone completely foreclosed on Nashville. We pretty much willed it to happen." ■

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THE TENNESSEAN

# SPORTS

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 1999