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January 21, 2009

ESPN WINTER X GAMES TO REMAIN IN ASPEN/SNOWMASS THROUGH 2012

New Agreement to Keep the Premier Winter Action Sports Event in Aspen for Total of 11 Years

ESPN and the Aspen Skiing Company have reached an agreement that will keep the Winter X Games, the world's signature action sports event, in Aspen/Snowmass through Winter X Games 16 in 2012. The announcement by Jack Wienert, executive director, ESPN X Games, and Mike Kaplan, President and CEO, Aspen Skiing Company, was made one day prior to the official start of Winter X Games 13, the eighth straight Winter X Games held at Buttermilk, one of Aspen/Snowmass' four mountains. The announcement is the third long-term announcement made with the two entities: in January 2004, Winter X Games and ASC announced a three-year deal to keep the event in Aspen through 2007; in January 2006, an announcement was made that the event would stay in Aspen through 2010.

Winter X Games originally rotated on a regular basis. The inaugural event was held in Snow Summit Mountain Resort, Calif. (1997), then it moved to Crested Butte, Colo., for two years (1998-1999) before moving east to Mount Snow, Vt. (2000-2001). It has been in Aspen since 2002. **As part of the new agreement, the Winter X Games will remain in Aspen/Snowmass for a total of 11 consecutive years (2002-2012).**

"This new agreement demonstrates our commitment to a good relationship, and we have that with Aspen Skiing Company, Pitkin County and the city of Aspen," said Wienert. "Our athletes, ESPN staff and sponsors love being in Aspen and we are thrilled to continue our success with Aspen/Snowmass and in this wonderful region of Colorado."

Kaplan said, "We are thrilled to keep the X Games where they belong, right here in Aspen/Snowmass, through 2012. This has become a signature event for our community and our brand. It is because of the commitment and hard work put forth by the local lodging community, local government, ASC staff, volunteers, and many others that we were able to make this extension happen. We look forward to continuing to grow our strong relationship with ESPN."

Winter X Games Snowboard gold medalist and local Aspenite, Gretchen Bleiler, said: "Having the biggest event in snowboarding in my hometown of Aspen makes it even more special. Buttermilk is a great venue, there are tons of people out supporting the event and the energy around the event is amazing."

Since Winter X Games Six in Aspen (2002), the event has seen significant growth: attendance has nearly doubled; the event is now live on ESPN and ABC; *SportsCenter* is now televised live on site; and a multitude of ESPN media platforms regularly cover the event. Last year's telecasts garnered record viewership, averaging 863,000 homes, up 17% from 2007.

WINTER X GAMES 13

The 13th annual winter action sports competition features athletes from across the globe competing for medals and prize money in the following sports: Skiing, Snowboard and Snowmobile. The event includes day and evening competitions and is free to the public.

ESPN and ABC will feature 15 hours of **live** high-definition programming Jan. 22 – Jan. 25. ESPN2 will present daily late-night highlight programs in HD from Jan. 22 – Jan. 25, resulting in eight additional hours of original HD programming for Winter X Games 13. Additionally, the Winter X Games will also be televised on ESPN's International networks to 122 countries and territories in Latin America, the Pacific Rim, Middle East, Asia, Africa, Israel and Canada.

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