

Coaches vs. Cancer “Suits and Sneakers Awareness Weekend” Set for Jan. 30 - Feb. 1, 2009

Basketball Coaches Nationwide Address the Importance of Exercising and Eating Right in the Fight against Cancer

Atlanta 2009/01/16 -Coaches vs. Cancer “Suits and Sneakers Awareness Weekend,” a collaborative initiative of the National Association of Basketball Coaches (NABC) and the American Cancer Society (the Society), is slated for the weekend of Jan. 30 - Feb. 1, 2009. Participating NABC-member coaches will wear sneakers instead of dress shoes with their usual game attire during weekend games to demonstrate their support for the Society and the fight against cancer. As well, fans are encouraged to wear sneakers to games to demonstrate their support.

By lacing up sneakers with their suits, participating coaches nationwide 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. Obesity has been shown to increase the risk for many forms of cancer, including breast, prostate, and colon cancers and may account for 20 percent of cancer deaths in women and 14 percent in men.

However, according to a 2006 survey, only eight percent of people understand that excess weight is so strongly linked to cancer risk, while more than 80 percent know of the link between overweight and heart disease. 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.

“The Coaches vs. Cancer program is a vital, year-round link between the Society and the NABC that empowers basketball coaches, their teams and communities to join the fight against cancer. The program draws from the personal experiences, community leadership, and the professional excellence of coaches nationwide to increase public awareness of the Society’s mission to save lives and prevent cancer, and to raise funds to fight the disease on a variety of fronts,” said Jim Satalin, director, Coaches vs. Cancer.

“‘Suits and Sneakers Awareness Weekend’ provides a tremendous opportunity for college basketball coaches nationwide to demonstrate their support for the American Cancer Society’s work to fight the disease and save lives, said Maryland coach **Gary Williams**, 2008-09 chair of the Coaches vs. Cancer Council. “The money raised through ‘Suits and Sneakers’ will fund vital research and support numerous services for cancer patients, their families and caregivers.”

In addition to Williams, who won an NCAA Championship in 2002, among other active Coaches vs. Cancer participants are some of nation’s top coaches – five others of whom have also won NCAA titles (dates noted), including **Mike Krzyzewski** (Duke, 1991, '92, 2001); **Jim Calhoun** (Connecticut, '99, '04); **Jim Boeheim** (Syracuse, '03); **Roy Williams** (North Carolina, '05); **Tubby Smith** (Minnesota, but won title at Kentucky, '98); **Mike Brey** (Notre Dame); **Mark Few** (Gonzaga); **Phil Martelli** (Saint Joseph's); **Fran Dunphy** (Temple); and **Mark Gottfried** (Alabama).

Thanks to the dedicated efforts of college and high school coaches across the country, Coaches vs. Cancer participants have raised nearly \$45 million since 1993 to help the 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 www.cancer.org/coaches.

Several events throughout the year 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 4-6 in Detroit; the annual **Coaches vs. Cancer Golf Invitational**, June 7-8 at the Raleigh (N.C.) Country Club; and the annual **2K Sports Classic benefitting Coaches vs. Cancer** (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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