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For Immediate Release

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WHEELCHAIR TENNIS ATHLETE TO COMPETE FOR ZEELAND EAST HIGH SCHOOL

Chris Melton is ranked 6th overall in the USTA Junior Division

Zeeland, Michigan, September 4, 2008 – Chris Melton, a 14 year old from Zeeland living with Spina Bifida, will be competing for the Zeeland East High School tennis team this year. Melton will be competing from his wheelchair against his teammates and opponents who are able bodied. This achievement makes him the first wheelchair tennis player, in the State of Michigan, to participate on a high school tennis team and one of only a few across the country. The one rule change for Melton is the tennis ball can bounce twice on his side of the court while everyone else is allowed only one bounce.

Melton has been playing tennis for seven years and is a member of the Grand Rapids Wheelchair Sports Association (GRWSA) where he has recently begun playing competitively across the country. Currently, he is ranked 6th overall in the country by the United States Tennis Association (USTA) junior wheelchair division and also competes in the adult Men's C division. Melton has traveled to California and trained with the US Paralympic coach and also with top U.S. junior athletes. He recently returned home from St. Louis where he was awarded both a silver and bronze ball at the USTA National Indoor Tournament.

“With Chris’ ability level at the age of 14 as well as training and playing tennis for the past few years, it has given him an early advantage over other wheelchair tennis players. If he remains dedicated to the game over the next 4 years, Chris has the potential to advance his level of playing ability and be among the top adult players in the country” stated Lynn Bender GRWSA Head Wheelchair Tennis Coach.

For more information on Chris Melton or to schedule an interview, please contact Lynn Bender GRWSA Head Wheelchair Tennis Coach at (616) 283-3377 or by email at lynncurt10s@yahoo.com. More information is also available by contacting Ray Lokers - Zeeland East High School tennis coach at (616) 457-5449 or Bonnie Melton at (616) 688-5156 (home), (616) 218-1608 (cell) or by email at bonni@ateg.us.

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About the Grand Rapids Wheelchair Sports Association:

The mission of the GRWSA is to provide and promote competitive and recreational wheelchair sports for persons with physical disabilities. The GRWSA recently hosted the Midwest Indoor Wheelchair Championships at Rockford's MVP Athletic Club. The event brought internationally ranked wheelchair tennis athletes from all over the world to compete for \$10,500 in prize money. For more information about GRWSA, please visit www.grwsa.com or call Lynn Bender at (616) 283-3377 or email at lynncurt10s@yahoo.com

About West Michigan Sports Commission:

The West Michigan Sports Commission's main goal is to promote Michigan's West Coast as the premier venue for hosting a diverse level of youth and amateur sporting events, enhancing the economy and quality of life in the region.