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JAPANESE TEAM OFFICIALLY JOINS IBL FOR 2009 SEASON

Portland, OR - The International Basketball League has announced that the Nippon Tornadoes have officially committed to join the league for the 2009 season. On Saturday March 22nd, the IBL's Commissioner Mikal Duilio received final payment to secure the deal. The Tornadoes will become the fourth nation represented in the IBL, joining China, Canada and the U.S.

The Tornadoes are owned by Mr. Katsuya Sasaki. Sasaki is a representative of the Japan Basketball Academy, and has a passion for developing the game in his home country. "Joining the IBL will not only be an exciting cultural experience," said Sasaki. "This affiliation will give Japanese players and coaches the opportunity to improve by competing against some of the best players in the world."



Mr. Katsuya Sasaki

Sasaki's vision for the Tornadoes roster is a collection of some of the top players from around Japan. Although the Tornadoes have support from Ehime Prefecture, and its capital, Matsuyama City, the team would like to have a national identity. The name 'Nippon' is an older reference to the nation of Japan.

IBL Commissioner Mikal Duilio – "Katsuya and his team are a tremendous addition to our league", further—"the fact that they chose 2009 over the 2008 season as their entry point is one of many examples of solid their decision making that shows their commitment to excellence and their commitment to stability and sustainability. The team is continually, and currently, building the correct and appropriate long term partnerships in Japan".

The IBL is uniquely able to offer Asian teams an efficient and affordable option to compete in an American professional basketball league. The IBL's system of organizing teams in regional clusters makes it possible for the league to offer an overseas team the same 'one flight guarantee' it gives its domestic owners. The Tornadoes will be based at the USBA in Blue River, Oregon, and play much of their 20 game schedule in the IBL's northwest cluster.

Adding the Tornadoes to the IBL's stable of teams is the latest success from the league's Asian Expansion Department. At least two other teams from Asia will compete in the IBL in 2009, both from China. There are also ongoing efforts to add teams from South Korea and the Philippines expected to yield results no later than the 2010 and 2011 season respectively. The Shanxi Kyilins from the CBA will play 20 games in the IBL this (2008) season.

For more information about the International Basketball League, including video and pictures of teams and players, visit www.iblhoopsonline.com