



NBA NAMES PANINI EXCLUSIVE TRADING CARD PARTNER

NEW YORK, Jan. 27, 2009 – The National Basketball Association (NBA) today announced a new exclusive, multiyear licensing agreement with The Panini Group – the leading global publisher of collectibles. The new partnership will focus on redefining the domestic NBA trading card category by enhancing the relationship with existing NBA card enthusiasts, cultivating a new generation of collectors, supporting hobby shops and retailers, and by creating new product growth opportunities worldwide.

As the NBA's exclusive trading card and sticker partner, Panini will produce NBA trading cards, stickers and sticker albums beginning with the 2009-10 NBA season. Together with the NBA, Panini will provide significant retail marketing and promotional support including TV, print and on-line initiatives and in-store events for both hobby shops and retailers.

"Over the years, NBA trading cards have served as an important source to connect fans of all ages with our game," said Sal LaRocca, Executive Vice President, NBA Global Merchandising Group. "As we look to the future of our trading card business, there is general consensus, including with our current partners, Topps and Upper Deck, that moving forward with an exclusive partner is the best way for us to energize the category on a worldwide basis. We are fortunate to have had three outstanding companies interested in our trading card business and believe Panini's position as the leading global company in this industry aligns best with our global growth strategy."

LaRocca continued, "Our exclusive partnership with Panini provides us with the best opportunity to recreate the trading card market by developing the key retail channels with a variety of products and promotions geared towards all consumer segments."

Panini will leverage the strength of the NBA as a global sports league to develop the international trading card business and establish and build a sports collectibles business in the U.S. Currently, Panini has a successful North American collectibles business with consumer brands such as Disney's Hannah Montana and High School Musical, and Warner Bros.' Harry Potter, as well as with the UEFA Euro 2008 and FIFA World Cup sporting events. Internationally, Panini's leadership in the sticker category will provide additional growth opportunities for the NBA.

"As the leading global sports league, the NBA provides Panini with an international platform to expand the global trading card and collectibles markets by building our business in the U.S. and attracting new collectors around the world," said Peter Warsop, Panini Group Licensing Director.

About the NBA

The NBA reaches fans and consumers worldwide through the licensing and marketing of consumer products bearing the league's trademarks and player attributes. More than 200 licensees manufacture, sell and market NBA-branded products that are promoted worldwide and sold in more than 100,000 retail locations, in 100 countries on six continents. Major categories include video games, apparel, footwear, sporting goods and trading cards. Thirty percent of merchandise sales are generated from outside the United States.

About Panini S.p.A.

The Panini Group, established almost 50 years ago in Modena, Italy with subsidiaries throughout Europe and Latin America, is the world leader in the published collectable sector and the leading multi-national publisher of comics, children's magazines and manga in Europe and Latin America. In 2008, the Panini Group is expected to have sales of c 1 Billion US\$. The company has distribution channels in more than 100 countries and employs a staff of over 700. www.paniamerica.net

#

Media Contact: Kristin Conte, NBA, 212.407.8534 or kconte@nba.com
Betsy Lichtschein, 410.571.1498 or nbainfo@paniamerica.net