

## NBA PLAYERS GIVE BACK TO THEIR HOMELAND

### ***Three NBA Players from the Republic of Georgia, in conjunction with the U.S. Department of State, to donate sporting goods to Former Basketball Academies***

*TBILISI, GEORGIA - April 13 2004* - The National Basketball Association (NBA) and Orlando Magic forward-center Zaza Pachulia, Portland Trail Blazers center Vladimir Stepania and Denver Nuggets forward Nikoloz Tskitishvili, in conjunction with the U.S. Department of State, will donate basketball products to their former basketball academies in their native Georgia, it was announced today at a press conference at the World Sport Café in Tbilisi, Georgia at 4:00 p.m. (local).

Representing the three Georgian NBA players, U.S. Ambassador to Georgia Richard Miles, will present the donation -- basketballs, jerseys, shorts, socks, warm-ups and other merchandise -- to the three schools. Pachulia's former coach Zurab Samkharadze, Tskitishvili's former coach Kvaratskhelia Vazha and Zaur Stepania, Vladimir's father, will accept the donations on behalf of the Tbilisi Department of Education Basketball School, the Sokhumi University Team, and Stepania's two former coaches, respectively.

"This gift has special meaning for me in that the NBA resembles the America I know where its members come from all over the world," said Ambassador Miles. "It is a special treat for me to be here to recognize the contributions of the NBA and its three Georgian players, to improve basketball education in Georgia."

Giorgi Gabashvili, Minister of Culture and Sports; Tamaz Tevzadze, Deputy Minister of Culture and Sports; Irakli Medzmariashvili, Head of the Sports Federation and Bessarion Liparteliani, Chairman of the Georgian Basketball Federation Action are scheduled to take part in the press conference. Action footage of Pachulia, Stepania and Tskitishvili will be presented to the audience, which will include local students and representatives from the local government and sports ministry.

"I am happy to be able to give back to my country and to help children have a future in playing basketball," Tskitishvili said. "And to do it together with Vladimir and Zaza, it means even more."

Since its founding in 1946, the NBA has become a global phenomenon that transcends national boundaries. The NBA is a recognized leader in global sports marketing with 13 offices around the world. The 2003-04 NBA season currently features 67 international players from 33 countries and territories on team rosters, resulting in global media coverage and increasing fan interest worldwide. Basketball without Borders, the NBA and FIBA's international basketball and community relations outreach program will take place in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil June 28-July 3, Treviso, Italy July 24-27 and Johannesburg, South Africa September 6-10. For more information on the NBA, visit [www.NBA.com](http://www.NBA.com).