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USA CYCLING RANKS CHICAGO CRITERIUM #1 IN THE NATION

The time is now to partner with the City of Chicago's newest and hottest event, the **Chicago Criterium**, just named by USA Cycling as the number one Criterium bike race in the United States on the National Racing Calendar (NRC) tying with the Tour of Elk Grove. The inaugural Chicago Criterium was held in Grant Park on Sunday, July 27 2008. Buzz is already spreading for 2009 when the Chicago Criterium will be held on **Sunday, July 26** in **Grant Park** on Chicago's beautiful lakefront.

USA Cycling serves as the national governing body for the sport. Rankings for the 2009 NRC races were determined on a point scale based on input from participating team, team directors, riders and the chief official's reports. Points were given for the following criteria: 1. Event Management Experience 2. Timing and Scoring 3. Venue Quality, Location, Infrastructure, Accessibility 4. Quality of Courses: fair, safe, and challenging to riders abilities. 5. Community Support and Involvement 6. Local, Regional, and National Sponsorship Potential 7. Impact on Local, State, and Regional Calendars. Volunteer Support and 9. Overall bid presentation.

"Cycling is a great sport and the success of the Chicago Criterium is further evidence that Chicago is becoming a great international sports town," said Megan McDonald, executive director, Mayor's Office of Special Events. "We are very excited about this honor and look forward to another thrilling series of races this July on Chicago's lakefront."

The all-day event features 10 professional and amateur criterium bike races on a closed circuit loop, approximately 1.1 mile in length with the start/finish line at Buckingham Fountain. Best described as NASCAR on bikes, spectators are captivated with the fast paced straight-aways, tight 90-degree turns and the occasional pile up in the heart of Grant Park. The high speed left turn action begins on Columbus Drive heading north to East Jackson Boulevard, south on Michigan Avenue, east on Balbo Avenue, then back to Columbus Drive. All races include multiple trophies/medals, plenty of cash prizes and primes.

The Chicago Criterium is presented the City of Chicago in conjunction with Special Events Management and these generous sponsors: SRAM, Chicago Athlete Magazine, Goose Island Beer Company, Hinckley Springs, Pepsi, Athletico, Chicago Transit Authority, Whole Foods and Communications Direct. For more information, including sponsorship opportunities call (312) 744-9217 or visit www.chicagocriterium.us.

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