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Irwin named 2009 Ambassador of Golf *World Golf Hall of Fame member to be honored at World Golf Championships-Bridgestone Invitational*

LOCATION: Akron, Ohio

DATE: June 30, 2009

World Golf Hall of Fame member Hale Irwin has been named the 2009 Ambassador of Golf by Northern Ohio Golf Charities, as announced today by World Golf Championships-Bridgestone Invitational Executive Director Don Padgett. The Ambassador of Golf Award is presented annually to a person or persons who have fostered the ideals of the game on an international level and whose concern for others extends beyond the golf course. Irwin, who has excelled on every level throughout his nearly five-decade career, has used his stature as an accomplished PGA TOUR and Champions Tour member to found and support the Hale Irwin Center for Pediatric Hematology/Oncology and the St. Louis Children's Hospital.

"We are pleased to honor Hale Irwin this summer during the Bridgestone Invitational as the 2009 Ambassador of Golf," said PGA TOUR Commissioner Tim Finchem, on behalf of the International Federation of PGA Tours. "Hale is the ultimate example of all that is good about the game of golf. His accomplishments on the golf course are impressive, from his 20-win career on the PGA TOUR, which included three major championships, to his record 45-win-and-counting career on the Champions Tour. Yet in addition to his perseverance, sportsmanship and humility as a Hall of Fame player, Hale has been even more accomplished as a person. His work to support the St. Louis Children's Hospital is a commitment that spans a quarter century. Hale most deservingly joins the esteemed list of past Ambassador of Golf recipients."

"I am truly honored to receive this award," said Irwin. "As we've witnessed by past recipients, it is an impressive list of those who have contributed greatly to the game of golf. Over the years I have seen the true value of what golf can offer to an individual. The real focus of my life now is to try and perpetuate all of those good things that I have learned from the game and pass them on to future generations."

Irwin, born in Joplin, Mo., in 1945 and raised in Baxter Springs, Kan., was introduced to golf at age 4 by his father. The two spent countless hours on the sand greens at the local municipal course. After moving to Boulder, Colo., Irwin became a star athlete in several sports, including football. He led Boulder High School to a state title as their quarterback his senior year and earned a football scholarship to the University of Colorado. Irwin was a two-sport athlete in college: a three-year letterman in golf, eventually winning the Big 8 Conference Championship two years in a row and the 1967 NCAA Championship; and a two-time All-Big Eight selection as a football defensive back.

But it was golf, not football or marketing – his field of study; he was a three-time Academic All-American – that became Irwin's career. Irwin joined the PGA TOUR in 1968 and captured his first tournament victory at the 1971 Sea Pines Heritage Classic. He would go on to win 19 more times on the PGA TOUR and is one of only 37 players in TOUR history with 20 career wins. Most notably, Irwin won three U.S. Opens, including a triumph in 1974 at the so-called "Massacre at Winged Foot" in perhaps the most difficult Open conditions in history. Five years later at Inverness, on another grueling Open course, Irwin shot even par to win by two. And finally, at the age of 45 and winless for five years, Irwin received a special exemption to compete in the 1990 U.S. Open. In the first sudden-death finish in U.S. Open history after an 18-hole playoff, Irwin birdied the 19th hole to defeat Mike Donald and become the oldest winner of the championship.

Irwin played on five Ryder Cup teams (1975, 1977, 1979, 1981 and 1991) and was a playing captain of the first U.S. Presidents Cup Team in 1994.

Irwin's Champions Tour career began in earnest in 1995, and he wasted no time making his mark, earning Champions Tour Rookie of the Year honors on the strength of two victories. Twelve years later, he had racked up 45 wins and now stands as the Tour's all-time victory and earnings leader (45 and more than \$25 million). He won the 1998 and 2000 U.S. Senior Open titles, the 1999 Constellation Energy Senior Players Championship, four Senior

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PGA Championships (1996-98, 2004) and claimed the season-long Charles Schwab Cup points race in 2002 and 2004.

