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## **Washington Area Coach Named Winner Of The 2010 Bridgestone Mark Messier Youth Leadership Award**

For more than 30 years Neal Henderson has mentored thousands of boys and girls through the Fort DuPont Ice Hockey Club

**NASHVILLE, TN. (May 27, 2010)** – For his dedication to the enhancement of youth hockey and his deep devotion to teaching young players the importance of teamwork and sportsmanship, Neal Henderson, of Washington, DC, has been named winner of the 2010 Bridgestone Mark Messier Youth Leadership Award. The award, which includes a \$5,000 grant from Bridgestone Americas Tire Operations, was presented to Coach Henderson on Wednesday June 3<sup>rd</sup> in Philadelphia by hockey legend Mark Messier before Game 3 of the NHL Stanley Cup Final.

**The Bridgestone Mark Messier Youth Leadership Award** was created to reward youth hockey players or mentors for their leadership and contributions to youth sports or education. Nominations were received for the award from across the United States and Canada.

“We had so many impressive nominations for the award that it was difficult to choose a winner,” Messier said. “Coach Henderson really embodies the things that youth hockey should be about. He’s really an educator on skates who’s not only teaching young players how to be better players and teammates, he’s teaching them to be leaders both on and off the ice. He’s a very deserving recipient of the award.”

The 2010 winner, Coach Neal, in 1978 founded the Fort DuPont Ice Hockey Club in Washington, DC, which is a developmental program that provides local and inner-city youth with the opportunity to participate in an organized ice hockey program. It is the oldest minority youth hockey program in the country and the goal is to teach young people discipline, via sports activities, to establish self-esteem, a sense of purpose and to offer an incentive to excel academically. The benefits of organized sports extend far beyond the rink: the girls and boys who join the Fort DuPont Ice Hockey Club learn life skills.

“I’m humbled and I’m very honored to be receiving this award,” Henderson said. “I greatly admire the leadership and accomplishments of Mark Messier, so winning this award is especially gratifying. It’s really a testament to all of the volunteers and parents who have worked together to make the Fort DuPont Ice Hockey Club a great experience for the kids — that’s what it’s all about.”

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“This award was created to reward people like Neal, whose leadership has enriched the lives of hundreds of young athletes and improved the quality of life in his hometown,” said Dan MacDonald, Vice President, Community & Corporate Relations, Bridgestone Americas, Inc. (BSAM). “At Bridgestone Americas we have a strong commitment to community service so we’re very pleased to be able to partner with Mark and the NHL to encourage leadership in youth sports with a focus on volunteerism, sportsmanship and education.”

The Bridgestone brand is also serving as title sponsor of **The Mark Messier NHL Leadership Award Presented by Bridgestone**, which recognizes an NHL player as a superior leader in hockey, and as a contributing member of society. The award honors an individual who leads by positive example through on-ice performance, motivation of team members and a dedication to community activities and charitable causes. This year the award will be presented at the 2010 NHL Awards™ in Las Vegas on Wednesday, June 23.

### **PHOTOS:**

*Photos from this event will be available to the media on-line for free through [www.Image.net](http://www.Image.net). Media who do not already have access to Image.net should complete the registration form and use the referral code “8881” for immediate approval. The 2010 Mark Messier NHL Leadership Award presented by Bridgestone /Bridgestone Youth Leadership Award section can be found on the NHL page which is under the ‘sports’ tab on the Image.net web site.*

### **About Bridgestone Americas Tire Operations:**

*Nashville, Tenn.-based Bridgestone Americas Tire Operations (BATO) is a business unit of Bridgestone Americas, Inc., whose parent company, Bridgestone Corporation, is the world's largest tire and rubber company. Reporting into the BATO business unit are the company's Latin American tire operations, the U.S. and Canadian consumer tire businesses and the U.S. and Canadian commercial tire businesses. BATO develops, manufactures and markets Bridgestone, Firestone and associate brand tires. The business unit is focused on retail, wholesale and original equipment markets, supplying passenger, light truck, commercial vehicle, off road, motorcycle, agricultural and other tires to its customers in the Americas. In addition, through its Bridgestone Bandag Tire Solutions unit, retreading customers have access to industry-leading research and development, manufacturing, marketing and sales expertise, providing them with a total tire solution.*

### **About the NHL:**

*The National Hockey League, founded in 1917, is the second-oldest of the four major professional team sports leagues in North America. Today, the NHL consists of 30 Member Clubs, each reflecting the League’s international makeup, with players from more than 20 countries represented on team rosters. According to a Simmons Market Research study, NHL fans are younger, more educated, more affluent, and access content through digital means more than any other major professional sport. The NHL entertains more than 250 million fans each season in-arena and through its partners in national television (VERSUS, NBC, TSN, CBC, RDS, RIS, ESPN America, ASN and NHL Network™) and radio (NHL Radio™, Sirius XM Satellite Radio and XM Canada). Through the NHL Foundation, the League’s charitable arm, the NHL raises money and awareness for Hockey Fights Cancer™ and NHL Youth Development, and supports the charitable efforts of NHL players. For more information on the NHL, log on to [NHL.com](http://NHL.com).*

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