

## **AT&T to take over as title sponsor in Dallas**

The Associated Press

The Byron Nelson Championship is getting a new title sponsor, which is sure to raise questions about Tiger Woods' event.

The PGA Tour said Friday that AT&T Inc. would take over as title sponsor of the Nelson in 2015, the year after the title contract of Hewlett-Packard Co. expires. AT&T recently moved its headquarters to Dallas.

AT&T is one of the most prominent sponsors in golf. Along with being a main corporate sponsor at the Masters, the company is the title sponsor on the PGA Tour at the Pebble Beach National Pro-Am and the AT&T National at Congressional, which is run by the Tiger Woods Foundation. Its contract with Woods' foundation expires in 2014, the year before it takes over in Dallas.

Greg McLaughlin, president of the Tiger Woods Foundation, was optimistic AT&T would stay as a sponsor after 2014.

"They've been a great partner of ours," McLaughlin said from the World Challenge in Thousand Oaks, Calif. "Their sponsorship began in '07, so this is an eight-year contract, which is phenomenal in this day and age. We're hopeful they're going to want to continue with the event. I know they like D.C., and they like the event."

Ron Spears, senior executive vice president of AT&T, said in a release that the company was excited to be the sponsor of the Nelson for 2015 and 2016, which suggested only a two-year deal.

"We hope the tournament will be the AT&T Byron Nelson Championship for many years into the future," Spears said.

Spears is on the board of directors for the Tiger Woods Foundation.

AT&T became sponsor of Woods' new tournament at Congressional in 2007, and it had a personal endorsement deal with Woods starting in 2009, with its logo on the bag. AT&T ended that endorsement soon after Woods was caught having multiple affairs at the end of 2009, though the company has remained supportive of the tournament.

The tournament has raised \$14 million since it began in 2007, which has helped support two Tiger Woods Learning Center campuses in the Washington area.

McLaughlin said he would meet with AT&T and "figure out strategically what they want to do."

"We think it's a great event," he said. "I hope they decide to stay with it."

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Published on Electronic Component News (<http://www.ecnmag.com>)

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This is only the third change in title sponsor for the Byron Nelson Championship, but the fifth corporate name in the title. GTE was the first sponsor in 1988, changing in 2001 when it was acquired by Verizon. EDS became a new sponsor in 2003, and then that company was acquired by HP before the 2009 tournament.

The Nelson will be played May 16-19 next year, one week after The Players Championship.

It has been played at the TPC Four Seasons Resort Las Colinas in Irving since 1983. There was no mention Friday where it would be played when AT&T takes over in 2015.

**Source URL (retrieved on 12/24/2014 - 10:45pm):**

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