

## “Andre Agassi Sportsmanship Award”

*For The 2007-2008 First Serve National Student Athlete Competition*



FT. LAUDERDALE, FL (December 9, 2008) – On November 8, 2008, Mou Doddipalli was awarded the Andre Agassi Sportsmanship Award in his hometown of Houston. Trey Buchholz, Founder & CEO of First Serve National [and past president of the Sony Ericsson Open in Miami], spoke of the 1994 Sampras-Agassi final in Miami. An ailing Sampras asked Agassi for a 15-minute delay of the final. Agassi agreed and Sampras went on to win the match 5-7, 6-3, 6-3. Andre told a packed stadium that he was happy for Pete and that *he would return to win the tournament in the future*. And he did, four more times.

“What Andre did for Pete was perhaps the greatest demonstration of sportsmanship I witnessed during my 10 years with the tournament,” said Buchholz. “When one of our First Serve students does something extraordinary like that, we issue an award in honor of what Andre did that day.”

Each year, over 500 inner-city young people from 16 First Serve Chapters throughout America compete for ranking points in the First Serve National Student Athlete Competition. Ranking points are earned primarily for grades in math, science, literary arts, and history, and secondarily by competing in USTA junior tennis tournaments.

Mou Doddipalli of Houston was atop the 2007-2008 rankings for much of the 12-month Competition. Each day, Mou would take the Metro bus to the Zina Garrison Academy where he received free tennis and tutoring. He earned A’s in all 16 of the grades counted for academic points in the Competition. With just 2 weeks remaining, Mou needed to win another tournament to earn enough ranking points to take the Competition’s #1 spot in the country. With the title and a \$5,000 academic scholarship within reach, Mou set out to the state’s capital to compete. He won 3 matches, including a convincing upset over the #2 seed, to reach the finals where he would play the #1 seed. Mou lost the final in a third set tie-breaker.

Mou realized he would have one more chance at winning a tournament, in Humble, TX, on July 12<sup>th</sup> before the First Serve Competition would come to a close on July 15<sup>th</sup>. Mao won 4 straight matches to win the tournament.

With all grades in and no more tournaments to be played before the Competition deadline, the First Serve National Office declared Mou as the winner, only to learn that the computer missed 10 points from a tournament played by another competitor, which resulted in a #2 ranking for Mou. He was contacted immediately and Mou’s response was, ‘I understand and *I will win the Competition in the future*’. Like Agassi did in Miami, he probably will.

“I am inspired by Mou’s ability to combine a straight A academic record with a successful tennis tournament record,” said Agassi when he heard about Mou. Agassi added, “I feel certain that Mou has many wins in his future. His hard work and dedication will serve him well.”

In the 2008 – 2009 Competition, Mou has straight A’s on his first quarter report card and he’s won 24 of 30 USTA matches, including 4 titles. He is currently ranked #1 [by a large margin] in the Boy’s Lower/Middle School Division. As part of the sportsmanship award, Mou and his father will attend the 2009 Sony Ericsson Open in Miami.

You can track First Serve students throughout the United States as they compete in the 2008 – 2009 First Serve National Student Athlete Competition. The rankings are updated daily and can be followed throughout the year at [www.FirstServe.org](http://www.FirstServe.org).

###

### **About First Serve**

First Serve, a national 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, provides academic, life skill, and tennis programming that challenges and inspires underserved young people who are dedicated to succeed in life. First Serve Chapters are located in 18 cities across America with Affiliate Chapters in Jamaica and South Africa.

For more information, visit [www.FirstServe.org](http://www.FirstServe.org).

### **Media Contact**

First Serve National: Trey Buchholz [TBuchholz@FirstServe.org](mailto:TBuchholz@FirstServe.org)