

**For Immediate Release: August 25, 2009**

## **Colorado Fireworks and Colorado Sparkler to Partner**

Craig Brooks, Director of the Colorado Fireworks and David King, President of Triple Crown Sports have announced a partnership that will team two of the top and largest girls softball events in the country beginning in 2010, the Colorado Sparkler Girls Softball Tournament and Colorado Fireworks Girls Softball Tournament. The Sparkler currently hosts 495 teams and the Fireworks 180 teams. Teams from all 50 states and Canada have been represented. The Sparkler is in its seventh year and the Fireworks in its 41<sup>st</sup> year. The majority of the top college eligible girls softball talent from the US and Canada plays in Colorado during this week long extravaganza, while being watched by most every college coach in America.

The combined events play on over 140 diamonds each Fourth of July week from South Denver to Greeley. The bulk of the Fireworks top older age group brackets are played in Aurora while the bulk of the Sparkler older age groups are played in Westminster, Colorado. The combined events generate over \$25,000,000 in direct economic impact to the Denver and Northern Colorado region with over 28,000 guests in attendance each year. The teams average staying 7 nights each. Over 750 college coaches attended the two events in 2009 to recruit college eligible players from teams as diverse as the 2009 NCAA Champion Washington Huskies to Junior College power Florida Community College of Jacksonville. The 700 teams represent nearly 10,000 14-18 year old girls softball players.

In 2010, a new format will be added featuring a televised playoff between the top Sparkler 18 year-old softball team against the top Fireworks 18-year old team on national television followed by a Sparkler vs. Fireworks special All-American All Star Game, also to be televised. The host site for the featured television matchup is planned to be rotated from Westminster's Christopher Field to Aurora's Sports Park each year. The Fireworks will also add individual showcase games coached by NAIA and Junior College Coaches beginning in 2010 the day prior to pool play of the core tournament. The core of the Fireworks event, limited number of teams respecting the current priority system, ASA sanctioning and officiating, games all held on Aurora's top facilities, and tournament staff will remain the same.

The Colorado Fireworks is the oldest consecutively running softball tournament in Colorado with a storied history being started as a local event in the early years of girls softball to becoming the premier college recruiting tournament in the late 1980's. The event was moved from Boulder to Aurora in 1993 and with the building of the Aurora Sports Park in early 2003 (the largest softball facility in a 5 state radius) it has become a haven for the top US Colleges to find talent. Craig Brooks took over ownership 7 years ago from Bob Strummel and has been at the helm ever since. Craig is a current college softball coach and Athletic Director at Lamar Community College in Lamar, Colorado.

The Colorado Sparkler Girl's Fastpitch Softball Tournament is owned and operated by Triple Crown Sports. Triple Crown was founded by David and Annette King in 1982 and is based in Fort Collins, Colorado. In 28 years of existence, Triple Crown's 55 full time employees have built and run some of the larger and more prolific sports events in softball, baseball and basketball. The Colorado Sparkler has

grown from 58 teams in 2002 to over 490 in 2009. The Sparkler also hosts over 2300 college eligible girls participating in the Sparkler Individual Showcase Events. The Sparkler is split into a senior group (16-18 year olds) in the Westminster area of 370 teams and a junior group (10-14 year olds) in Greeley/Loveland of 130 teams. The Sparkler Junior and Senior Events share a common All American night during the week-long event in Westminster with over 12,000 fans and players in attendance in 2009 at Christopher Field.

Triple Crown also produces the 300 team Park City Girls Triple Crown Softball World Series, the 200 team Oklahoma City Festival (held during the NCAA Softball College World Series), the largest youth baseball tournament in America, the 500 team Omaha Baseball Slumpbuster (held during the NCAA Baseball College World Series), and five different NCAA Division 1 Basketball tournaments (the Cancun and Caribbean Challenges for both Men and Women, The Pre Season Women's WNIT, the Post Season Women's WNIT). Triple Crown is a nationally recognized specialist in event organization, customer service and marketing in youth sports and has been on the frontier in organizing innovative college placement type events for 14-18 year old players.

Quotes:

King said.... "The combination of Fireworks and Sparkler will create a partnership that continues to deliver and enhance the top college placement experience for clubs with more to come."

"The partnership offers us a way to put our marketing and operational backgrounds to work under Craig's unique ability to execute a great tournament".

Brooks said..... "Triple Crown will help to provide additional manpower to the ideas running through my head".

Question to King: What will change? "We will be able to put additional resources to Craig's idea while retaining those legacy items he believes are most important. And yes, we've got some ideas that Craig may like as well. It should be extremely exciting and rewarding for the teams."

What will the customer feel or see? "The events they love will be intact, the people they want to see will be there and the new innovative ideas to help young girls find the right college and colleges to find the right player, will only get better.

For additional information:

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