



michigan high school athletic association

# media information

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 26, 2009

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## **March Magic Hoopfest Plays At Jenison Field House During MHSAA Boys Basketball Finals**

**EAST LANSING, Mich. – Jan. 26** – No one venue has seen more high school basketball championships in Michigan than Jenison Field House in East Lansing. For 31 years, one of the toughest tickets around was for the Michigan High School Athletic Association's Boys Basketball Finals.

Among the most storied memories in Jenison Field House:

- “The Shot” – A jumper by Bob Davis that bounced around the rim and finally went in at the final buzzer to give Lansing Sexton an 80-79 overtime win against Highland Park in the 1959 Class A Final;
- The ferocious comeback in the final 45 seconds of the 1972 Class B title match when River Rouge scored the game's final eight points in a 65-64 win over Muskegon Heights – the last of the 12 championships the Panthers won under the state's all-time winningest coach, Lofton Greene;
- The Game of the Century in 1958 where two future professional stars – Dave DeBusschere of Detroit Austin and Chet “The Jet” Walker of Benton Harbor squared off for the Class A title, which was won by Austin, 71-68; and
- Three Upper Peninsula teams – Stephenson in Class B, Crystal Falls in Class C, and Chassell in Class D – all winning titles at Jenison Field House in 1956, and all by two points. Two years later, Chassell would win its third straight crown at Jenison, and it was also the last victory in what is still the longest winning streak in boys basketball history in Michigan – 65 games.

The memorable names to have played in the building in Final or Semifinal games includes: Earvin “Magic” Johnson of Lansing Everett; “Marvelous” Mel Peterson of Stevenson; Spencer Haywood and Ralph Simpson of Detroit Pershing; John Sperla of Flint St. Matthew; Jay Smith of Mio; M.C. and Ed Burton of Muskegon Heights; Pete Gent of Bangor; Wayman Britt of Flint Northern; Kimm and Paul Griffin of Shelby; Ernie Thompson of Saginaw; Antoine “The Judge” Joubert of Detroit Southwestern; L.C. Bowen of Benton Harbor; Jim Sarno of Covert; and numerous River Rouge players, including Willie Betts, the only player to ever start on four consecutive championship teams.

Twenty years since Jenison Field House saw its last high school basketball action and 35 years since it last hosted the championships, the building will come alive with yesterday's, today's and tomorrow's players and fans as it is transformed into a hardwood haven again when the inaugural March Magic Hoopfest takes place in conjunction with the MHSAA Boys Basketball Finals at the Breslin Student Events Center, March 26-28.

The March Magic Hoopfest is being conducted in a partnership between the Greater Lansing Sports Authority, a division of the Greater Lansing Convention and Visitors Bureau; and the MHSAA, with vital support coming from the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics at Michigan State University. The Hoopfest will cover the 40 thousand square feet of the Jenison Field House floor with a variety of basketball activities for all ages.

“The March Magic Hoopfest will take a great weekend of high school basketball games and help turn the MHSAA Championships into an event which will involve the Lansing area and the thousands of visitors coming to town,” said John Young of the Greater Lansing Sports Authority. “If you're coming to the championships, the Hoopfest is a destination to visit before and after the games; and if you're not coming to the games, the Hoopfest is a wholesome, inexpensive, family activity.”

(more)

## 2-2-2 March Magic Hoopfest Announced

“Some of our fans will remember the days when the buzz in the Lansing area each March was the weekend of the high school boys basketball semifinals and finals,” said John E. “Jack” Roberts, executive director of the MHSAA. “All of the teams meeting for the opening luncheon and staying downtown across from the State Capitol at the old Jack Tar Hotel; games not only in the Field House, but in the Upper Gymnasium at Jenison, the old Civic Center downtown and at member schools – it was truly a community event.

“The March Magic Hoopfest will build on the excitement of the games for the fans of the participating schools, serve as another focal point of fun for spectators who continue to make attending the championships an annual affair, and involve the Lansing community in a whole new way.”

A number of different basketball skills stations will surround the Hoopfest’s Center Court area, which will feature youth and wheelchair basketball games. Center Court will also serve as the site of pre-game pep rallies for the participating teams the days of the semifinals. A Hall of History will feature the showing of championship games of years past, life-size photos of finals stars, and display boards from the Hometown Hoops Exhibit from the Michigan Historical Museum.

On the third day of the Hoopfest, a basketball clinic will take place for junior high/middle school students, conducted by the Basketball Coaches Association of Michigan.

The Greater Lansing Sports Authority has committed to conduct the Hoopfest for three years. When the MHSAA Girls Basketball Semifinals and Finals return to the Breslin Center in 2010, the Hoopfest will take place on back to back weekends.

Admission to the March Magic Hoopfest is \$2 per person, and fans attending the MHSAA Boys Basketball Semifinals and Finals will be admitted free with their game ticket. The Hoopfest will be open from 11 a.m. until 9 p.m. on March 26 and 27; and from 10 a.m. until 8 p.m. on March 28.

Young also said that sponsors and volunteers are being sought to help support the variety of activities at the Hoopfest. To become a sponsor or volunteer, or to find out more general information about the event, visit the March Magic Hoopfest Website at [marchmagichoopfest.com](http://marchmagichoopfest.com).

The Greater Lansing Sports Authority (GLSA) is a division of the Greater Lansing Convention and Visitors Bureau. The GLSA’s mission is to be the leading voice of sports tourism in the Greater Lansing area and to promote economic growth by attracting a diverse range of sporting events to the region. The GLSA will strive to enhance the quality of life for area residents through the development of local sports and fitness programs for all ages, and to support the continued development and maintenance of safe, high-quality athletic facilities.

The MHSAA is a private, not-for-profit corporation of voluntary membership by over 1,600 public and private senior high schools and junior high/middle schools which exists to develop common rules for athletic eligibility and competition. No government funds or tax dollars support the MHSAA, which was the first such association nationally to not accept membership dues or tournament entry fees from schools. Member schools which enforce these rules are permitted to participate in MHSAA tournaments, which attract approximately 1.6 million spectators each year.

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**MEDIA ADVISORY** – March Magic Hoopfest resources available on the Media Page of the MHSAA Website include: Hoopfest logos; a review of the 31 years the MHSAA Boys Basketball Finals were played at Jenison Field House; and audio and video clips from the press conference announcing the Hoopfest. Media attending the MHSAA Boys Basketball Semifinals and Finals are encouraged to attend the Hoopfest to visit with fans taking part in the various activities, as well as fans from participating schools. Media are welcome to setup remote reports from the Hoopfest, and will be admitted by showing their MHSAA-issued passes or showing appropriate identification. Media should contact Mike Price at the Greater Lansing Sports Authority (517- 377-1406 - [MPrice@lansing.org](mailto:MPrice@lansing.org)) to set up remote shoots in advance so appropriate arrangements can be made for a location in the venue, and for the parking of uplink/transmission facilities.

**RL09-038**