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Papa John's Names the Cleveland Browns as Sports Partner of the Year

Team recognized as part of inaugural award for success in synergizing sports/brand marketing

LOUISVILLE, Ky.--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- Sports partnerships play a critical role in the success of Papa John's marketing mix worldwide, with more than 150 partners in the U.S. alone. This year, to acknowledge top performers in this marketing strategy, Papa John's recently created an all-new Sports Partner of the Year award and recognized the Cleveland Browns as the first-ever recipient.

The winner was chosen based on a number of criteria, including how its partnership with Papa John's tapped into the passion of fans and connected them to the Papa John's brand in a way that was truly breakthrough.

The Browns were able to uniquely excel in leveraging fans' passion for the team and connect the Papa John's brand to the things fans love about football. This included developing and offering an in-market product for Papa John's, the Cleveland Brownie, which gave Papa John's customers a unique dessert that directly connected them to a long-standing Cleveland Browns icon: Brownie the Elf.

The partnership also encouraged an organic brand connection between Papa John's and the Browns by enabling fans to redeem Papa Rewards points, the brand's digital loyalty rewards program, to earn exclusive team items and nostalgic collectibles.

"The Cleveland Browns exemplify everything we look for in successful partners," said Melissa Richards-Person, Vice President of Global Field Marketing for Papa John's. "They've fostered intimacy and a close, reciprocal relationship with their fans, much like Papa John's has done through its promise of 'Better Ingredients. Better Pizza.' They've gone above and beyond in their first year of partnership, and we look forward to what's to come next season."

"It's is our distinguished honor to have been recognized for this award in partnership with the local Papa John's owner operators," said Randy Domain, vice president of corporate partnerships with the Cleveland Browns. "Papa John's has embraced the vision of true collaboration and activation with their Cleveland Browns partnership. Papa John's recognizes the passionate fan base of the Cleveland Browns, and that passion was displayed as our fans showed significant lift in supporting Papa John's programs through increased sales of pizzas on days of the week that were typically lower in sales volume."

The winner was announced onstage at this year's Papa John's International Operations Conference in Orlando, Fla., at the Rosen Shingle Creek Resort and Conference Center, on April 1.

About Papa John's

Headquartered in Louisville, Kentucky, Papa John's International, Inc. (NASDAQ: PZZA) is the world's third largest pizza delivery company. For 13 of the past 15 years, consumers have rated Papa John's No. 1 in customer satisfaction among all national pizza chains in the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI). Papa John's is the Official Pizza Sponsor of the National Football League and Super Bowl XLIX. For more information about the company or to order pizza online, visit Papa John's at www.papajohns.com. Also visit us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/PapaJohns, or on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/PapaJohns>.

For Papa John's International, Inc.
Traci Brodnax, 404-460-9659
Traci.Brodnax@edelman.com

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