



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Recognizing the Green Sports Alliance 2018 Innovators of the Year

*Celebrating environmental innovation and achievements in sports*

**May 21, 2018: Portland, OR** – On Tuesday evening, June 26, 2018, the Green Sports Alliance will present its annual [Environmental Leadership Award](#) and [Environmental Innovators of the Year awards](#). The awards, now in their seventh year, recognize and applaud the best in sports and sustainability. LEED Platinum-certified Mercedes-Benz Stadium will play host.

This year's Environmental Leadership Award goes to ESPN. [ESPN's Corporate Citizenship](#) team, led by Vice President Kevin Martinez, champions their mission to "Serve sports fans in the community. Anytime. Anywhere." ESPN Corporate Citizenship encompasses multi-faceted community initiatives, including employee volunteerism, charitable giving, cause marketing and sustainability, while also utilizing their media assets to reach and uplift diverse communities. The core goal of their work is to use the power of sports to make the world a better place and their efforts are strategically focused across five key areas: access to sports, leadership through sports, good neighbor, environmental sustainability, and the V Foundation.

### Past honorees include:

- Jack Groh, director of NFL's Environmental Program (2017)
- Andrew Ference, captain and defenseman, Edmonton Oilers (2016)
- Doug Behar, New York Yankees vice president of stadium operations (2015)
- Gary Bettman, commissioner, National Hockey League (2014)
- Christina Weiss Lurie, owner, Philadelphia Eagles (2013)
- Allan H. Bud Selig, commissioner emeritus, Major League Baseball (2012)

No less significant, are the Environmental Innovators of the Year awards, given to both individuals and organizations for their work in the sports greening movement. This year's winners are:

Thanks to an innovative collaboration between **Aramark, BASF, Hampton Farms, and the Kansas City Chiefs**, Arrowhead Stadium became the first-ever professional sports venue to sell a pre-packed compostable peanut bag. Debuting at the November 26<sup>th</sup>, 2017 game, the compostable peanut bag was sold throughout general concessions and in-seat vending, with the goal of expanding to other areas of Arrowhead Stadium following the pilot phase. The pre-packed compostable peanut bag is now for sale at other venues.

The **Arizona Diamondbacks** added 200 new recycling bins through a partnership with Waste Management increasing recycling tonnage by 170% (314 tons recycled); partnered with Xcel Dryer to replace 50 towel dispensers with eco-friendly hand dryers resulting in reduction of 350

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miles worth of paper towels; installed low-flow flush valves on all 425 toilets and 260 urinals, in turn reducing water use in those areas by 50%; partnered with Levy Restaurants to donate 9 tons of food to a local shelter; and teamed up with UnitedHealthcare to develop a vertical garden on the exterior of the ballpark, donating fresh produce to Kitchen on the Street, a non-profit organization that aims to eliminate child hunger.

**Greg Martin, of Martin Design Partnership**, worked to renovate and redesign a golf course focused on creating an environmentally symbiotic relationship between the course and adjacent forest preserve. As a result, The Preserve at Oak Meadows provides a great golf experience, while improving water quality, expanding and protecting wetlands and native sanctuary, and supporting increased storm water management capabilities.

The **Melbourne Cricket Club** closed the loop on organics recycling at its venue, with waste produced at the Melbourne Cricket Ground treated in-house via an organics dehydrator and then turned into a soil additive used to sustain the heritage listed Yarra Park surrounding the stadium, as well as being donated to a local community garden.

In November 2017, Fiji hosted its first plastic free sports event called **Raka 7s Rugby Tournament** with 64 men and 16 women's club teams from Fiji and Solomon Islands. The organizing committee worked with food vendors to avoid using single use plastic bags, straws, utensils, cling wrap, and polystyrene foam containers. Apart from paid advertisements in the national media to socialize the plastic free sports event among fans, tournament volunteers launched a mascot and awareness campaign at the stadium on the impacts of plastic on Fiji's environment. This initiative was led by tournament sponsors Kinton International Group Limited to also ensure that single use plastic bottles were recycled in partnership with Coca-Cola Amital Limited, the Fijian Department of Environment, International Union for Conservation of Nature and the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Program.

The **Sacramento Running Association (SRA)** set out to increase their events' positive impacts on the Sacramento community by developing a systematic approach to sustainability planning for the California International Marathon (CIM). As a result, their total diversion rate increased from 38% in 2015, to over 77% in 2017. Additionally, SRA partnered with Republic Services to transport organic waste for diversion and improved organic waste collection from zero in 2015, to over 28 tons in 2017. Organic waste now accounts for over 48% of all of SRA's event waste.

**U.S. Bank Stadium**, in collaboration with the Minnesota Sports Facilities Authority, SMG, Aramark, NFL, PepsiCo, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency and Hennepin County, created a zero-waste legacy project for Super Bowl LII. Over the course of seven months, the stadium increased event-day waste diversion rates by 69%. U.S. Bank Stadium achieved a zero-waste Super Bowl on February 4, 2018, where 91% of all waste was either composted, recycled, reused or donated. Stadium partners designed a long-term waste diversion operation allowing this legacy project to be used for major events moving forward.

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**University of Texas Austin** achieved a zero-waste baseball season in spring 2017. Throughout 34 home games, they generated a total of 21.2 tons of waste and diverted 5.7 tons to recycling and 13.5 tons to compost, only sending 2 tons of waste to the landfill. Approximately 200 volunteers donated over 600 hours of their time to the cause. Fan education played a major role in achieving this milestone, as did post-game waste sorts and stakeholder collaboration. Because of the success in the baseball venue, UT Austin aims to utilize the system created at other campus athletic facilities, while decreasing costs and increasing revenue.

The **University of Washington Department of Athletics** worked to increase collaboration with students and student groups via class projects, internships and volunteer opportunities to encourage environmental and social progress in and around their facilities. The Husky Athletics Green Team works directly with fans at football games to educate around waste and as a result helped reach an 81% waste diversion rate at Husky Stadium and 53% waste diversion in parking lots and tailgating areas in 2017. This year will find the group greening off-site athletic events such as the NCAA Cross Country Regional Championships and the Pac-12 Women's Golf Championships.

**Vegan Night** during the 2016-2017 season with the **Pittsburgh Pirates and PNC Park** featured fan education, plant-based menu options, and provided an opportunity for local organizations to share their messages. In 2018, the Pirates hope to feature multiple vegan nights during the season, as the first event was deemed one of the most successful theme nights at a Pirates game to date.

The award presentations are the highlight of the Alliance's Green Sports Celebration, part of its annual [Green Sports Alliance Summit](#). The awards, now in their seventh year, recognize the best in sports and sustainability. The event is hosted the evening of June 26, 2018, at Mercedes-Benz Stadium in Atlanta and will be coupled with "A Taste of Atlanta" showcasing innovative concepts in sustainable food and beverage.

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### **Registration is Open for the Summit**

The Green Sports Alliance Summit is the most influential convening of key stakeholders from around the sporting world for the purpose of sharing best practices, inspiring positive change, and improving the communities where we live and play. [Register](#) and learn more at [greensportssummit.org](http://greensportssummit.org)

### **About Green Sports Alliance**

The Green Sports Alliance leverages the cultural and market influence of sports to promote healthy, sustainable communities where people live and play. The Alliance inspires professional sports leagues, sports governing bodies, colleges, teams, venues, their partners and millions of fans to embrace renewable energy, healthy food, recycling, water efficiency, safer chemicals and other environmentally preferable practices. Alliance members now number nearly 600 organizations and fans representing 15 leagues in 14 countries. Visit [greensportsalliance.org](http://greensportsalliance.org) for more information.

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