Coaches vs. Cancer Suits and Sneakers Awareness Weekend Set for Jan. 28-30, 2011

Basketball Coaches from Coast to Coast Address the Importance of Exercising and Eating Right in the Fight against Cancer

ATLANTA – Jan. 13, 2011 – During Coaches vs. Cancer® Suits and Sneakers awareness weekend, Jan. 28-30, basketball coaches nationwide will wear sneakers with their suits to demonstrate their support for the American Cancer Society and its vision of a world with less cancer and more birthdays. Basketball fans are encouraged to also wear sneakers to games that weekend to show their support.

Coaches vs. Cancer is a collaborative initiative of the American Cancer Society and the National Association of Basketball Coaches (NABC) that empowers coaches, their teams and local communities to make a difference in the fight against cancer.

By lacing up sneakers with their suits on the event's seventh annual awareness weekend, college and high school basketball coaches across the country will spotlight the fact that while cancer remains a major health concern, everyone can take daily steps to reduce their risk of the disease. For those who do not smoke, weight control, exercise and a healthy diet are the best ways to improve health and reduce cancer risk. In the U.S., overweight and obesity contribute to 14-to-20 percent of all cancer-related deaths.

Increasing evidence also points to being overweight as raising the risk for cancer recurrence and decreasing the likelihood of survival for many cancers. The prevalence of obesity in the United States more than doubled between 1976-80 and 2003-04, and although rates appear to have stabilized by 2005-06, more than one third of U.S. adults – more than 72 million people – are obese. Overweight and obesity are of particular concern in minority populations, with higher rates of both reported for Hispanic men and women and for African American women, than for non-Hispanic white adults.

“Coaches vs. Cancer is a vital link between the basketball community and the American Cancer Society’s commitment to saving lives by helping people stay well and get well, by finding cures and by fighting back against a disease which has taken too much,” said Stephen L. Swanson, 2010-11 national volunteer chair, American Cancer Society Board of Directors. “Like so many of us, these coaches have a personal connection to cancer. And, because of their visibility in their communities and nationwide, they also have a unique and invaluable opportunity to reach people with important information about how they can reduce their risk of cancer, particularly by maintaining a healthy weight and by being physically active.”

"We may be battling on the court night in and night out, but as coaches, we’re on the same team when it comes to reminding our basketball community and our fans about taking an active role in reducing our risk of cancer and in fighting back on behalf of those who face a cancer diagnosis,” said Lon Kruger, UNLV head coach and Coaches

vs. Cancer Council member. “Suits and Sneakers awareness weekend is all about challenging us all to get involved in the fight for every birthday threatened by cancer in every community.”

In addition to Kruger, among active Coaches vs. Cancer Coaches Council members are: **Jim Boeheim** (Syracuse); **Mike Brey** (Notre Dame); **Jim Calhoun** (Connecticut); **Bobby Cremins** (College of Charleston); **Ed DeChellis** (Penn State); **Fran Dunphy** (Temple); **Mark Few** (Gonzaga); **Jeff Gamber** (York College); **Mike Krzyzewski** (Duke); **Phil Martelli** (Saint Joseph’s); **Oliver Purnell** (DePaul); **Orlando “Tubby” Smith** (Minnesota); **Bruce Weber** (Illinois); **Gary Williams** (Maryland), chair; and **Roy Williams** (North Carolina).

The Coaches vs. Cancer Council brings together NABC members, American Cancer Society volunteers and business leaders from across the country to explore new and innovative ways to fund the fight against cancer and send the powerful message that the fight can be won.

Thanks to the dedicated efforts of college and high school coaches and fans throughout the nation, Coaches vs. Cancer participants have raised more than $60 million since 1993 to help the American Cancer Society fund groundbreaking cancer research, provide up-to-date cancer information and education, advocate for public health policies that benefit communities, and deliver services that improve the quality of life for patients and their families. Additional information is available at coachesvscancer.org.

Several events throughout 2011 will continue to highlight the productive work of Coaches vs. Cancer, including **Fight Cancer In Style** – an event for coaches’ wives during NCAA Final Four weekend, April 2-4 in Houston; the annual **Coaches vs. Cancer Golf Invitational**, June 12-13 at The Ocean Course, Kiawah Island (S.C.) Resort; and the annual **2K Sports Classic benefitting Coaches vs. Cancer** (12-team nationwide basketball tournament) in November.

The American Cancer Society combines an unyielding passion with nearly a century of experience to save lives and end suffering from cancer. As a global grassroots force of more than three million volunteers, we fight for every birthday threatened by every cancer in every community. We save lives by helping people stay well by preventing cancer or detecting it early; by helping people get well by being there for them during and after a cancer diagnosis; by finding cures through investment in groundbreaking discovery; and by fighting back by rallying lawmakers to pass laws to defeat cancer and by rallying communities worldwide to join the fight. As the nation’s largest non-governmental investor in cancer research, contributing more than $3.5 billion, we turn what we know about cancer into what we do. As a result, more than 11 million people in America who have had cancer and countless more who have avoided it will be celebrating birthdays this year. To learn more about us or to get help, call us anytime, day or night, at 1-800-227-2345 or visit cancer.org.

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