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-From the SPORTS LANE-

Unprecedented Alliance of Professional Sports Leagues and Associations, Media Networks, Educators and Athletes Ask America to "RISE Together" to End Racism*

RISE Aims to Achieve Lasting Impact on Race Relations Through Sports

NEW YORK, Oct. 16, 2015 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- Today, the nonprofit organization Ross Initiative in Sports for Equality (RISE), launched a nationwide campaign to harness the unifying power of sport to advance race relations. Founded by Stephen M. Ross, majority owner of the Miami Dolphins and chairman and founder of Related Companies, RISE is supported by an unprecedented alliance across the sports community, including: Major League Baseball (MLB), the National Basketball Association (NBA), the National Football League (NFL), the National Hockey League (NHL), the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), Major League Soccer (MLS), the Association of Volleyball Professionals (AVP), the Professional Golfers' Association (PGA) of America, USA Track and Field (USATF) and the United States Tennis Association (USTA) as well as media networks, experts, educators and partner organizations. RISE will use sports as a vehicle to promote understanding, respect and equality.

Major professional athletes have pledged their support to RISE including professional basketball players Stephen Curry, Draymond Green and LeBron James as well as professional football players Antonio Brown, Larry Fitzgerald, Greg Jennings, Ryan Tannehill, Justin Tuck and DeMarcus Ware. Many of these athletes are also featured in a series of RISE public service announcements (PSAs) launching today. At RISEtoWIN.org, everyone can pledge to stand up against racism, treat others with respect and dignity and speak out against discrimination. The "[It Takes All Colors](#)" [photo app](#) allows visitors to upload a picture, apply their team colors and share it across social channels.

In addition to the RISE website and PSAs, RISE and its partners will also engage individuals through onsite game activation, RISE to Win Curriculum, town halls and social media.

"Sport brings together athletes, coaches and fans of all races, uniting us with shared experiences and common goals that transcend our differences. If there is any place where real equality can be found, it's in sports. The sports community is uniquely

positioned and empowered to help drive national discussion and action to unite our country, promote understanding, respect and equality and advance race relations now and for the next generation. While it would be unrealistic to say that RISE alone will end racism, we have the opportunity to harness the unifying power of sport and create a new paradigm," said Mr. Ross.

Led by executive director Ndidi Massay, RISE aims to generate awareness, inspire dialogue and spur action towards racial equality through a three-pronged approach:

- **Drive participation and accountability:** RISE has launched a nationwide public awareness campaign, including PSAs, the RISE pledge and game day activation to encourage communities to advance race relations in sports and beyond.
- **Leverage voices that break through:** To reach a wide range of athletes throughout the sports community, RISE has developed strategic partnerships with sports leagues and associations, organizations, media networks, sports professionals and educational institutions.
- **Develop meaningful curricula and resources:** RISE will provide resources and develop and deploy curricula aimed to help athletes, coaches, parents and professionals identify, resolve and prevent racially-insensitive behaviors and situations.

RISE will increase racial and cultural competency through a comprehensive and practical training program, the RISE to Win Curriculum, which promotes understanding, respect and equality amongst student-athletes and coaches. The curriculum equips student-athletes and coaches with the tools to proactively identify, resolve and prevent racially-insensitive behaviors and situations. Facilitators will be taught how to instruct and build awareness about cultural sensitivity and inclusion issues in society, especially issues related to race, racism and race relations. The organization will also measure impact by conducting benchmark studies and research on perception, attitudes and public discourse on race relations through sports.

"As the sport of Jackie Robinson and other pioneers who followed in his footsteps, we must continue to build upon our progress with mutual respect and understanding through initiatives like RISE," commissioner of baseball Rob Manfred said. "It is incumbent upon all of us – owners, players, managers, executives and the game's loyal fans – to work together to promote justice, equality and a positive example. We strongly believe that the power of sports can help advance this vital goal."

Adam Silver, NBA commissioner, said, "The NBA is proud to work with RISE and the entire sports community on this critically important issue."

NFL commissioner Roger Goodell said, "We want to use our shared passion for sport to champion equality and respect for all."

NHL commissioner Gary Bettman said, "Sports is for everyone – there is no room for bias or hatred. We are proud to stand with RISE in its efforts to support inclusiveness and diversity."

