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CHICAGO'S TOP SPORTS STARS TO BE HONORED AT ANNUAL EVENT "27th Annual Comcast SportsNet Sports Awards" presented by Baird and Blue Cross Blue Shield of Illinois televised LIVE on Comcast SportsNet on Wednesday, March 4th at 7:30 PM CT

CHICAGO, Feb. 25, 2015 – Many of Chicago's most popular professional athletes will take center stage to receive honors at the "27th Annual Comcast SportsNet Sports Awards" presented by Baird and Blue Cross Blue Shield benefiting the March of Dimes.

The live televised event will be co-hosted by WTMX-FM 101.9 morning personality Eric Ferguson and Comcast SportsNet anchor Pat Boyle. Over the past 26 years, the Comcast SportsNet Sports Awards has raised over \$12 million for the March of Dimes. The honorees chosen are top athletes from Chicago's professional teams who have made considerable contributions to their teams, as well as the Chicago community.

This year's honorees include: **PAUL KONERKO** (legendary White Sox captain, who helped lead the team to its first World Series title in 88 years), **MIKE DUNLEAVY** (veteran NBA standout whose on-court/off-court contributions have paid significant dividends for the Bulls), **BRYAN BICKELL** (gritty left winger for the Blackhawks who was a key contributor to the team's Stanley Cup title in 2013), **KYLE LONG** (starting right guard for the Bears who earned Pro Bowl honors in each of his first two NFL seasons), **HARRY SHIPP** (Chicago Fire midfielder and Lake Forest, IL, native who helped lead Notre Dame to the 2013 NCAA championship, runner-up for MLS "Rookie of the Year").

For the pinnacle moment of the evening, this year's **March of Dimes "Inspirational Athlete" award winner is 16-year-old Northlake, IL resident/USA Sled Hockey Gold Medalist BRODY ROYBAL from West Leyden H.S.** Brody has persevered as a standout athlete, student and ambassador, despite being born with a birth defect. The evening is also scheduled to include a special tribute to multiple "Sports Awards" honoree and one of Chicago's greatest superstars, the late **Ernie Banks** (1931-2015).

Attendees at this year's 27th Annual Comcast SportsNet Sports Awards can also participate in a silent auction featuring Chicago sports packages and more to support the March of Dimes mission for stronger, healthier babies.

What: 27th Annual Comcast SportsNet Sports Awards presented by Baird
Where: Hilton Chicago (720 S. Michigan Ave.)
When: Wednesday, March 4, 2015 (live broadcast begins at 7:30 p.m. on Comcast SportsNet)
Additional Info: The event will begin with a reception at 5 p.m., followed by dinner at 6:30 p.m. The awards ceremony, which will be carried live on Comcast SportsNet in HD, starts at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$500 per person and sponsorships are available. Visit marchofdimes.org/sportsawards.

Event sponsors include Comcast SportsNet, Baird and Fields Auto Group.

This year's event is presented by Baird, an employee-owned, international wealth management, capital markets, private equity and asset management firm with offices in the United States, Europe and Asia.

"Baird is pleased to sponsor the Chicago Sports Awards, recognizing excellence in Chicago professional sports and supporting the March of Dimes ongoing efforts to promote healthy pregnancies and newborns," said Randy Lyon, vice chairman of Baird. "Given the charitable focus, these awards align well with Baird's long-standing tradition of giving back to the communities in which our associates live and work."



SPORTS AWARDS

Presented by BAIRD

march of dimes

About March of Dimes

The March of Dimes is the leading nonprofit organization for pregnancy and baby health. For more than 75 years, moms and babies have benefited from March of Dimes research, education, vaccines, and breakthroughs. For the latest resources and information, visit marchofdimes.org/illinois or nacersano.org. Find us at facebook.com/marchofdimesIL, twitter.com/marchofdimesIL and instagram.com/marchofdimesIL.

Comcast SportsNet Chicago, a partnership between the Chicago Blackhawks (NHL), Chicago Bulls (NBA), Chicago Cubs (MLB), Chicago White Sox (MLB) and the NBC Sports Group, features over 275 live pro games in high definition each year. In addition, CSN delivers extensive pre/post-game coverage for its core pro team partners, as well as Chicago Bears (NFL) programming, Chicago Fire soccer game telecasts (MLS), Illinois High School Association (IHSA) championships, along with Emmy Award-winning regional sports news and analysis via SportsNet Central and SportsTalk Live. Through the network's growing digital platform, CSNChicago.com, Chicago sports fans tap into the most comprehensive and dedicated 24/7 online destination for breaking news, up-to-the-minute game previews/recaps, highlights, multimedia video clips, blogs and standout coverage from CSNChicago.com's team of "Insiders." Follow the network on Twitter via @CSNChicago.

NBC Sports Regional Networks, part of the NBC Sports Group, consist of 11 regional networks that deliver more than 2,400 live sporting events annually, along with award-winning breaking news, comprehensive analysis, digital content and original programming to more than 43 million homes. The NBC Sports Regional Networks are: Comcast SportsNet Bay Area, Comcast SportsNet California, Comcast SportsNet Chicago, Comcast SportsNet Mid-Atlantic, which serves Baltimore and Washington D.C., Comcast SportsNet New England, Comcast SportsNet Northwest, The Comcast Network, Comcast SportsNet Philadelphia and SportsNet New York. For more information, visit ComcastSportsNet.com. For more information about NBC Sports Group properties, including press releases, photos, talent and executive bios and headshots, please visit NBCSportsGroupPressBox.com.

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