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MIAMI LIGHTHOUSE SPONSORS USABA ATHLETES COMPETING IN BENCHPRESS AND POWERLIFTING WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

May 19, 2008—MIAMI—Miami Lighthouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired will sponsor Team USA in the upcoming 2008 International Blind Sports Association's (IBSA) Benchpress and Powerlifting World Championships, to be held in Miami July 2-5 at the Hyatt Hotel Grand Ballroom.

"We're thrilled to be sponsoring these fine athletes," said Miami Lighthouse CEO Virginia A. Jacko, who is blind. "Their participation is another example of the life-changing qualities of vision rehabilitation, which enables blind people to accomplish anything that sighted people can accomplish."

Blind and visually impaired athletes from 15 nations will be competing. Sponsored by Miami Lighthouse for the Blind and Adidas, Team USA's athletes include:

- Kevin Brousard; San Clemente, Calif
- Cody Colchado; Linn, Texas
- Patrick Donelan; Olathe, Kan.
- Omar Sanchez; Weslaco, Texas
- Kris Scheppe; North Fort Myers, Fla.
- Nick Sinardi; Temple Terrace, Fla.
- Jacob Hendee; Vancouver, Wash.
- Sunny Aparace; Vancouver, Wash.
- Tyler Shepard; Tacoma, Wash.
- Jeffrey Gazzara; Bellmawr, N.J.
- Billy Henry; Vancouver, Wash.
- Steve Pena; San Jose, Calif.

"This is a tremendous opportunity for these outstanding athletes to represent the United States at such a prestigious, international event," said Mark Sampson, USABA Powerlifting Head Coach. More than 130 blind and visually impaired athletes are expected to compete.

USABA athletes also will have the opportunity to attend the USABA Sports Festival and compete at the State Games of the West, an inaugural event that hosts up to 8,000 blind and sighted athletes in 29 sports. The Festival and Games will be held from July 22 – 29 in Colorado Springs, Colo.

"We encourage athletes from all over the U.S. of all ages and abilities who are blind and visually impaired, and are interested in getting involved in powerlifting, or any other sport to participate in the Festival," said Sampson. "There is a camp preceding the State Games where athletes can come to Colorado

Springs, learn about a particular sport that they might be interested in that is taught by USABA coaches, and then compete in the State Games.”

About USABA: Since its founding in 1976, The United States Association of Blind Athletes (USABA), a community-based organization of the United States Olympic Committee, has reached thousands of blind individuals. The organization has emerged as more than just a world-class trainer of blind athletes, it has become a champion of the abilities of Americans who are legally blind. USABA’s Mission: to enhance the lives of blind and visually impaired people by providing the opportunity for participation in sports and physical activity.

For more information, please visit USABA’s website at www.usaba.org or contact Powerlifting Coach, Mark Sampson at: msampson56@hotmail.com

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Miami Lighthouse for the Blind is Florida’s largest and oldest agency serving the blind and visually impaired. In addition to providing free vision care to thousands of financially disadvantaged children each year, Miami Lighthouse helps more than two thousand blind and visually impaired people and their families learn to live safe and independent lives while coping with vision loss. For more information visit:

<http://www.miamilighthouse.org>

OUR MISSION:

*To provide vision rehabilitation and eye health services that promote independence,
to educate professionals, and to conduct research in related fields.*