



For immediate release:

**CLEARWATER NAMED SPORTS ILLUSTRATED
50th ANNIVERSARY SPORTSTOWN FOR THE STATE OF FLORIDA**

Mayor Brian J. Aungst to Accept Award on Behalf of City

NEW YORK, February 12, 2004 – Clearwater has been selected as the *Sports Illustrated* 50th Anniversary Sportstown for the state of Florida. The announcement was made today by SI and the National Recreation and Park Association.

The award, won by the City of Clearwater Parks and Recreation Department, will be presented by SPORTS ILLUSTRATED Assistant Managing Editor Sandra Rosenbush and NRPA Trustee Joe Abel in a pre-game ceremony on Saturday, March 6, at Bright House Networks Field in Clearwater. Among those scheduled to receive the award on behalf of the city is Mayor Brian J. Aungst.

Fifty *Sports Illustrated* Sportstowns – one from each state – will be announced from July 2003 to July 2004 in conjunction with the week a special section featuring that state's sports landscape is highlighted in the magazine. The selections are made by both SPORTS ILLUSTRATED and the National Recreation and Park Association based on a variety of criteria that demonstrates a community's involvement in facilitating and enhancing quality sports. Communities are judged in the following categories: philosophy, policy/procedures, education and training strategies, youth development strategies, community commitment to parks and recreation resources, innovations for community development, and scope of the programming. Each Sportstown recipient will be honored with a cash grant, recognition in SPORTS ILLUSTRATED magazine and on SI.com, and a special commemorative road sign that recognizes the community as an official *Sports Illustrated* 50th Anniversary Sportstown.

Florida will be the 31st state profiled in a special editorial section in the magazine and to receive a *Sports Illustrated* Sportstown designation. The special Florida section is in the February 23rd issue, which will be on newsstands starting Wednesday, February 16.

"The *Sports Illustrated* Sportstown program brings to life the notion that sports are an enormous force for good in our country," said SI President Bruce Hallett. "Clearwater's commitment to finding creative and resourceful ways to enhance sports for the well being of its community fits perfectly with the principles of our Sportstown program, as well as the overall mission of our anniversary celebration."

"Clearwater's uniqueness begins with a long history of providing sports facilities and programs for resident's participation and enjoyment," said NRPA Executive Director John Thorner. "Clearwater offers an extremely broad scope of sporting opportunities for all ages and interests. Opportunities exist to introduce individuals to various sports, to involve them from the beginner to the advance level and up to the very competitive travel team arena."

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SI's 50th Anniversary program, *America's Sports Illustrated: 50 Years, 50 States, 50 Sports*, is a wide-ranging multimedia platform that is the most ambitious initiative in the history of the franchise. The grassroots effort, which began in July and will continue through July 2004, is a yearlong celebration of sports in America. It includes editorial coverage in the magazine and on-line, a community sports outreach campaign which includes the 50th Anniversary Sportstown recognition program, as well as *The Toyota Presents Sports Illustrated's 50th Anniversary Tour* that will travel to unique sports events in cities and towns throughout the country. SI's actual 50th anniversary date is August 16, 2004.

Toyota is the presenting sponsor of the Tour. **Starter, Best Buy** and **MassMutual** are the program sponsors.

The National Recreation and Park Association is a nonprofit professional and citizen association dedicated to advancing parks, recreation and environmental conservation efforts that enhance the quality of life for all people. Headquartered in Ashburn, Virginia, NRPA supports the work of public, private, and non-profit park and recreation concerns in the areas of youth development, lifelong health, quality sports and environmental stewardship.

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