

NBA ALL STAR RETURNS TO HOUSTON

For the second time in the event's history, Houston has been selected as the host city for NBA All-Star. The 55 th annual All-Star Game will be played at the Toyota Center, home of the Houston Rockets on February 19, 2006.

Houston first hosted the midseason classic in 1989 before a record crowd of 44,735 at the Astrodome. In that game, the West posted a 143-134 victory behind MVP Karl Malone's 28 points and John Stockton's 17 assists, which included an All-Star record nine in a single quarter. Chicago's Michael Jordan scored 28 points for the East, while the Los Angeles Lakers Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Magic Johnson's injury replacement on the West roster, played a record 18 th and final All-Star Game. In All-Star Saturday night festivities at the Summit, New York's Kenny Walker took home the Slam Dunk trophy with a record high score of 148.1 in the final round and Seattle's Dale Ellis collected the Three-Point Shootout crown.

NBA All-Star has evolved into a week-long celebration that enables fans worldwide to experience the thrill of the world's greatest athletes playing the game they love while also leaving a lasting impact in each host city's community.

The NBA All-Star competitions tip off on Friday as the League's top rookies and second-year players square off in the Rookie Challenge. The excitement continues the next day with the NBA All-Star Saturday featuring the Shooting Stars, a shooting competition featuring NBA, WNBA players and NBA legends; Skills Challenge, a competition of top guards working against the clock to complete a series of passes, long range shots and agility drills; and the Three-Point Shootout, where six of the NBA's best long-range shooters compete against each other an versus the clock in the test of the three-point shooting accuracy. The evening's grand finale is the Slam Dunk Contest, which showcases some of the NBA's best athletes as they take to the air mystifying fans with their gravity-defying creativity.

The week concludes with the NBA All-Star Game on Sunday before a worldwide television audience that reaches more than 200 countries.

Leading up to All-Star Weekend will be the 13 th NBA All-Star Jam Session, the ultimate interactive basketball experience. The event is open to the public and will provide fans of all ages with the opportunity to take part in NBA All-Star 2006. Jam Session will feature more than 35,000 square feet of basketball activities and games. Fans of all ages can test their basketball passing skills while battling a bungee cord, enjoy the sounds of today's hottest musical artists at Club NBA, see their favorite NBA and WBNA players, slam dunk, launch a jump shot from a trampoline, shoot baskets with a slingshot, make their own personalized basketball trading card, test their trivia skills, and much more. Jam Session also features NBA and WNBA player autograph sessions and clinics, and a complete collection of authentic NBA apparel and NBA All-Star 2006 souvenirs.

Not all of the NBA All-Star action will take place on the hardwood. The NBA and the Houston Rockets will partner with schools, community organizations and corporate partners to showcase the league's ongoing commitment to the community by opening reading and learning centers, refurbishing basketball courts and encouraging countless youngsters to develop a love of reading. Highlighting the NBA All-Star activities in the community are the NBA Legacy Project, the NBA Read to Achieve Caravan, NBA All-Star Jam Session, Jr. NBA and WNBA youth basketball clinics.