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TENNIS GROWTH SKYROCKETS 43 PERCENT! According to Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association (SGMA) 2009 Sports & Fitness Participation Report

Hilton Head, SC., March 19, 2009 – According to data just released by the Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association (SGMA), Tennis is the fastest growing sport in America among individual traditional sports with an increase in participation of 43% from 2000 to 2008. According to the SGMA, tennis was one of only six sports to experience participation growth exceeding 40% from 2000 through 2008. Tennis is well ahead of other traditional sports like baseball, ice hockey, gymnastics and football, all of which suffered a decline in participation during the past eight years. In the last year alone (through December 31, 2008), Tennis experienced a 9.6% growth in participation.

The SGMA study is the latest in a series of reports and studies that have cited the extraordinary growth for tennis. In December, the Taylor Research Group (TRG) reported that tennis participation reached a record high of 27 million players in 2008, more than any other period in the past 15 years. Sales of tennis racquets and balls have both also increased significantly, most notably, an 88% increase in the sale of youth racquets from 2003 through 2008, according to the TRG report.

“The SGMA study is a clear validation of all the hard work and commitment that our industry has put into the sport,” said Jon Muir, president of the Tennis Industry Association (TIA), and General Manager of Wilson Racquet Sports. “We’ve focused not only on reinforcing our already strong base, but at the same time, we’ve developed new, innovative programs to bring players, of all ages and skill levels, into the game.”

“From programs like QuickStart Tennis that makes it easy for young players to get into the sport and begin a developmental pathway; to high school and college programs like USTA’s No-Cut and Tennis on Campus, which keeps them in the game; to the innovative and fitness based Cardio Tennis, which combines tennis with a healthy and fun work-out curriculum, the tennis industry is at the forefront of engaging and retaining players,” “We’ve tried to make tennis as accessible as possible at the grassroots levels, which we’ll continue to do, by promoting initiatives to grow youth and adult participation in order to keep this momentum going,” comments Kurt Kamperman, Chief Executive, Community Tennis, USTA.

“Together with the USTA, the TIA has also established more than 2600 Tennis Welcome Centers across the country, and provides an online Growing Tennis System that lets consumers find places to play, partners with comparable skill level and other programs that all serve to enhance their overall tennis experience,” adds Muir.

The TIA, USTA and many other industry partners have been united since 1993 in a joint effort to support “Grow The Game” activities, a strategy to increase tennis participation on several levels.

Tennis Participation vs. Economy

“We are especially pleased that interest in tennis has been able to withstand this soft economy,” added Jolyn de Boer, TIA Executive Director. “We’ve charted the various economic indicators against industry shipments and participation numbers from 2003. We’ve clearly seen that tennis has experienced a level of growth unmatched among other major sports and participation doesn’t seem as impacted by a down economy.”

In addition to the rise in tennis participation, charting industry shipments over this same five year period showed shipments of adult racquets are up 30%, while shipments for youth racquets increased a remarkable 88% from 2003 thru 2008. Furthermore, tennis ball shipments for the same time period were up over 16%, continuing to demonstrate an increasing attraction to the sport. Muir adds: “While no industry can escape the current impact of the nation’s economic challenges, we will use the current report provided by the SGMA study and our own TIA/USTA Participation research to focus on creating even more players and consumers for our sport.”

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About the TIA

The Tennis Industry Association, the not-for-profit trade association for tennis, is THE unifying force in the tennis industry bringing together competitive companies to work collectively to promote and grow the sport. The TIA works closely with the USTA and industry partners to develop and implement initiatives to increase tennis participation. Core TIA activities include Participation Research, Consumer and Trade Research and the Growing Tennis System. For more information, please visit TennisIndustry.org or GrowingTennis.com.

About the USTA

The USTA is the national governing body for the sport of tennis in the U.S. and the leader in promoting and developing the growth of tennis at every level -- from local communities to the highest level of the professional game. It owns and operates the US Open, the highest attended annual sporting event in the world, and launched the Olympus US Open Series linking 10 summer tournaments to the US Open. A not-for-profit organization with more than 725,000 members, it invests 100% of its proceeds in growing the game. In addition, it owns the 94 Pro Circuit events throughout the U.S., and selects the teams for the Davis Cup, Fed Cup, Olympic and Paralympic Games.

About the SGMA

SGMA, the trade association of leading industry sports and fitness brands, enhances industry vitality and fosters sports and fitness participation through research, thought leadership, product promotion and public policy. SGMA produces the industry leading National Health-through-Fitness Day on Capitol Hill as well as representing the industry on trade and consumer issues. More information about SGMA membership and SGMA's Sports Research Partnership can be found at www.sgma.com.

Current Tennis Industry Initiatives:

Tennis Welcome Centers: These public and private tennis facilities have led the charge in growing the sport by welcoming new players to the game the right way – through instruction. The facilities provide well-rounded programs to new and current players of all ages and abilities. On average, each Tennis Welcome Center, reports 39 new players, retains 34 players and 82 percent of the centers reported increased revenue from lessons. Visit <http://www.tenniswelcomecenter.com/> for more information.

Cardio Tennis: This program brings new players to tennis by demonstrating the exercise and fitness benefits of the sport. *Cardio Tennis* is a fun way to get in shape and lose weight, even for someone who has never played tennis. In just 4 years, *Cardio Tennis* is now offered in over 1,700 facilities nationwide. Find more information about Cardio Tennis at: www.cardiotennis.com.

QuickStart Tennis for kids: This program is a great way to integrate children – primarily 10 years old and younger - into tennis by using a progressive format to teach basic skills on shorter courts, using smaller racquets, low pressure balls, and modified scoring. This method will train the next generation of tennis players as the *QuickStart* format is now being used in almost 1,000 locations across the country! For more information please visit: <http://consumers.quickstarttennis.com/>.

Tennis On Campus: Developed by the USTA to promote and support the expansion of recreational tennis on college campuses. Either through intramural tournaments and leagues or in a more structured sport club environment, teams compete interscholastically. *Tennis On Campus* focuses on providing opportunities for the entire campus community, and is currently run on more than 500 campuses across the country, providing organized play for 30,000 participants. For more information about Tennis On Campus please visit: <http://www.tennisoncampus.com/>.

No-Cut: This program was introduced to encourage and recognize high school coaches who make a commitment to their schools by not cutting any student who tries out for the team. Since its inception, the USTA's *No-Cut* program has been embraced by coaches across the country, nearly doubling each year since its inception. With almost 1,800 coaches now implementing a no-cut philosophy, thousands of students who may have otherwise dropped the sport are now part of a team and competing for their school. Find more information about the No-Cut program at: <http://www.usta.com/Coaches/HighSchool.aspx>.

GrowingTennis System / Online Enrollment: The national TIA database has more than 20,000 facility listings and contacts that can post their programs and events online at GrowingTennis.com. Every month, more than 2.4 million consumer queries are made to these informational postcards on consumer sites including usta.com, tennischannel.com, tennis.com, tenniswelcomecenter.com, cardiotennis.com, quickstart.com and others. Visitors and players can also automatically register for programs, events or reserve court time online, saving time and money. For more information please visit: www.growingtennis.com/.