"We are proud to support RISE in its efforts to tackle racism," said MLS commissioner Don Garber. "Our support of RISE will be an extension of the

League's *Don't Cross the Line* initiative, which aims to eliminate bias, prejudice

and harassment in all aspects of sport. This collective and collaborative approach is paramount in making a lasting impact."

RISE has garnered unprecedented support across the sports community – including major sports leagues and associations, teams, individual athletes, educators and media networks such as CBS Sports, NBC Sports Group and Turner Sports. Participating members have committed to combining their collective resources, reach and influence to promote understanding, respect and equality in sports and beyond.

"RISE represents an extraordinary union across the sports world," said Donald Sun, AVP managing partner. "No matter what sport you represent, we all believe in standing up for equality, respect and understanding."

"The world of sports has made tremendous strides in the areas of diversity and inclusion, but we all understand that a lot more needs to be done," said PGA of America CEO Pete Bevacqua. "Through RISE, we stand together as drivers for change, not just in sports, but society as well."

"Athletes, coaches and sports professionals are in a unique position to make an impact on the next generation," said Max Siegel, CEO of USATF. "We are thrilled to join RISE on this journey to create social change by advancing race relations."

"Changing the dialogue and behaviors around race and equality in sports starts with removing barriers and creating opportunities," said Katrina Adams, USTA chairman of the board, president and CEO. "We celebrate the notion that anyone from any background should be able to play and compete, and we commend RISE for driving awareness to this important factor."

RISE is also working with educators and experts on race relations to help guide the discussion and ensure the campaign's efforts adequately address racial concerns through the lens of sport.

"There is still a huge need for a push towards inclusion, respect and equality in sports," said Kenneth L. Shropshire, the David W. Hauck Professor at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania and the faculty director of its Wharton Sports Business Initiative. "We need leaders within the sports industry and beyond to embrace and deliver RISE principles in a real and tangible way."

Antonio Tijerino, president and CEO of the Hispanic Heritage Foundation said, "Eradicating racial discrimination is like getting rid of air pollution – it's an overwhelming undertaking but we need to start somewhere and sports is the best platform in terms of finding common ground between ethnic groups and races. RISE aims to confront the problem head-on by providing the necessary tools to engage in honest conversations and foster a culture of dialogue in society."

Additional Statements of Support:

Sean McManus, chairman, CBS Sports: "We are proud to join forces with RISE for such a worthy cause; we view this partnership as an important step to driving progress on and off the field."

John Skipper, president, ESPN: "We too believe that the power of sports can affect positive change so are proud to support RISE."

Larry Jones, executive vice president, FOX Sports: "It's an honor to be personally involved with a stellar group of committed athletes, coaches, leagues and fans across the sports community to rise up against racial discrimination."

Mark Lazarus, chairman, NBC Sports Group: "We are proud to support RISE in its mission to build solidarity; sports have always been a reason to come together for a common goal."

David Levy, president, Turner Broadcasting: "Media has long been an engine of positive change, inspiring us to embrace our differences through sports, news, comedy, drama and music. This partnership with RISE gives us an opportunity to use the reach and power of our television, digital and mobile platforms to continue that legacy on a greater scale than ever before."

Antonio Brown, Pittsburgh Steelers: "RISE invites everyone to help end racial discrimination – we can all be agents of change."

Stephen Curry, Golden State Warriors: "Anyone who loves sports knows that victory is unachievable without collaboration."

Larry Fitzgerald, Arizona Cardinals: "We want the sports community to take an active role in advancing race relations; active engagement results in a stronger commitment to our shared goal."

Draymond Green, Golden State Warriors: "We are stronger when we stand together. RISE will help us to create a better future for the next generation."

Greg Jennings, Miami Dolphins: "Our differences can bring us together if we can bond through a shared interest like sports."

Ryan Tannehill, Miami Dolphins: "From fans to athletes, and everybody in-between, we must help people identify and alter their behaviors to make real change."

About RISE

Founded in 2015 by Stephen M. Ross, the Ross Initiative in Sports for Equality (RISE) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to harnessing the unifying power of sport to advance race relations and drive social progress. Supported by an unprecedented alliance of sports leagues and associations, organizations, educators, media networks, sports professionals, athletes and coaches, RISE will use sports as the vehicle to promote understanding, respect and equality. Through national public awareness campaigns and educational programming, RISE aims to spark enduring action. For more information, please visit RISEtoWIN.org and [@RISE_to_WIN](https://twitter.com/RISE_to_WIN).

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