



*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*  
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## **PGA TOUR and Nationwide Tour Players Anticipate ‘Great Golf’ During Knoxville’s Preeminent Golf Tournament**

*– News Sentinel Open presented by Pilot Will Be Played August 25-28 –*

Knoxville, TN (July 11, 2011) – PGA TOUR professionals Scott Stallings, Hunter Haas and Garrett Willis, along with current Nationwide Tour golfers Kyle Thompson, Brent Delahoussaye and Keith Nolan, and NGA/Hooter’s Tour player David Holmes shared memories of exciting and well-played past Knoxville tournaments during this year’s Service Provider Group sponsored media day held at Ruth’s Chris Steak House.

The tournament will be played the week of August 22-28 at Fox Den Country Club.

Stallings is taking a scheduled week off after competing in this past weekend’s John Deere Classic where he finished tied for 22<sup>nd</sup> at 11-under par. His 273 total earned him \$39,487.50 and moved him into 88<sup>th</sup> on the FedEx Cup points standings list. Stallings is happy to be in Knoxville to share his thoughts about his hometown Nationwide Tour event.

"I love playing in this tournament," he said. "Not only do I hear and see many supporters when I play here, I also find that I seem to always play well here, which means a lot to me. In fact I’ve noticed that this Nationwide Tour stop always seems to bring out the best in all of us who’re out here grinding it out from week to week."

Stallings shot an 8-under par 280 during last year’s News Sentinel Open, finishing tied for 42<sup>nd</sup>. Last year was the Oak Ridge High School alum’s first full season as a Nationwide Tour professional. 2010’s Knoxville performance started a streak that led to seven-of-nine Nationwide Tour cuts made. He then went on to secure his PGA TOUR card during Q-School this past December. He said his confidence began to swell after playing well in front of family and friends at Fox Den Country Club.

"I started to feel like I was ready for the challenges of the PGA TOUR after playing here in Knoxville last August," Stallings added. "There’s a lot to be said about support and encouragement and I definitely felt that I received so much of it here. It helped me put together a nice stretch run at the end of last season."

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Since securing his PGA TOUR card, Stallings has totaled an impressive \$693,034 on tour this season. The year's highlight to this point came during the Transitions Championship in Palm Harbor, FL. Stallings vaulted into contention with a 5-under 66 in the third round, which featured a hole-in-one on the 8<sup>th</sup> hole (6-iron, 214 yards). He finished alone in third place earning a check for \$374,000. Since the Transitions, Stallings has finished tied for 11<sup>th</sup> at the Valero Texas Open, tied for 20<sup>th</sup> at The Memorial presented by Nationwide Insurance, tied for 25<sup>th</sup> at the FedEx St. Jude Classic, and tied for 22<sup>nd</sup> this past weekend at the John Deere Classic.

Two-time Knoxville Champion Hunter Haas (2004, 2006) knows what it takes to win at challenging Fox Den Country Club. Rounds of 67-66-67-69 led to a 19-under-par 269, five-stroke victory there in 2006. He outlasted Shane Bertsch and Justin Bolli in 2004, winning on the first playoff hole. Both wins earned him checks worth \$85,500 each. Haas is one of only six players to win the same Nationwide Tour event twice.

"I've had great success here in Knoxville," Haas said. "I always feel comfortable playing the course at Fox Den and expect not only myself but all of us to come out and play great. In fact I hear there've been challenging improvements to the course. Whenever there are challenging course upgrades, we're all for it."

Haas played his way onto the PGA TOUR this year after finishing 3<sup>rd</sup> on the 2010 Nationwide Tour's money list. His late season run included five top-five finishes with titles at the Albertsons Boise Open presented by Kraft and the Price Cutter Charity Championship Presented by Dr. Pepper.

The Knoxville News Sentinel is the 2011 title sponsor of one of the Nationwide Tour's four original events that is still on the schedule. Knoxville is joined by Boise, Idaho, Springfield, Mo. and Wichita, Kan. in having hosted a Nationwide Tour event every year since 1990. Fox Den Country Club has been the host venue in Knoxville every year since 1999.

The Knoxville News Sentinel has entered into a partnership with Pilot to present the News Sentinel Open. The official name of the 2011 tournament will be the "News Sentinel Open presented by Pilot."

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Last year the proceeds from every ticket sold to the public were donated directly to local nonprofit organizations. The News Sentinel Open generated more than \$56,000 in 2010, which benefited the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Tennessee Valley, News Sentinel Empty Stocking Fund, The First Tee, University of Tennessee Partners in Sports and Sports Management Scholarship in honor of Buck Jones, Shriners Kerbel Temple, East Tennessee Children's Hospital, UT Medical Center, Ronald McDonald House of Knoxville, Concord United Methodist Men and the Tennessee Society of the Sons of the American Revolution.

The Nationwide Tour has been a fixture on the Knoxville sports scene, welcoming the future stars of the PGA TOUR to East Tennessee every year since the tour's inception in 1990. Past champions of the event who have gone on to capture PGA TOUR titles are Jeff Maggert (1990), Brian Henninger (1992), Tom Scherrer (1995), J.J. Henry (2000), Heath Slocum (2001), Vaughn Taylor (2003) and Chez Reavie (2007).

Last year's News Sentinel Open was won by Knoxville-born Chris Kirk who finished at 20-under par (268), two shots ahead of Travis Bertoni. The win was Kirk's second of the season (Fort Smith Classic).

#### **ABOUT THE KNOXVILLE NEWS SENTINEL**

Founded in 1886, the Knoxville News Sentinel is an award-winning daily newspaper in Knoxville, Tennessee. The newspaper is owned by E.W. Scripps Company. The E.W. Scripps Company is a diverse media enterprise with interests in television stations, newspapers, local news and information Web sites, and syndication of news features and comics. For a full listing of Scripps media companies and their associated Web sites, visit <http://www.scripps.com/>.

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## ABOUT THE NATIONWIDE TOUR

Founded (1990), owned and operated by the PGA TOUR, the Nationwide Tour identifies those players who are ready to compete and win on golf's biggest stage. As the official proving ground of the PGA TOUR, two out of three PGA TOUR members are Nationwide Tour alumni. Tour alumni have won 304 PGA TOUR titles, including 13 majors and four PLAYERS Championships. Twenty-five PGA TOUR cards will be at stake over the course of 26 events in 2011. Nationwide Insurance is the Tour's umbrella sponsor through 2012. The PGA TOUR, through the efforts of its three tours and their tournaments, sponsors, players and volunteers, supports over 2,000 local charities and has surpassed \$1.6 billion in charitable giving. To learn more about the PGA TOUR and Nationwide Tour and to follow the season-long quest for a PGA TOUR card, visit [PGATOUR.COM](http://PGATOUR.COM), Twitter and Facebook.

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Headquartered in Knoxville, Tenn., Pilot operates 40 convenience stores in Tennessee. For more information about Pilot, visit <http://www.pilotcorp.com/>.

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