

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Slam Dunk to the Beach Announces Delaware Teams and Presenting Sponsorship

Defending State Champions; Grotto Pizza to participate in 2017

Dover, DE – October 17, 2017 – The **Delaware Sports Commission** is proud to announce the inclusion of four top Delaware high school basketball teams, as well as the presenting sponsor for the 2017 event.

Set for Dec. 27-29, Slam Dunk to the Beach presented by **Grotto Pizza** will be back in Lewes for the fourth consecutive year after drawing more than 30,000 fans, players and participants over the last three seasons.

The Delaware Sports Commission is looking forward to its continued partnerships and increased support from the community.

“In year four, Slam Dunk to the Beach has become the event we aspired it to be,” said Chairman of the Delaware Sports Commission, **Dr. Matthew Robinson**. “With national recognition, top-tier talent and support from the local community, Slam Dunk to the Beach will continue to provide positive economic impact to Sussex County. This could not have been possible without the support of our sponsors, local businesses and community leaders.”

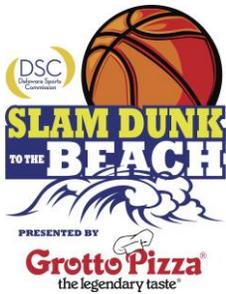
“We are very proud to be the Official Pizza and presenting sponsor of Slam Dunk to the Beach,” said **Vinnie DiNatale**, Director of Marketing for Grotto Pizza. “Competition at the event is fierce. The games are very exciting to watch and the buzz has grown, so you don’t want to miss a single game. Slam Dunk to the Beach gets better and better every year. We are glad to be a part of such a great event in Sussex County.”

The schools representing Delaware’s local community include host **Cape Henlopen High School, Caravel Academy, Howard High School** and **Smyrna High School**.

“We are pleased to welcome another outstanding slate of Delaware talent to the 2017 event,” said **Jessie Dmitchik**, Executive Director of the Delaware Sports Commission. “The state will be well represented with at least one team from each county giving the top programs the opportunity to compete against the nation’s elite.”

Since the tournament’s 2014 return, each DIAA State Champion has started its season at Slam Dunk to the Beach before going on to win the state title. **Andrew Mears**, Head Coach of the 2017 State Champion Smyrna Eagles, had this to say about his team’s Slam Dunk to the Beach experience: “Last year’s event provided such a valuable opportunity and learning experience for our team. We are excited and humbled to once again be included this year.”

Over the years Slam Dunk to the Beach has hosted some of the nation’s premier players, including **LeBron James** (2001), **Kevin Durant** (2003) and **Carmelo Anthony** (2000), but recent participants are already making their presence felt in the world of hoops. **Cheick Diallo** (2014) is the newest Slam Dunk alum to make the NBA, now in his second season with the New Orleans Pelicans. In college basketball, **Mohamed Bamba** (2015, 2016) will make his debut for the Texas Longhorns this fall after ranking as the #4 prospect in the 2017 class by ESPN.



Here's a closer look at Delaware's Slam Dunk entrants:

- For the fourth year in a row, the defending DIAA State Champion will participate at Slam Dunk to the Beach when **Smyrna High School** tips off. A return visit for Andrew Mears' team, this talented Eagles squad boasts of two returning All-State selections from 2016-17; **Caleb Matthews** (1st Team) and **Jaymeir Garnett** (Honorable Mention).
- Host school, **Cape Henlopen High School** will once again compete at the event played on their home floor. Head Coach **Steve Re's** Vikings team advanced to the Second Round of the state tournament in 2016-17 and will bring back a strong local following to the Slam Dunk to the Beach tournament. The Vikings will, once again, be led by two of the top Seniors in the state, **Ian Robertson** and **Randy Rickards**.
- 2017 DIAA State Runner-Up, **Caravel Academy**, is looking to build on last season's tournament run. Head Coach **Mark Tobin** and All-State guard, **O'Koye Parker**, took the Buccaneers from 19th seed to the Championship Game in 2017 but come in to this season high on everyone's radar.
- Rounding out the Delaware participants for 2017 is **Howard High School** of Wilmington, DE. Head Coach **Rahsaan Matthews** will bring plenty of star power with him to Lewes, in the form of returning All-State performer **Lamar Woody**. The Wildcats appeared in the 2016-17 state playoffs and are poised for a deeper run this year.

About Delaware Sports Commission:

The Delaware Sports Commission, a not-for-profit organization, was established to attract regional and national level sporting events to Delaware as an endeavor to positively impact Delaware's economy. The DSC also assists with the retention and growth of existing sporting events. To date, the DSC has partnered with over 50 regional and national events, paving the way for future large-scale events to be held in Delaware

About Grotto Pizza, Inc.:

Grotto Pizza, Inc. first opened in Rehoboth Beach, Delaware by owner Dominick Pulieri. Since then Grotto Pizza has grown to 23 locations throughout Delaware, Maryland and Pennsylvania. Still a family owned business, Grotto Pizza is a family casual dining restaurant that specializes in award winning pizza and hospitality. The full menu includes pizza, pasta, sandwiches, subs, appetizers, salads, beer, wine, cocktails and Grotto Gelato. Dominick Pulieri is involved in day-to-day operations and preaching the company culture that it is All About the Guest! To learn more about Grotto Pizza visit www.grottopizza.com.

Slam Dunk to the Beach Media Contact:

Scott Klatzkin, Sports Outreach Consultant
slamdunkmedia@delawaresports.org