

For Immediate Release
March 29, 2008

Contact: Trey Buchholz
954-612-6787
tbuchholz@firstserve.org

SPRING REPORT CARDS SHOW POSITIVE RESULTS IN FIRST SERVE STUDENT ATHLETE COMPETITION

The Competition Heats Up On the Court and in the Classroom

KEY BISCAWAYNE, FL. – Youngsters from 18 cities nationwide have been competing for a chance at two scholarships through the First Serve Student Athlete Competition. Two students from St. Petersburg, Florida – sophomore Jerica Coley and sixth-grader Julian Haerle – top the current rankings based on their spring report cards. Mamanka Doddipalli of Houston and Elena Chavez of Palo Alto follow closely as the second place boy and girl, respectively.

The 11-month national competition tracks and ranks over 250 First Serve students based on points awarded for A's and B's in math, science, literary arts, and history, as well as their scores in junior tennis tournaments. To qualify, students must attend tutoring and tennis sessions at least twice per week at a First Serve Chapter. The winning boy and girl will each earn the title of First Serve Student Athlete of the Year and a \$10,000 scholarship prize to be awarded at the U.S. Open in September. The winning First Serve chapter also receives a \$25,000 grant at the Competition year end.

“First Serve uses its unique tennis, academic, and life-skills curricula to empower underserved girls and boys as young as fifth grade prepare for college and be successful in life,” says Trey Buchholz, Founder and CEO of First Serve, a non-profit organization. “Unlike many sports and education programs, the drama of the First Serve Student Athlete Competition takes place as much in the class as it does on the court.”

Because of the high level of commitment to academics and athletics that is required, only 250 youngsters involved in First Serve's programs, about 25 percent of the total, are eligible to participate in the Student Athlete Competition. Rankings often change by a fraction of a point based on academic results, so the report card season is typically accompanied by intensified determination in the classroom. For many students, it is the first tangible evidence of hard work at school equaling a real-world payoff.

“The First Serve curricula is unique because it uses tennis to teach kids everything from conflict resolution, to personal goal setting, and working with others, to cultivating fitness, good nutrition, improved study skills and decision making.” says Dave Boon, Director, First Serve, Fort Collins, Colorado.

“Playing tennis with First Serve has taught me a lot about working hard and being my best at whatever I try,” says girl's division leader, Coley. “That's really helped me in high school, and hopefully it will help a lot when I go to college too.”

About First Serve

First Serve, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, is dedicated to empowering young people by providing local tennis facilities and schools with a life skills program that promotes positive values, healthy habits, and education through the game of tennis. The First Serve curriculum focuses on underserved boys and girls aged 8-13. First Serve Chapters are located in 18 cities across America. For more information, visit www.firstserve.org.

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