



For Immediate Release

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Hard-Hit Referees Volunteer Skills for Hurricane Katrina Victims

Washington, D.C., September 15, 2005 – Vocation is “the place where our deep gladness meets the needs of the world,” according to American author Frederick Buechner. Last Sunday, NBA referees and New Orleans natives Derrick Collins and Bennie Adams joined coaches and 26 league players in Texas to help Hurricane Katrina relief efforts by doing what they love best – basketball.

The NBA Players Hurricane Relief Game drew over 11,000 spectators to Houston’s Toyota Center to watch some of professional basketball’s current stars scrimmage for a good cause. The event was organized in less than a week by TNT basketball analyst and former NBA player Kenny Smith. The hustle was worth it; the game raised more than \$1 million for displaced victims of the storm and brought joy to the 5,000 evacuees in the audience.

Officiating the game was also a welcome event for the two referees, who needed to boost their own spirits following the Gulf area disaster.

Collins and wife Julie, who is seven months pregnant, evacuated their Slidell, Louisiana home on Saturday, August 27, the same day a federal state of emergency was declared for the region. They grabbed their dog, packed a few treasured pictures and important papers, and drove to Baton Rouge to check on relatives. Then they moved on to Houston and settled into a hotel. Uprooted, and unsure as to whether or when they will return to Slidell, the two have since found more permanent lodging and have assisted their displaced parents and other family members in locating housing in the area.

Adams splits his time between New Orleans and Los Angeles. He was in California during the hurricane, and has not been able to find anyone to check on the state of his home – which he presumes is unsalvageable. His mother, grandmother, aunts and uncles left the day before the storm hit and are now scattered throughout the South. The entire family was accounted for only yesterday.

The game itself was a capstone to a day of goodwill for the volunteer NBA group. Collins and Adams accompanied the players and coaches to shelters for the displaced throughout the Houston area, brightening the day for hurricane victims – there was much hugging, chatting, autograph-signing, and comforting.

About the NBRA

The National Basketball Referees Association represents 62 active and 14 retired referees who officiate all National Basketball Association games.