



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:

1-800-88-GATOR

Mia Hamm, Jennie Finch and Vince Carter Challenge Five Million Children to “Get 60”

National Program Helps Children Reach Goal of 60 Minutes of Physical Activity Each Day

Chapel Hill, N.C. (Dec. 1, 2005) – Mia Hamm, U.S. and World Cup soccer star; Jennie Finch, U.S. and Chicago Bandits softball star; and Vince Carter, NBA All-Star, and New Jersey Nets basketball star, are encouraging kids across the country to run, jump, skip, bike and dance their way to the recommended 60 minutes of physical activity each day. As National Champions of the Get 60 program, these celebrity athletes are challenging 5 million kids to get the daily amount of physical activity recommended by the new U.S. Department of Agriculture’s MyPyramid for Kids.

Get 60, part of the Get Kids in Action partnership between the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and The Gatorade Company, is also bringing student-athletes from more than 25 universities throughout the country into classrooms to inspire children to make physical activity part of their daily routine. The relationship between student-athletes and kids is key to motivating kids to get active.

“There is no more important message that athletes can send to kids today than to get up, get active and enjoy what you’re doing,” said Mia Hamm. “As a former UNC student-athlete, I support Get 60 because I am as passionate about encouraging kids to get active as I am about winning on the soccer field.”

Children everywhere will be able to participate in the Get 60 program through the Get Kids in Action Web site at www.getkidsinaction.org. Mia Hamm, Jennie Finch and Vince Carter will serve as mentors to help children log their physical activity each day and will provide encouragement and ideas to help them reach the goal. Parents can also visit the resource-rich Web site to learn about how they can take a more active role in their child’s health.

-more-



Get 60/page 2

Pilot studies conducted by UNC in several elementary school classrooms have shown that Get 60 appears to work. After six weeks of visits from student-athletes, 82 percent of children reported achieving 60 minutes of physical activity per day, a significant increase compared to 14 percent at the beginning.

“The success of the initial research on the Get 60 student-athlete mentorship program has prompted us to expand it to universities and schools across the country, and to encourage kids everywhere to participate in Get 60,” said Dr. Dianne Ward, the UNC director of research for Get Kids in Action and professor of nutrition at the UNC School of Public Health. “What’s unique about Get 60 is that student-athletes develop a mentoring relationship with children over the six weeks, which seems to provide increased motivation for children to get more physical activity, a key to addressing the overweight epidemic.”

Student-athletes are finding the Get 60 program as rewarding as the children they inspire.

“All of us were really psyched to get involved with Get Kids in Action because it seemed like a great cause,” said Heather O’Reilly, a UNC student-athlete who participated in one of the pilot programs. “It was awesome to work with the kids for six weeks and see them enjoy becoming more active over time.”

This fall, student-athletes at schools across the country from the University of Florida to Penn State University and the University of Washington will work closely with children to help them identify activities they would be good at and enjoy. The student-athletes will also lead kids in a weekly physical activity session and help them log their physical activity on an Activity Tracker to monitor and recognize their progress. To extend its value, Get 60 also includes components for the children’s classroom teachers, physical education teachers and parents.

“The results of this pilot study re-affirm our confidence in the Get Kids in Action partnership to identify groundbreaking solutions to the complex national issue of childhood obesity,” said Chuck Maniscalco, president of The Gatorade Company. “With our support of Get 60, Gatorade is confirming our longstanding commitment to helping kids become more active.”

The worldwide leader for number of soccer goals scored, Mia Hamm led the U.S. women’s soccer team to success in Athens in 2004. A University of North Carolina alumna, Mia was named 2001 and 2002 FIFA World Player of the year. She also was awarded U.S. Soccer’s Chevrolet Female Athlete of the Year five years in a row, from 1994-1998, a feat no one had accomplished before.

Vince Carter, another University of North Carolina alum, is a five-time NBA All-Star who led fan voting in 2000, 2001, 2002 and 2004. In addition to winning the top honor in Sydney in 2000, Vince was voted 1995-96 Gatorade Florida Boys Basketball Player of the Year and was named to *USA Today*, *Parade* and McDonald’s All-American lists.

-more-

The star pitcher for the Chicago Bandits softball team, Jennie Finch helped lead the U.S. softball team to success in Athens in 2004. A University of Arizona graduate, Jennie holds the NCAA record for the most consecutive softball wins at 60 games.

Get Kids in Action -- a four year, \$4 million partnership between UNC's School of Public Health, UNC's Department of Athletics and The Gatorade Company -- is designed to identify real and proven solutions to increase physical activity to reduce and prevent children from becoming overweight. Unlike other child activity programs, Get Kids in Action is studying the linkages between the full range of individuals who can help make a difference in this issue: physicians, families and community leaders. The Gatorade-UNC partnership counts toward the Carolina First campaign goal of \$1.8 billion. Carolina First is a comprehensive, multi-year private fund-raising campaign to support Carolina's vision of becoming the nation's leading public university.

Gatorade® Thirst Quencher, the nation's leading sports drink, was created 40 years ago at the University of Florida to help athletes stay hydrated and play their best. Backed by more than three decades of research, Gatorade is scientifically formulated and athletically proven to replace fluids and provide energy to working muscles. Research on the effects of exercise, environment, nutrition and hydration, conducted at the Gatorade Sports Science Institute, makes Gatorade the most researched sports drink in the world. For more information, visit: www.gatorade.com.

###