

Coaches vs. Cancer 2009 Champion Award Honors Michigan State Basketball Coach Tom Izzo

NCAA Final Four Coach Recognized For Work to Support American Cancer Society

Atlanta 2009/04/03 -Michigan State basketball coach Tom Izzo, whose Spartans have advanced to the 2009 NCAA Final Four, is the recipient of the Coaches vs. Cancer Champion Award, presented annually to a college coach who has been vigorously engaged in the program's fundraising, education and promotional initiatives and has demonstrated leadership in the fight to save lives from cancer.

Coaches vs. Cancer is a collaboration between the American Cancer Society and the National Association of Basketball Coaches (NABC) that empowers coaches, their teams and communities to join the fight against cancer.

Izzo will receive the Champion Award at the 2009 NABC Guardians of the Game Awards Show on Sunday, April 5 in Detroit – site of this year's Final Four.

Izzo and his wife, Lupe, are actively involved with Coaches vs. Cancer and have raised significant funds to support the American Cancer Society's efforts to save lives. Their work has been instrumental in promoting cancer awareness throughout Michigan.

They have engaged the participation of worksites and MSU basketball fans across the state in a "Wear Your Sneakers to Work Day" fundraising effort to coincide with Coaches vs. Cancer's annual Suits and Sneakers awareness weekend – a nationwide event in which coaches wear sneakers with their game attire to raise awareness about the importance nutrition and physical activity play in reducing personal cancer risk.

In early May, the Izzos will perform in a cabaret-style show of song, dance and inspiration at Michigan State's Wharton Center for Performing Arts. Izzo Goes to Broadway, celebrating the skill of athletics and the passion of the arts, will benefit the American Cancer Society.

"The American Cancer Society, in conjunction with the NABC, is pleased to recognize Coach Izzo for his outstanding work with Coaches vs. Cancer. He is a true leader for the Spartans and for the Coaches vs. Cancer team, and he and his wife demonstrate their commitment to the Society's lifesaving work with creativity and dedication every chance they get. Coach Izzo is a wonderful ally as we work together to save lives by helping people stay well, helping people get well, finding cures and fighting back," said Van Velsor Wolf, 2008-09 volunteer chair, American Cancer Society National Board of Directors.

Izzo is concluding his 14th year at the Michigan State helm and his 26th as a member of the Spartan coaching staff, where he has earned four national coach of the year citations. His 2000 MSU team claimed the NCAA crown, and with the '09 Spartans having advanced to the Final Four, this will be Izzo's fifth team to reach college basketball's national championship semifinals.

The Champion Award was instituted in 1996, with former Missouri coach Norm Stewart receiving the inaugural citation. Since that time, the award has honored head coaches Jim Boeheim (Syracuse); Denny Crum (Louisville); Roy Williams (then at Kansas and now at North Carolina); Riley Wallace (Hawaii); Fran Dunphy (then at Pennsylvania and now at Temple); Gary Williams (Maryland); Mark Few (Gonzaga); Mike Brey (Notre Dame); Bruce Weber (Illinois); and Jim Calhoun (Connecticut).

Several other national events throughout the year continue to highlight the productive work of Coaches vs. Cancer, including **Fight Cancer In Style** – an event for coaches' wives during the upcoming Final Four weekend (April 4-6); the **Coaches vs. Cancer Golf Invitational**, June 7-8 at

the Raleigh (N.C.) Country Club; and the **Coaches vs. Cancer Classic** (16-team, nationwide basketball tournament) in November.

The American Cancer Society is dedicated to eliminating cancer as a major health problem by saving lives, diminishing suffering and preventing cancer through research, education, advocacy and service. Founded in 1913 and with national headquarters in Atlanta, the Society has 13 regional Divisions and local offices in 3,400 communities, involving millions of volunteers across the United States. For more information anytime, call toll free, 1-800-ACS-2345 or visit www.cancer.org.

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