



**KOBE BRYANT'S 81-POINT GAME NAMED**  
**TOP SPORTS MOMENT OF 2006**

**Beverly Hills, Calif. (January 21, 2007)** – Los Angeles Lakers star **Kobe Bryant's** remarkable 81-point game last season was named Southern California's top sports moment of 2006 at the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Greatest Moments in Sports Awards, presented by the Los Angeles Sports Council.

Bryant's spectacular performance occurred on January 22, 2006, at Staples Center as the Lakers defeated the Toronto Raptors, 122-104. Bryant's 81 points is the most ever by a Laker and the second-highest point total in NBA history behind only Wilt Chamberlin's 100-point game in 1962.

Bryant's achievement was honored at a star-studded awards presentation held tonight at The Beverly Hilton and televised live by FSN PRIME TICKET.

In other award presentations, L.A. Clippers forward **Elton Brand** was selected as "Sportsman of the Year" and center **Lisa Leslie** of the L.A. Sparks was named "Sportswoman of the Year." **Ned Colletti**, general manager of the L.A. Dodgers, and Anaheim Ducks General Manager **Brian Burke** were chosen "Co-Sports Executives of the Year."

During the awards gala the overall Top 10 moments of 2006 were announced in ranked order. They are:

- 1. Kobe Bryant scores 81 points** (January 22): Bryant produced the second-highest single-game point total in NBA history in leading the Lakers to a win over Toronto.

2. **USC-Texas Rose Bowl classic** (January 4): In one of the greatest games ever in college football history, Texas quarterback Vince Young scored with 19 seconds remaining to lift the Longhorns to a 41-38 win and the national championship.
3. **Dodgers hit 4 consecutive homers** (September 19): The Dodgers blasted back-to-back-to-back-to-back solo home runs in the bottom of the 9<sup>th</sup> inning to tie the score against San Diego, then won, 11-10, on Nomar Garciaparra's two-run shot in the 10<sup>th</sup>.
4. **UCLA stops USC, 13-9** (December 2): The Bruins stunned their cross-town rivals in football to snap a seven-game series losing streak and knock the Trojans out of national championship contention.
5. **UCLA reaches Final Four** (April 3): The Bruins capped an incredible March Madness run by reaching the Final Four and Championship game for the first time in 11 years.
6. **Clippers win first playoff series** (May 1): The Clippers defeated Denver, 4 games to 1, to earn their first playoff series win since 1978.
7. **Jered Weaver wins 9 straight to begin career** (August 18): The Angels pitcher went 9-0 to start his major league career, tying Whitey Ford's rookie mark set in 1950.
8. **Ducks set NHL record for best start** (November 9): Anaheim established a new NHL record by recording at least one standings point in each of their first 16 games, going 12-0-4.
9. **Lisa Leslie scores 5,000<sup>th</sup> career point** (June 24): Leslie became the first WNBA player to total 5,000 career points.
10. **Tiger Woods wins 6 straight PGA events** (July 23-October 1): The native Southern Californian won six consecutive PGA Tour events and eight overall, retaining his No. 1 world ranking.

Sportsman of the Year honoree Brand raised his game to another level in helping lead the Clippers to their best season ever in Los Angeles and their first playoff berth in nine years. Brand has a reputation as a true sportsman based on the way he comports himself, both on and off the court. He is as consistent with his service to the community as he is with his points and rebounds. A tremendous competitor, he is also a media favorite in the locker room.

Leslie was the WNBA's MVP in 2006, her third time winning the prestigious award. Last season she was voted to the All-Star Team,

the All-Defensive Team, and the All-Decade Team, while also becoming the first WNBA player to total 5,000 career points. Leslie has been the face of the league since its inception in 1997, and continues to remain active in the L.A. community, raising awareness about physical fitness, conducting clinics and school visits, and serving as a positive role model for young girls.

