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SUMO WRESTLERS WALK THROUGH JAPAN TOWN **WORLD SUMO CHALLENGE WRESTLERS SHOW OFF THEIR STUFF**

OAKLAND, Calif. – May 3, 2006 – To kick off the on-sale at 10 a.m. for the World SUMO Challenge at the Oakland Arena, four of the Sumo wrestler contestants will be walking through San Jose, San Francisco and Oakland in their *mawashis*, a traditional loin cover, on Friday, May 5th, 2006.

The WSL Mega Tour features many of the world's best Sumo wrestlers from countries including Japan, Mongolia, Poland, Germany, Bulgaria, the United States, Great Britain, Republic of Georgia, The Netherlands, Ukraine, Hungary and Norway.

On Friday, May 5th, the Sumo Walk will start in downtown San Jose at 6:30 a.m., walking along Santa Clara Street before heading to San Jose's Japan Town. Starting at 10:30 a.m., the Sumo wrestlers will walk through San Francisco's China Town along Grant Avenue, followed by a walk through Japan Town from noon until 2 p.m. and then from 2 p.m. until 3 p.m., they will be in Union Square. Starting at 3:30, the Sumos will be in Oakland at the where they will walk to China Town and end up at the Pacific Renaissance Plaza for a reception and dinner. The Sumo wrestlers walking through the various downtowns and Japan Towns include Levan Altunashvilli, Harrington Wa'a, Kaimi Kiwa, and Kaleo.

Levan Altunashvilli (height: 6 ft.; weight: 350 lbs) was born in Tbilisi, Georgia and currently resides in Brooklyn, NY. He has been wrestling since 1998, and is a two-time European Bronze medalist. In 1991, he was the World Bronze medalist. Altunashvilli is married with two children and is also an international arm wrestling champion.

Harrington Wa'a (height: 6'3"; weight: 380 lbs) hails from Hawaii, where he was the Hawaii State Junior Men's Champion and the Hawaii State High School Champion. His other titles include Aichi Tournament 1st Place and 1st Place Junior World Sumo Tournament. Harrington has been happily married for many years to Iolanda Wa'a with whom he has five beautiful children. Wa'a's favorite food is fried chicken.

Kamikiiwa, also known as Wayne Vierra, Jr. (height: 6'1"; weight: 330 lbs) is 34 years old and currently resides in Hawaii with wife Maxine and children, Megan and Simeon. Vierra has been the Hawaii State Sumo Champion since 1996. In 2000, he was the Champion in *Night of the Giants* at Lake Tahoe., and came in third place in the World Sumo Championships. Vierra is a five-time World Championship qualifier and a four-time North American Champion. From 1990 – 1991 he was a professional SUMO with the Azumazeki Stable in Japan – his fighting name is Kamikiiwa. He has been a Sumo wrestlers since the age of 15 and is coached by Dr. John Jacques.

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Kaleo (height: 6 ft.; weight 260 lbs) is 36 years old and originally from Waimanalo, Hawaii. Wrestling since the age of 18, Kaleo became the World Jr. Champion four times from 1988 through 1997. Kaleo was a member of the Takasago Stable for seven years with famous Japanese Sumo Champion Konshiki. He went as high as Makushita No. 1 (which means he was top ranking over 1,000 wrestlers). He retired early, at the top of his game and only due to sadness over the death of a beloved grandmother. Kaleo currently resides in Japan.

Sumo wrestling is one of the oldest forms of martial arts and Japan's national sport. The most notable feature of the sport is the size of the athletes, ranging from 200 to 600 pounds. Sumo opponents battle barefoot and wear a *mawashi*, a traditional loin cover. The object is to throw your opponent outside an 18-foot ring, called a *dohyo*, or knock him to the ground. Wrestlers use many moves, including the *oshi-dashi*, or push, to drive an opponent backward, and the *tzuki-dashi*, or slap, to upset an opponent's balance.

Tickets for the World S.U.M.O. Challenge at the Oakland Arena go on sale on Friday, May 5, 2006 at 10 a.m. through the Oakland Arena Box Office or through Ticketmaster by logging on to ticketmaster.com or by calling (510) 625-TIXS.

If you'd like to interview the Sumo Wrestlers, please call Jennifer Cooke at (415) 279-5558 to schedule.

Funding for this event is provided by the marketing budget of the Joint Powers Authority for the city of Oakland, county of Alameda.

The Oakland-Alameda County Coliseum Complex, including the Oakland Arena and McAfee Coliseum, is home to the Oakland Athletics, Oakland Raiders and Golden State Warriors as well as a host of other sporting events, concerts and family shows. The Coliseum Complex is jointly owned by the City of Oakland and Alameda County and managed by the Oakland Coliseum Joint Venture (OCJV), owned in majority by SMG. SMG is the world's leading company in the private development and management of public assembly facilities, including 180 properties in arenas, stadiums, convention centers, performing arts centers and recreational facilities around the world.

Big Boy Productions, LLC is a New York-based sports and entertainment company that is dedicated to developing world-class Sumo wrestling in the United States and around the globe as a professional sport.

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