



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 23, 2007

**ALABAMA CENTERFIELDER EMEEL SALEM SELECTED IN NATIONAL BALLOTING
AS FIRST EVER BASEBALL RECIPIENT OF LOWE'S SENIOR CLASS AWARD**

Award for College Baseball's Top Student Athlete Presented by Lowe's at College World Series

(Omaha, NE) – A model student athlete on the field, in the classroom and in the community, centerfielder Emeel Salem of the University of Alabama has been chosen as the first winner in the baseball division of the Lowe's Senior CLASS Award. Selected by a nationwide vote of coaches, media and fans, the award is presented to college baseball's outstanding NCAA Division I senior student athlete.

The award presentation was made today on ESPN during the first championship round game of the NCAA College World Series in Omaha. Salem, who was drafted last week by the Tampa Bay Devil Rays and has reported to Fishkill, NY for the beginning of his professional career, was in Omaha with his parents to accept the award.

Earlier this year, Lowe's announced the addition of baseball and three other NCAA sports to the award program that originally was launched in 2001 with basketball. An acronym for *Celebrating Loyalty and Achievement for Staying in School*, the Lowe's Senior CLASS Award has grown into the nation's premier tribute to college seniors. The award identifies personal qualities that define a complete student athlete, with criteria including excellence in the **classroom**, **character** and **community**, as well as **competition** in sports.

"This is truly an honor for me," said Salem, a two-time Academic All-American. "To win such a prestigious award is very humbling. I have always taken my school work and off-the-field matters very seriously. I am truly honored."

On the field, Salem produced a .351 batting average as a senior to earn First Team All-Southeastern Conference honors. He finished his career with 142 consecutive starts in centerfield and set all-time Alabama career records for stolen bases (76) and triples (13).

In the classroom, he double-majored in Marketing and Spanish, carrying a 3.85 GPA. His community service has been constant, ranging from leadership roles in Life Skills programs, youth camps and student athlete advisory committees, to being a Katrina Relief volunteer, and even reaching outside the borders with a missions trip to Nicaragua and Venezuela with Athletes in Action.

-- more --

Salem recently received the 2007 Algernon Sydney Sullivan Award, the highest honor the University of Alabama offers. He was a recipient of the 2007 H. Boyd McWhorter Southeastern Conference Male Scholar-Athlete Award and has twice been named the SEC Baseball Scholar-Athlete of the Year. He is an 8-time member of both the UA President's List and the UA Dean's List.

"Emeel Salem is a quality person and very deserving of this honor," said Jim Wells, head baseball coach at Alabama. "While he is a great baseball player, he is a better student and even better person. Emeel represents what the student-athlete is all about. He had a solid career at Alabama. I am very proud of his accomplishments, both on and off the field."

"We at Lowe's are extremely excited to award the Senior CLASS Award because it is about so much more than honoring talented athletes," said **Bob Gfeller**, SVP of Marketing and Advertising at Lowe's. "The Lowe's Senior CLASS Award is about acknowledging hard-working students who embody the spirit of college athletics. Emeel has set a great example for us on the field, in the classroom and in the community as he reflects on the goals he has accomplished and the promising future ahead of him."

The Lowe's Senior CLASS Award also names an All-Senior All-America Team based on voting results of the finalists. Joining Salem on the 2007 First Team are: **Bryan Henry** of Florida State, **Austin Adams** of Texas Christian, **Andy DeLaGarza** of Coastal Carolina and **Eric Cattoni** of Saint Mary's. The Second Team consists of: **Eric Rose** of Michigan, **Ryan Gryskevicz** of Bucknell, **Brad Mills** of Arizona, **Keanon Simon** of Oklahoma State and **Aaron Ivey** of Oklahoma.

Sportscaster **Dick Enberg**, Honorary Chairman of the Lowe's Senior CLASS Award, first conceived the idea of an award for seniors in 2001 in response to the growing trend of men's basketball players leaving school early for the NBA.

Lowe's, an official Corporate Partner of the NCAA, has expanded the Senior CLASS Award program this year to include NCAA Division I men's lacrosse, men's hockey, baseball and softball in addition to men's and women's basketball. The winner in each sport has been announced at the respective NCAA Championship events.

#

ABOUT LOWE'S

With fiscal year 2005 sales of \$43.2 billion, Lowe's Companies, Inc. is a FORTUNE® 50 company that serves approximately 12 million customers a week at more than 1,360 home improvement stores in 49 states. Based in Mooresville, N.C., the 60-year old company is the second-largest home improvement retailer in the world. For more information, visit Lowe.com.

CONTACT:

Erik Miner

Premier Sports Management

913-681-6990

The Nation's Premier Award for
NCAA Senior Student Athletes



All-Senior All-America Teams

As selected in balloting for the Lowe's Senior CLASS Award by cumulative results of NCAA Division I Coaches, National Media and Fan Balloting

Baseball

First Team

| <u>First</u> | <u>Last</u> | <u>School</u> | <u>Position</u> | <u>Height</u> | <u>Weight</u> |
|---------------------|--------------------|----------------------|------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Emeel | Salem | Alabama | IF | 6'0 | 175 |
| Bryan | Henry | Florida State | P | 6'3 | 202 |
| Austin | Adams | Texas Christian | OF | 6'5 | 219 |
| Andy | DeLaGarza | Coastal Carolina | P | 6'4 | 200 |
| Eric | Cattoni | Saint Mary's | OF | 5'11 | 160 |

Second Team

| <u>First</u> | <u>Last</u> | <u>School</u> | <u>Position</u> | <u>Height</u> | <u>Weight</u> |
|---------------------|--------------------|----------------------|------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Eric | Rose | Michigan | OF | 5'11 | 185 |
| Ryan | Gryskewicz | Bucknell | P/OF | 6'3 | 195 |
| Brad | Mills | Arizona | P | 6'0 | 185 |
| Keanon | Simon | Oklahoma State | OF | 5'10 | 191 |
| Aaron | Ivey | Oklahoma | OF | 5'9 | 165 |