In Colletti's first season in charge of the Dodgers' baseball operations, he assembled a Major League team that tied for the NL Western Division title, and oversaw the continued success of a farm system that earned the Dodgers 2006 Organization of the Year honors from *Baseball America*. Colletti hired Grady Little as manager and the team finished 17 games better than the previous season, earning the confidence of fans and media alike. In re-shaping the roster, Colletti improved the club dramatically without parting with any of the organization's talented prospects.

Burke came to the Ducks in the aftermath of the NHL lockout and immediately turned around the hockey culture surrounding the organization, including an overhaul of much of the team's roster. Burke was responsible for the hiring of Coach Randy Carlyle and the acquisition of superstars Scott Niedermayer, Chris Pronger, and Teemu Selanne. In his first year at the helm, Anaheim advanced to the 2006 Western Conference Finals, and this season the team presently owns one of the league's best records and is viewed as a Stanley Cup contender.

Eighteen other awards also were presented to each of the major local teams and universities – plus Golf, Horse Racing, Motor Sports, and Tennis – recognizing their individual greatest moment of the year. Those winners were determined by on-line fan balloting conducted by the L.A. Sports Council on its website, [www.lasports.org](http://www.lasports.org). Voting took place from Dec. 18 thru Jan. 8 and approximately 10,000 ballots were cast.

Separately, a blue-ribbon media panel chose the overall Top 10 moments and ranked them in order of importance. The panel also selected the Sportsman, Sportswoman, and Sports Executive of the Year. The panel was comprised of representatives from the local print and electronic media and was chaired by noted local sports historian Rich Perelman.

For the purposes of these awards, the concept of a moment is loosely defined. It can be a specific instant in time (such as a winning goal,

hit or shot), an individual or team milestone, an upset victory, a remarkable game, a special event, or a career achievement. Nominated moments must have taken place in the local area or have involved a local athlete or team.

The Greatest Moment of the Year in each of the following 18 categories as determined by fan voting:

### **ANGELS**

Jered Weaver's 9-0 Start Ties AL Record - Weaver opened his major league career with a 9-0 record, tying the American League record for starting pitchers by defeating the Seattle Mariners, 3-0, at Angel Stadium. Weaver tied the record set by the Yankees' Whitey Ford in 1950 (August 18).

### **AVENGERS**

Avengers Defeat Defending Champion Colorado - The Avengers defeated the defending ArenaBowl champion Colorado Crush in a 60-57 thriller before 12,276 at Staples Center (March 19).

### **CHIVAS USA**

Chivas USA Wins First Playoff Game in Team History – Chivas USA won their first-ever playoff game, 2-1, defeating the Houston Dynamo at the Home Depot Center. Goalie Brad Guzan saved a late penalty kick to preserve the victory (October 22).

### **CLIPPERS**

Clippers Win First Playoff Series – The Clippers defeated the Denver Nuggets, 101-83, at Staples Center to win their first playoff series since moving to California in 1978. The 4-1 series win put the Clippers into the Western Conference Semifinals for the first time (May 1).

### **DODGERS**

Dodgers Hit 4 Straight Home Runs – Jeff Kent, J.D. Drew, Russell Martin, and Marlon Anderson blasted consecutive solo home runs in the bottom of the ninth inning to tie the score against San Diego, then Nomar Garciaparra finished off the Padres by cracking a two-run homer in the bottom of the tenth for an historic 11-10 victory that vaulted the Boys in Blue into first place (September 19).

### **DUCKS**

Ducks Defeat Calgary in Game 7 – Rallying from a 3-2 series deficit the Ducks upset the Calgary Flames by winning games 6 and 7, shutting out the Flames, 3-0, at Calgary to win game 7 and advance to the Western Conference Semifinals (May 3).

### **GALAXY**

Galaxy Reach US Open Cup Final – By defeating the Houston Dynamo, 3-1, at Home Depot Center, the Galaxy advanced to the finals of the

Lamar Hunt U.S. Open Cup, the country's oldest team competition, for the fourth time in the last six years (September 6).

