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THE FRANKLIN INSTITUTE DEVELOPS $3.1 MILLION EXHIBIT DEDICATED TO THE SCIENCE OF SPORT
SPORTSZONE
OPENS OCTOBER 24, 2015

Philadelphia, PA, August 10, 2015—SportsZone, the all-new 3,600 square-foot state-of-the-art permanent exhibition dedicated to the precision and science of sport opens to the public on October 24. The high-energy exhibit uses full-body immersive experiences, combined with advanced media, artistic design, augmented reality and other innovative technology to illustrate how science, technology and engineering maximize an athlete’s performance potential. Developed by scientists and designers on The Franklin Institute’s award-winning Exhibits team, SportsZone replaces the popular Sports Challenge exhibit—a steady favorite for nearly 15 years, and is the first of several Franklin Institute exhibits planned for complete redesign and refurbishment in the coming years. The $3.1 million support for SportsZone is generously provided by Lead Underwriters James J. Maguire, Jr., the Maguire Foundation, and Philadelphia Insurance Companies, and by Associate Supporters William and Laura Buck, Mr. & Mrs. Ernest Scheller, Jr., and the Dow Chemical Company.

The centerpiece of the exhibition, Athletes Run, is a 40-foot long race challenge that pairs the visitor against their choice of virtual competitors, including Philadelphia Eagles Wide Receiver Jordan Matthews, Inline Speed Skater Brian Talley, Paralympic Medalists Tatyana McFadden and Richard Browne, Marathon Runner Dawn Grunnagle, and even fan favorite Phillie Phanatic—all personally involved in the filming and recording of the experience during the exhibit development phase. Athletes Run is narrated by longtime voice of the Philadelphia Eagles Merrill Reese. Other hometown sports favorites including Philadelphia 76ers center Nerlens Noel (large scale mural to show jump technique) and Philadelphia Phillies second baseman Chase Utley (full size likeness and batting helmet) are represented in the exhibition.

“Philadelphia is a legendary sports town as well as a renowned city of science. SportsZone shows the vital role science and technology play in all sports and illustrates how incredible feats of athleticism showcase science at work.” said Larry Dubinski, President and CEO, The Franklin Institute. “We are extremely grateful to the generous support of each of our donors which has allowed us to completely re-imagine one of the most popular and adored exhibits at The Franklin Institute.”

SportsZone is designed around a central narrative theme: Ready? Set. Go! and evokes the immersive look and feel of indoor and outdoor sports facilities. Each area contributes to the overall mission of the exhibit—to discover how sports connect the science of the human body, technical innovation, and laws of motion. The exhibit
features a series of 21 interactive experiences allowing visitors the opportunity to compete with others or improve on their own performance, and each focusing on a different scientific principle that is fundamental to the sport. Interactive highlights include: balance daily energy needs based on activity level and basic physiology; investigate the best fluids to drink during exercise; discover how new materials and specialized designs can make hockey sticks strong and flexible, bikes more efficient and balls bounce differently; test the force of a direct impact on model heads, one with a helmet, one without; examine how shaped skis provide greater control on a curved path; use slow-motion video to analyze and improve your pitching technique by comparing it to an expert pitching coach; practice and improve your reaction time; experience how momentum and timing affect the height of your vertical jump, and find your best surfing stance.

*SportsZone* is located on the 3rd floor of the museum and is included with general admission to The Franklin Institute.

NOTE TO EDITORS:
Hi-resolution renderings of *SportsZone* are available at [https://www.fi.edu/press-room/presskits](https://www.fi.edu/press-room/presskits)
Login: presspass

The Franklin Institute
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