CIAA Announces Partnership with Academy Sports + Outdoors

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CHARLOTTE – The Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association (CIAA), the nation's oldest historically black athletic conference, has partnered with sporting goods and outdoor retailer Academy Sports + Outdoors.

The multi-year partnership will focus on establishing meaningful community initiatives across established markets within the CIAA footprint. Specifically, these initiatives will look to activate and amplify grassroots efforts, such as youth outreach and mentoring programs, that is inclusive of students-athletes and administrators from across the conference.

"We're excited to be partnering with Academy Sports + Outdoors. This is a great opportunity to work jointly with an industry leader to develop impactful programming within our communities," said CIAA Commissioner Jacqie McWilliams. "We value partnerships that provide our membership with access to resources and opportunities while allowing our conference to uniquely engage our fans and alumni through collaborative efforts."

Additionally, this partnership will provide Academy Sports + Outdoors exposure and engagement with the passionate fan bases throughout the CIAA during conference championships and events as well as social media activations while seeking additional opportunities to elevate the HBCU experience together.

"Academy Sports + Outdoors is proud and excited to partner with one of America's oldest athletic conferences, who has a rich tradition of athletic excellence, educational opportunity and community involvement," said Lawrence Lobpries, Academy Sports + Outdoors' senior vice president of marketing. "Through this new partnership, we're excited to implement impactful initiatives that are inclusive for everyone in our local communities."

Through this partnership, Academy Sports + Outdoors will be designated as the Official Sporting Goods and Outdoor Retailer of the CIAA and its fans.

For the latest information on the CIAA, visit theciaa.com. You can also like us on Facebook, and follow us on Twitter and Instagram.

About the CIAA

Founded in 1912, the Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association (CIAA) is the first and longest running, African American athletic conference in the U.S. and one of the most recognized conferences in Division II. The CIAA conducts 14 championships attended by more than 150,000 fans from around the country. In 2020, the conference celebrated the special 75th anniversary of its Championship Basketball Tournament - an event that has become a must-see in the African American community. The Basketball Tournament has been honored as a Champion of Economic Impact in Sports Tourism by *Sports Destination Management*, the leading publication with the largest circulation of sports event planners and tournament directors in the sports tourism market, for both 2018 and 2019. Headquartered in Charlotte, North Carolina, the CIAA is governed by the Presidents and Chancellors of its 12 member-institutions: Bowie State University, Claflin University, Elizabeth City State University, Fayetteville State University, Johnson C. Smith University, Lincoln University of Pennsylvania, Livingstone College, Saint Augustine's University, Shaw University, Virginia State University, Virginia Union University, and Winston-Salem State University. Chowan University is an associate member in football and women's bowling. For more information on the CIAA, visit theciaa.com, like us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter and Instagram.

About Academy Sports + Outdoors

Academy is one of the leading full-line sporting goods and outdoor recreation retailers in the United States. Originally founded in 1938 as a family business in Texas, Academy has grown to 259 stores across 16 contiguous states, primarily in the southern United States. Academy's mission is to provide "Fun for All" and Academy fulfills this mission with a localized merchandising strategy and value proposition that strongly connects with a broad range of consumers. Academy's product assortment focuses on key categories of outdoor, apparel, footwear and sports & recreation through both leading national brands and a portfolio of 17 private label brands, which go well beyond traditional sporting goods and apparel offerings.