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2008 College Table Tennis National Championships

April 11-13 in Rochester, Minnesota

WEBSITE: <http://www.nctta.org/champs/2008/index.html>

****NEWS RELEASE****

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COLLEGE TEAMS TRAVELING FROM NEAR - BUT MOSTLY FAR

For college kids, spring break is usually during the month of March. So why will hundreds of college students, many from hundreds of miles away, invade Rochester, Minn. this coming April? They are coming to contend for coveted National Collegiate Table Tennis Association (NCTTA) team titles. And who says it is too expensive to travel these days?

“We have athletes traveling from as far south as Puerto Rico and Miami, to as far west as Washington, and everywhere in between,” said Willy Leparulo, NCTTA President.

Of the 24 co-ed teams and 11 women’s teams from 17 geographic divisions, the University of Minnesota co-ed squad from Minneapolis will travel the shortest distance, a mere 85 miles. That strains in comparison to California schools USC, UC-San Diego, and UC-Berkeley, who will all fly nearly 2,000 miles for the event.

It has even spilled over into Canada and other countries. The University of Toronto competed in the championships the past three years. This year third-ranked University of Puerto Rico garners the international limelight.

“It is exciting to see how the level of commitment, desire, and passion for intercollegiate table tennis has amplified in such a short period of time,” said Leparulo.

On the co-ed side, top-ranked Texas Wesleyan University goes for an incredible five-peat, with repeat runner-up Princeton following close behind. Puerto Rico, Maryland, and Minnesota round out the top five.

As for the women, Texas Wesleyan and 1988 Olympic Bronze Medalist Jasna Reed hope to repeat as champions. Stanford, runner-up in 2007, looks to 2004 Olympian Whitney Ping to bring back the title they earned in 2006. NYU, Cornell, and UC-Berkeley are the other top schools hoping to battle it out for third place. Wisconsin is the closest women’s team to compete, ranked seventh in the tourney.

“Texas Wesleyan has clearly established themselves as the team to beat,” said David DelVecchio, NCTTA Treasurer. “Of course in sports, no team is unbeatable, there’s always the possibility of an upset. That’s what makes it so exciting.”