### **GOLF**

Tiger Woods Wins 6 Straight PGA Events – Southern California native Tiger Woods added to his resume by winning six PGA Tour events in a row and eight overall in 2006, retaining his ranking as the world's number one golfer (Dates of Streak: July 23 - October 1).

### **HORSE RACING**

Lava Man Wins Second Straight Gold Cup at Hollywood Park – California-bred Lava Man joined legendary Native Diver as the only multiple Hollywood Gold Cup winners in history, hanging on by a nose while spotting runner-up Ace Blue 10 pounds in the 67th running of the one-and-a-quarter-mile classic (July 8).

### **KINGS**

Luc Robitaille Sets Kings Scoring Record – Robitaille scored his 551st goal as a King, breaking Marcel Dionne's all-time franchise record. In recording a hat trick (3 goals) Luc led the Kings to an 8-6 victory over the Atlanta Thrashers at Staples Center (January 19).

### **LAKERS**

Kobe Bryant Scores 81 – With the Lakers trailing by 18 points in the 3rd quarter, Bryant fueled a furious comeback by scoring 55 points in the second half alone on route to a total of 81, a figure exceeded in NBA history only by Wilt Chamberlin's 100-point game in 1962. Final score at Staples Center: Lakers 122, Toronto Raptors 104 (January 22).

### **MOTOR SPORTS**

Kasey Kahne Sweeps Labor Day Weekend Races – Kahne became the first driver to sweep the NASCAR Nextel Cup and Busch series races at California Speedway, taking his No. 9 car to Gatorade Victory Lane twice in the same weekend. In Sunday's NASCAR Nextel Cup Sony HD 500, he grabbed the lead with just one lap to go and won by 3.427 seconds (September 2-3).

### **OLYMPIC SPORTS**

Sasha Cohen Wins Silver at Torino – In the women's figure skating competition at the Winter Olympics, Southern California native Sasha Cohen won the silver medal, her first Olympic medal (February 23).

### **SPARKS**

Lisa Leslie Becomes First in WNBA to Score 5,000 points – With a 19-foot jump shot in the first quarter against San Antonio, Leslie became the first WNBA player to total 5,000 career points. Her career-high 41 points that night led the Sparks to victory, at Staples Center (June 24).

### **TENNIS**

Pepperdine Wins NCAA Men's Tennis Championship – Finishing the season 36-2, Pepperdine claimed its first national championship in men's tennis with a thrilling victory over Georgia in the finals at Stanford University. Coach Adam Steinberg was named National Coach of the Year (May 23).

### **UCLA**

Bruins Create BCS Chaos by Defeating USC – In one of the biggest upsets in the history of the cross-town rivalry, UCLA prevented USC from advancing to the BCS Championship game by defeating the Trojans, 13-9, at the Rose Bowl. Utilizing a tenacious defense all day, the Bruins sealed the victory when Eric McNeal intercepted a John David Booty pass with just over one minute to play, their first win in the series since 1998 (December 2).

### **USC**

Trojans Top Notre Dame for 5<sup>th</sup> Straight Year - In a battle of teams ranked in the Top 10, USC convincingly defeated the Fighting Irish, 44-24, for their fifth consecutive win in the intersectional rivalry. The Trojans were led by three John David Booty touchdown passes to Dwayne Jarrett, at the Coliseum (November 26).

### **DIVISION I SCHOOLS**

Aaron Nixon's Buzzer-Beater Lifts Long Beach State Over UCI – Guard Aaron Nixon hit an off-balance three-point shot as time expired, carrying the 49ers to a 75-73 win over UC Irvine in the Big West Conference Basketball Tournament Semifinals in Anaheim. The shot was selected as ESPN's "Play of the Week" (March 10).

*The Greatest Moments event is a fundraiser for the non-profit Sports Council, which will utilize the proceeds to further its mission of promoting economic development through sports in Southern California. For further information, please visit the Sports Council website at [www.lasports.org](http://www.lasports.org).*

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