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Dick Vitale to be honored as Sports Person of the Year at Nov. 11th Diamonds on the Diamond Fundraising Gala

SARASOTA, Fla., Oct. 12, 2006...Dick Vitale, college basketball's top analyst and ambassador, and "Voice of Sarasota," has been selected as the Sarasota Area Sports Authority's (SASA) 2006 Sports Person of the Year, it was announced today.

Vitale, a longtime Sarasota resident, will be honored at the upcoming SASA Diamonds on the Diamond fundraising event, Nov. 11, 2006 at Ed Smith Stadium.

From coaching championship teams at the high school, collegiate and professional levels, including serving as head coach of the NBA's Detroit Pistons from 1978-79, Vitale's popularity spans far and wide. His revered career includes more than 25 years with ESPN where he has served as analyst, commentator and regular contributor to ESPN The Magazine, ESPN.com, ESPN Radio and as a college basketball analyst for ABC Sports since 1988, for whom he has covered the NBA Finals and 1992 Summer Olympics.

His corporate and philanthropic contributions as a highly requested speaker and supporter of Boys & Girls Club of Sarasota and a proud member of the Jimmy V Foundation for Cancer Research, an organization and cause he has devoted countless hours to help raise funds, are indicative of the genuine love of both sport and people that Vitale evokes be it work, play or pure personal passion. In addition, he's been selected for seven Halls of Fame, including The University of Detroit Hall of Fame, The National Italian Hall of Fame, and The Florida Sports Hall of Fame.

"Dick's 'voice' has made him both a national and local figurehead and his work in and outside the world of sports and basketball embody the pure essence of sportsmanship," said Nicole Evans, Board President for SASA. "Dick is a role model for everyone, be it youth, aspiring athletes or the public as a whole," Evans added.

DIAMONDS ON THE DIAMOND GALA

Vitale, along with the finalists for the top male and female High School Scholar Athletes of the Year, will be honored at the 1st Annual SASA Gala, "Diamonds on the Diamond," at Ed Smith Stadium on Sat., Nov. 11, 2006. The "dress up and sneakers" gala is a fundraising event to benefit the Sarasota Area Sports Authority, which will use the funds to provide scholarship and grant support to area youth and sports programs.

Tickets are \$100 per person and include dinner, entertainment, dancing, cocktails, silent auction and one chance at a drawing for a high-value diamond, courtesy of Hannoush Jewelers of Sarasota. New Balance Sarasota Awards will also be given out to guests for most creative sneakers and additional diamond drawing chances will be available for \$25 each or 5 for \$100.

For more information and tickets, visit www.sarasotasports.org or call 941-350-3464. For more information on Dick Vitale and his impressive career and honors, visit www.dickvitaleonline.com.

ABOUT SASA

The Sarasota Area Sports Authority is a non-profit organization whose mission is to support area sports events and programs, including providing scholarship opportunities to high school athletes and financially needy youth.

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