Make-A-Wish®

America

4742 North 24th Street, Suite 400

Phoenix, Arizona 85016-4862

602-279-WISH, 800-722-WISH

602-279-0855 fax

wish.org

NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contact:** Josh deBerge, Senior Manager, National Communications

jdeberge@wish.org or (602) 792-3185

**Kick-off Time Approaches for 9th Annual ESPN “My Wish” Series**

*Beginning July 20, ESPN will highlight four sports wishes*

*granted by Make-A-Wish®*

PHOENIX (July 18, 2014) – In order to reach elite status, athletes must possess not only natural talent, but also the ability to persevere through challenges and overcome adversity. So, it’s no wonder that wish kids often look up to world-class athletes as their role models. Wish kids – who are dealing with their own, much more threatening obstacles – gain hope and strength from watching their favorite superstars excel. For the ninth consecutive year, ESPN® will showcase the power of the sports wishes that Make-A-Wish® grants through the “My Wish” series on SportsCenter.

This year’s series begins on the morning of Sunday, July 20, and continues throughout the week. Each day until Thursday, July 24, ESPN will highlight a different wish for a child with a life-threatening medical condition. Viewers will be treated to wishes that feature the following wish-granters: Carolina Panthers’ Cam Newton, Boston Red Sox’s Dustin Pedroia, the University of Michigan football team and USA Olympic team gymnast Gabby Douglas. The series will once again be hosted by Emmy Award-winning reporter, Chris Connelly.

“Athletes have been given the rare opportunity to truly make a difference,” said Chris Connelly, who has interviewed over 50 wish kids and their parents over the course of the series. “By helping grant their one true wish, the athletes are empowering wish kids to keep a positive outlook and continue to battle for their health.”

“The ‘My Wish’ series allows sports fans to witness the transformational power of a wish,” said David Williams, president and CEO of Make-A-Wish America. “Some people familiar with Make-A-Wish may not realize that for many wish kids, a wish-come-true can be a life-altering experience that forever changes everyone involved.”

- - MORE - -

In addition to the four new sports wishes being showcased, a special compilation of the wishes will be shown on SportsCenter later in the week. Each feature will also be accessible at ESPN.com following its original air date.

# # #

**WANT TO SUPPORT “*MY WISH*” ON SOCIAL MEDIA?**



 **Suggested Twitter language:**

**Before Series** (Before Sunday, July 20)
**Tweet:** Watch the 9th annual @ESPN “My Wish” series beginning Sunday on #SportsCenter as it highlights sports wishes granted by @MakeAWish. #MyWish

**Tag:** @ESPN, @MakeAWish

**During Series** (On/After Sunday, July 20)

**Tweet:** Tune in to #SportsCenter this week for the 9th annual @ESPN “My Wish” series featuring sports wishes granted by @MakeAWish. #MyWish

**Tag:** @ESPN, @MakeAWish

**ABOUT MAKE-A-WISH®**

Make-A-Wish grants the wishes of children with life-threatening medical conditions to enrich the human experience with hope, strength and joy. According to a 2011 U.S. study of wish impact, most health professionals surveyed believe a wish-come-true has positive impacts on the health of children. Kids say wishes give them renewed strength to fight their illness, and their parents say these experiences help strengthen the entire family. Headquartered in Phoenix, Make-A-Wish is one of the world's leading children's charities, serving children in every community in the United States and its territories. With the help of generous donors and more than 25,000 volunteers, Make-A-Wish grants a wish somewhere in the country every 38 minutes. It has granted more than 240,000 wishes since its inception in 1980; more than 14,000 in 2013 alone. Visit Make-A-Wish at [www.wish.org](http://www.wish.org) to learn more.