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State Games Founder Hill Carrow to be Honored at Friday's Opening Ceremonies

WINSTON-SALEM, N.C. (JUNE 14, 2011) – Opening Ceremonies of the State Games of North Carolina, this Friday, June 17, at BB&T Ballpark in Winston-Salem will mark the 25th anniversary of North Carolina's State Games. Among those to be honored on this special occasion is Hill Carrow, Founder of the State Games of North Carolina and the Founder of North Carolina Amateur Sports (NCAS), host of the State Games.

Carrow will be recognized during the opening ceremony and also will later participate in the torch run. He will receive the torch from the driver of a stock car before handing it off to Mechelle Lewis (USA Track & Field Olympian).

"The State Games movement in the US was relatively new in the US when I first proposed in 1983 developing a state games for North Carolina," recalls Carrow. New York created the first state games – the Empire State Games – in 1978, and several other states, notably Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, and Florida began to develop their own games shortly thereafter. "We got our start when NCAS was awarded the 1987 US Olympic Festival. The resources and support that flowed into the organization for that event gave us the wherewithal to launch the State Games of North Carolina in July of 1986. It was a very exciting time for the state and for the athletes!"

North Carolina's first state games included more than 3,000 athletes. Now entitled as the Powerade State Games of North Carolina, the event has grown to more than 13,000 athletes competing in 16 sports. In the early years of the State Games of North Carolina, all events were held in North Carolina's Triangle area. Subsequently, as the Games grew and added more sports, the finals were moved around the state, having been held now in Charlotte, Greensboro, and Winston-Salem. Meanwhile qualifying tournaments and semi-final competitions have been added such that State Games events literally take place across the entire state during the weeks leading into and through the finals. And during the 2009 and 2010 State Games in Charlotte, athletes from South Carolina for the first time were allowed to compete in the event.

“The State Games were envisioned to be North Carolina’s Olympics,” Carrow said. “The original idea was to include all age groups--kids and adults alike--and as many sports as we could reasonably accommodate. The first edition in 1986 was something of a test event for US Olympic Festival-’87, but subsequent generations of NCAS leaders have far exceeded initial expectations for what the Games could become.”

Carrow served as the Executive Director of North Carolina’s first state games in 1986 and went on to serve as the President and Executive Director of the 1987 US Olympic Festival (which still holds the record as North Carolina's largest-ever event) the following year. Carrow is now CEO of Sports & Properties, Inc. in Cary, a national sports marketing and sports tourism firm, and also serves as Volunteer CEO of the Triangle Sports Commission. Earlier this year he Chaired the Local Organizing Committee for the highly successful 2011 AT&T U.S. Figure Skating Championships held in Greensboro.

He will be one of the featured torch bearers in Friday night’s Opening Ceremonies.

About Sports & Properties, Inc.: Sports & Properties, Inc. is a sports and entertainment marketing and development firm located in Cary, NC. The company is a specialist and innovator in naming rights and major sponsorships. SPI also consults with cities and community organizations on sports and entertainment economic development projects, represents major corporate clients with regard to their sports and entertainment sponsorships, and manages major sports events and activities. Recent clients include Mandalay Baseball Properties, the 2011 AT&T U.S. Figure Skating Championships, and the ESPN Wide World of Sports at Walt Disney World. For more information on Sports & Properties, Inc., visit www.sportsproperties.com.

About the State Games of North Carolina: The 25th anniversary edition of the State Games of North Carolina finals competitions are being held in and around greater Winston-Salem and are being hosted by the Winston-Salem Convention & Visitors Bureau and the City of Winston-Salem. Opening Ceremonies will be held from 7pm to 8pm on Friday, June 17 at BB&T Ballpark. The Ceremonies will feature a parade of athletes, torch relay and lighting of the Olympic Cauldron to announce the official start of the state games.

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