



Press Contact:

Glenn Greenberg
617-574-5874
glenn.greenberg@libertymutual.com

Liberty Mutual Coach of the Year Honors for Mickey Matthews Earns \$70,000 for Local Charities and JMU Alumni Association

Harrisonburg, Va. – February 25, 2009 – Families and individuals without health insurance, youths seeking to develop character and leadership skills, young women in crisis, and people afflicted with Lou Gehrig’s disease – these are among the many beneficiaries of James Madison head football coach Mickey Matthews’ selection as the 2008 Liberty Mutual Coach of the Year. Coach Matthews and Liberty Mutual will present eight local charities and the James Madison Alumni Association with a combined \$70,000 to support their programs at halftime of the tonight’s Dukes men’s basketball game against Virginia Commonwealth at the JMU Convocation Center.

Liberty Mutual Insurance presents the winning coach from each division with \$50,000 to support his favorite civic and charitable endeavors. Coach Matthews is donating \$15,000 each to the Harrisonburg Rockingham Free Clinic and the United Way of Harrisonburg and Rockingham County; \$5,000 to the First Presbyterian Church on Court Square; \$4,000 to Rockingham Memorial Hospital; \$3,000 each to the Harrisonburg Pregnancy Center, The First Tee of Harrisonburg, and the ALS Association – DC/MD/VA Chapter; and \$2,000 to the Harrisonburg Junior Women’s Club.

“The Liberty Mutual Coach of the Year Award is special because it is much more than a personal accolade and a trophy,” said Matthews. “It empowers charitable organizations to continue and enhance their vital work, and provides educational opportunity through scholarship, all of which makes our communities better places to live and to learn. Our student-athletes should be equally proud that their performance on the field and in the classroom enables the James Madison football program to give something so meaningful back to our college and our community.”

Liberty Mutual also awards \$20,000 to the alumni association of each winning school to foster scholarship or campus programming. “We are grateful to both Coach Matthews and Liberty Mutual. This generous contribution will allow future James Madison students to benefit from the level of excellence Coach Matthews and our student-athletes have achieved,” said Ashley Privott, director of Alumni Relations and executive director of the James Madison Alumni Association.

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Chosen by a combination of votes by fans at www.coachoftheyear.com and an elite selection committee of national media and College Football Hall of Fame players and coaches, the award honors Coach Matthews as the Football Championship Subdivision (FCS) college football coach who best exemplifies responsibility and excellence on and off the field of play. In addition to receiving the charitable and scholarship monies, Coach Matthews also will receive his personal trophy at the game and will be recognized in the permanent Liberty Mutual Coach of the Year Award display at the College Football Hall of Fame in South Bend, Ind.

Coach Mickey Matthews' tenth campaign at the helm of the James Madison football team was marked by an undefeated Colonial Athletic Conference record (8-0) and 12-game winning streak that brought the team to the FCS semifinals before dropping to eventual national runner-up Montana. One element of coaching excellence is team discipline, an area in which the Dukes excelled this year having committed nearly 20 percent fewer penalties than the CAA average. Coach Matthews' student-athletes are equally disciplined in the classroom, continually producing strong Academic Progress Rates.

"Coach Matthews' performance in 2008 embodies all that makes the Liberty Mutual Coach of the Year Award different from all others: admirable sportsmanship and responsibility to his student-athletes and community, accomplishing all while delivering outstanding results on the field," said Greg Gordon, Liberty Mutual senior vice president of Marketing.

The other 2008 Liberty Mutual Coach of the Year Award winners are Nick Saban of the University of Alabama (Football Bowl Subdivision), Chuck Broyles of Pittsburg State (Kan.) University (Division II), and Larry Kehres of Mount Union (Ohio) College (Division III).

About Liberty Mutual Group

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The eighth-largest auto and home insurer in the U.S., Liberty Mutual (www.LibertyMutual.com) sells full lines of coverage for automobile, homeowners, valuable possessions, personal liability, and individual life insurance. The company is an industry leader in affinity partnerships, offering car and home insurance to employees and members of more than 10,000 companies, credit unions, professional associations and alumni groups.

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