

THE BATTALION

Monday, February 10, 2003

Love wins at Pebble Beach

By Greg Beacham
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

PEBBLE BEACH, Calif. — Davis Love III was right: Staying ahead is even tougher than coming from behind at the Pebble Beach National Pro-Am.

Fortunately for Love, he's capable of doing both.

Love surrendered a three-stroke lead over Tom Lehman with six holes to play on Sunday, but made a short birdie putt on the 18th hole for a one-stroke victory — his first win since his first Pebble Beach triumph in 2001.

On the fourth straight day of perfect weather on the Monterey Peninsula, two veterans, whose careers have lagged recently, battled down the stretch of an entertaining final round in the popular pro-am.

Love, who made up a seven-stroke deficit to win at Pebble Beach in 2001, took advantage of the conditions with an extraordinary string of birdies, but Lehman caught him down the stretch, setting up a dramatic finish.

After beginning the day with a two-stroke lead, Love made six birdies in the eight holes around the turn. Lehman charged back with three straight birdies on the back nine and another on the 17th, but Love made a 4-foot birdie putt on the 18th — moments after Lehman missed a similar putt.

"A win for me after two years of coming close and not being 100 percent physically, that's great for me," said Love, who got his 15th PGA Tour victory with a final-round 68 to finish at 14-

under 274 for the tournament. "It feels like a great start."

Love thrust his hands into the air shortly after the last shot. His share of the \$5 million purse was \$900,000 — the biggest paycheck in 18 years on tour for the third-leading money winner in PGA history.

Before his victory at Pebble Beach in 2001, Love had gone 62 events and 34 months between victories. This time, he had been without a win in 44 official events over 24 months while playing a slightly reduced schedule because of neck and back problems.

"A win for me after two years of coming close...that's great for me..."

— Davis Love III
PGA Tour Professional

Lehman finished with a 5-under 67 to go 13-under for the tournament. It was his best finish since the 2001 Sony Open in Hawaii — and a thrilling result for Lehman, whose wife, Melissa, is nearly ready to deliver their fourth child. He doesn't plan to go back East with the tour following the West Coast swing.

Tim Herron — who shot a final-round 66 — and Mike Weir finished third at 276, two strokes behind Love. Weir, off to the best start of his career, won last week's Bob Hope Classic and held the lead over playing partner Love on the front nine.

Love said the win was even tougher than his triumph in 2001, when he made up seven strokes against Weir, Phil Mickelson and the rest of the field. Maybe that's because the conditions were gorgeous — and decidedly out of the ordinary at the normally soggy course.

Love fell behind Weir with two early bogeys. He made up the deficit with a phenomenal string of birdies — including the par-3 12th, where Love's tee shot took a serendipitous bounce off a greenside photographer to within feet of the cup.

Love led by three strokes after another birdie on the 13th, but Lehman kept the same steady pace he maintained through all four days — and then made his move with three straight birdies midway through the back nine.

Lehman hit an 18-footer for a dramatic birdie on the par-3 17th hole to go 13-under — just moments before Love, playing cautiously for the first time all day, hit into the sand and the rough before missing a short downhill putt for bogey on the 16th, pulling him back into a tie with Lehman.

After Love saved par on the 17th with a tricky 8-foot putt that hung on the lip for an instant, Lehman made an outstanding chip from the rough around the famous 18th green. But Lehman missed the birdie attempt with his long putter, leaving the door open for Love's outstanding iron shot to the green and a two-putt finish.

Mickelson shot an 80 on Sunday to finish at 296 — dead last among those who made the cut.

Olympic Committee seeks reform

By Nancy Armour
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CHICAGO — The U.S. Olympic Committee is getting serious about cleaning up its mess.

After several months of scandals that splintered the organization and took public attention away from athletes, the USOC's executive committee announced Sunday it has formed a task force to create a blueprint for major reform.

The governance and ethics review task force will examine virtually every part of the USOC for ways to streamline the organization and improve its operation. Its recommendations are due before the USOC's April board meeting.

"The task force has a broad mandate and a lot of work to do," said Bill Stapleton, who will chair the task force with fellow vice president Frank Marshall.

"We have a unique chance in the history of our organization to create real change that we have needed to make for a very long time."

And frankly, the USOC doesn't have much choice. Congress has the authority to revoke the USOC's charter, and it has very little patience with the group these days. One senator, Ben Nighthorse Campbell, even said chief executive officer Lloyd Ward should resign because of his role in the recent scandals.

A second Congressional hearing is scheduled for Thursday, and senators have asked witnesses for suggestions on fixing the USOC's unwieldy operating structure.

"This gives us the opportunity to show Congress we're stepping up to the plate as far as our own governance, and are willing to take corrective action," said Jim McCarthy, a member of the USOC's executive committee.

"We've had reports with these suggestions before," he added. "The advantage now is we're getting a big push."

Political intrigue and power struggles between volunteers and paid staffers are nothing new to the USOC. But the recent turmoil has been bad — even by USOC standards.

Since Ward was accused in December of trying to steer Olympic business to his brother's company, five USOC members have quit, president Marty Mankamyer resigned and the organization's leaders

have been called before Congress.

The group has now had three presidents in the last 11 months, and three CEOs since 2000.

"The USOC needs to take decisive action to get our house in order," interim president Bill Martin said. "... The time for action, change and improvement is now."

Martin said he would name the rest of the reform task force early this week. The group will then focus on six areas: ethical behavior; governance and organizational structure; maintenance of sensitive, confidential and proprietary information; communications policies; openness, transparency and disclosure; and fundraising efficiency.

One of the task force's main focuses will be on the USOC's ethics process, which has been under fire for the way conflict-of-interest allegations against Ward were handled. The executive committee gave Ward a mild reprimand Jan. 13, prompting five USOC members — including ethics compliance officer Pat Rodgers — to resign in protest.

The USOC's compensation committee ruled Ward had committed two ethical violations, and he was stripped of his \$184,800 bonus Saturday.

"There are no specific recommendations yet, but we need to have an ethics process that is in line with the best practices of Fortune 100 companies," Stapleton said. "I don't think there's any model that won't be reviewed or any idea that won't be considered."

The size of the USOC's board of directors will also be scrutinized. The board currently has 123 members, and almost everyone agrees it's too big.

But where can it be trimmed?

"In some form, we have to be a big tent, and have to provide an opportunity for all amateur organizations to have a voice," Martin said. "We don't know how we're going to do it."

But they're determined to try.

"I don't think you change the world over the weekend. I think that it is a continuum," Ward said. "I think ultimately what blunts any criticism is not what occurs in a meeting, but what occurs in performance."

"The story will be written going forward, and it won't be one that has no history," he added. "But I think it will be one now where this weekend will create a little bit of air cover and a little bit of a runway so that we can do some good, and I'm excited about that."

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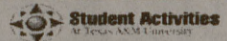
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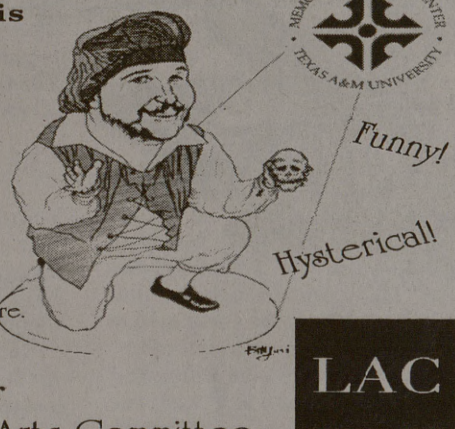
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