Away from the course, Irwin is the consummate family man and is dedicated to his charity of choice. Irwin founded and participated in a charity golf tournament in St. Louis for 25 years called the Hale Irwin St. Louis Children's Hospital Golf Benefit. The money raised through the many years of hard work eventually built the Hale Irwin Center for Pediatric Hematology/Oncology at St. Louis Children's Hospital, which offers a comfortable, non-threatening space for children and their families to receive specialized care from a team of dedicated experts in treating blood and cancer disorders.

Irwin will be honored at a reception on Aug. 5 at Firestone Country Club in Akron, Ohio, in conjunction with the Bridgestone Invitational.

Past recipients of the Ambassador of Golf Award are: 1981 Chi Chi Rodriguez; 1982 Bing Crosby; 1983 Byron Nelson; 1984 Gene Sarazen; 1985 President Gerald Ford; 1986 Bob Hope; 1987 Dinah Shore; 1988 Joe Dey; 1989 Frank Chirkinian; 1990 Barbara Nicklaus; 1991 Arnold Palmer; 1992 Nancy Lopez; 1993 Roberto DeVincenzo; 1994 President George H.W. Bush; 1995 Michael Bonnallack; 1996 Deane Beman; 1997 Peter Thomson; 1998 Ken Venturi; 1999 Gary Player; 2000 Ben Hogan and Sam Snead; 2001 Del de Windt; 2002 Joanne Carner; 2003 Robert Dedman Sr. and Jack Vickers; 2004 Lee Trevino; 2005 Pete Dye; 2006 Ken Schofield; 2007 Tony Jacklin; and 2008 Charlie Sifford.

For a limited time, purchase a Firestone Clubhouse Badge or a Weekly Championship Ticket Book and receive a free dozen Bridgestone Golf balls at Northeast Ohio Dick's Sporting Goods or Golf Galaxy. To learn more about the ticket packages available for the Bridgestone Invitational, call the Championship Office at 330-664-2299, toll free 1-877-942-4849 or visit www.worldgolfchampionships.com.

About Bridgestone

The Bridgestone Group (Bridgestone Corporation and its consolidated subsidiaries including Bridgestone Americas, Inc., Bridgestone Sports Co., Ltd. and Bridgestone Golf Inc.) is the world's largest manufacturer of tires and rubber products. Bridgestone Corporation was founded in 1931 in Japan and today sells products in over 150 countries worldwide. Tires account for about 80 percent of consolidated sales, with the remainder made up of a wide range of industrial and consumer products which includes golf balls and clubs, bicycles and other sporting goods.

About Bridgestone Americas, Inc.:

Nashville, Tenn.-based Bridgestone Americas, Inc. (BSAM) is the U.S. subsidiary of Bridgestone Corporation, the world's largest tire and rubber company. BSAM and its subsidiaries develop, manufacture and market a wide range of Bridgestone, Firestone and associate brand tires to address the needs of a broad range of customers, including consumers, automotive and commercial vehicle original equipment manufacturers, and those in the agricultural, forestry and mining industries. The companies are also engaged in retreading operations throughout the Western Hemisphere and produce air springs, roofing materials, and industrial fibers and textiles. The BSAM family of companies also operates the world's largest chain of automotive tire and service centers. Guided by its One Team, One Planet message, the company is dedicated to achieving a positive environmental impact in all of the communities it calls home.

About the World Golf Championships-Bridgestone Invitational

The Bridgestone Invitational is one of four World Golf Championships sanctioned and organized by the International Federation of PGA Tours, which includes the Asian Tour, European Tour, Japan Golf Tour, PGA TOUR, PGA Tour of Australasia, Sunshine Tour, China Golf Association, Korea Professional Golf Tour Corp., Professional Golf Tour of India, LPGA Tour, Ladies European Tour, Australian Ladies Professional Golf Tour, Japan LPGA, Korean LPGA and the Ladies Asian Golf Tour. The other World Golf Championships include the Accenture Match Play Championship, the CA Championship and the HSBC Champions.

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