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Fresno State to host high school, collegiate, and professional athletes in the Second Annual Run for the Dream

FRESNO, Calif. – Fresno State will introduce a bigger and better version of the Run for the Dream Indoor Track Meet to Fresno and the San Joaquin Valley on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, January 21, 2008.

The meet, which took a hiatus after its inaugural year in 2006, will include three separate meets with athletes at different levels in their careers ranging from high school students to professional athletes. Run for the Dream which is meant to honor the memory of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and present the San Joaquin Valley with an opportunity to honor track and field stars of the past, with the stars of the present and the future.

To represent stars of the present, professional athletes on the Visa Championship Series will compete in a first-ever team-scored meet with pitting international and American competitors against each other in USA vs. the World.

"The meet is meant to re-ignite the spirit and excitement of the Old West Coast Relays," said Bulldog track and field head coach Bob Fraley. "The Run for the Dream will help build back the tradition of the San Joaquin Valley. This massive event will help bring track and field back to the highest level."

The collegiate division of the second annual Run for the Dream will be the first meet on the new track featuring the indoor teams from Fresno State, Hawai'i, Cal Poly, and Cal-State Stanislaus. Later in the afternoon, high school athletes drawn from across the state will take the track to compete in the high school "Dream Team Championships. The day's events will culminate with the Visa Championship Series USA vs. the World with some of the nation's best athletes, including NCAA Champions, World Record Holders and Olympic Champions.

High school coaches are in the process of selecting athletes from the three geographical areas to make up their "dream teams." Each team has two high school coaches to draw together their region's best possible team. Two athletes per event will be selected to represent their regions in the team-scored event.

Helping bring the sport to the highest level will be the debut of a custom-designed 160-yard track for the Save Mart Center. A \$900,000 donation by long-time track and field supporter Frank Arnold made the construction of the indoor track possible. Arnold and Fraley met when Fraley's son competed at a middle school pole vault event in Los Angeles.

"We had a rule that we always would shake the official's hand and thank them for officiating after the meet," explained Fraley. "Frank came across the track and said he wanted to meet the parents of one of the most respectful young man he had ever met. And we've been friends ever since."

According to Fraley, Arnold, a resident of Los Angeles chose to donate to Fresno State rather than a school in Los Angeles because he "likes what we're doing here at Fresno State" and because of the "media support for Fresno State."

Fraley, USA Track & Field's 2003 Nike Coach of the Year, is primarily responsible for the development of Fresno State's recent track and field athletes. Aside from coaching 21 Bulldog All-Americans in his 27 seasons with Fresno State, Fraley has served as chair of men's pole vault development for USATF. In 1989 he created the Pole Vault Summit, now held in Reno, Nev., which features an exchange of knowledge about pole vaulting and competitions which draw more than 2,000 athletes ranging from teen-agers to Olympic gold medalists.

Tickets for Run for the Dream, priced at \$15 for adults and \$5 for children, are good for both the high school and professional meets, while the collegiate event in the morning requires a separate ticket. Further information on ticketing will be available in mid-December.