



For Immediate Release  
December 3, 2009

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## GRITTY MCDUFF'S BREWING COMPANY LAUNCHES OFFICIAL BEER OF THE MAINE RED CLAWS, "RED CLAWS ALE," IN LANDMARK AGREEMENT

*Gritty's and Red Claws to introduce signature beer at December 10 event in Portland*

**Portland, Maine** – The Maine Red Claws ([www.maineredclaws.com](http://www.maineredclaws.com)), the new, NBA Development League's team for the Boston Celtics and the Charlotte Bobcats, today announced a ground-breaking sponsorship agreement with Maine craft brewer Gritty McDuff's Brewing Company ([www.grittys.com](http://www.grittys.com)). The arrangement authorizes Gritty's not only to produce the team's official beer, "Red Claws Ale," for sale at The Portland Exposition Building itself ("The Expo," the Red Claws' home court), but also to offer it throughout Maine in bars, restaurants, and market retailers – a creative move in NBA circles.

In a recent CNBC story about the growing popularity of D-League NBA teams ("NBA D-League on the Rise"; <http://tinyurl.com/yb4xg9j>), Darren Rovell, CNBC sports business reporter, spotlights the Maine Red Claws and praises the team for connecting with its target audience by strategically finding the right home city, and generating one of its most creative team sponsorship deals with Gritty McDuff's.



"We have been extremely fortunate to have received an incredibly warm reception from Maine companies, and our relationship with Gritty's is evidence of that," said Red Claws President and General Manager Jon Jennings. "Local companies have been eager to partner with us and have joined us in crafting creative packages that are mutually beneficial. There are some fantastic products being produced right here in Mainer's own back yard, and the Red Claws are proud to play a part in spreading the word.

"This sponsorship program with Gritty's is innovative and exactly the type of inventive, long-term partnership we hope to form with Maine-based businesses," Jennings continued. "We are proud that Gritty McDuff's thought so highly of the Red Claws to want to enter into this partnership and produce Red Claws Ale. We're looking forward to serving Red Claws Ale at the Portland Expo, and are even more excited to see it on shelves at area retailers and on tap at local bars."

"Having this kind of product-focused relationship with an NBA development team is huge news for Gritty's and for Portland," agreed Richard Pfeffer, Gritty's co-owner and publican. "We worked with the Maine Red Claws staff to create a genuinely unique sponsorship, and we all believe it's an ideal way to raise awareness of and support for Portland's new basketball team throughout the Northeast."

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## **Formal Launch Event for Red Claws Ale**

To celebrate its historic sponsorship deal with the Maine Red Claws, Gritty's McDuff's Brew Pub in Portland (396 Fore St.) will formally launch its Red Claws Ale during a celebration for fans with Red Claws players, coaches, management, and the team's dance team performers on **Thursday, December 10, from 5-8 p.m.** Red Claws players will be on hand to sign autographs, and guests can register for prize packages featuring Gritty McDuff's and Red Claws merchandise.

During the December 10 launch party, Jennings and Pfeffer will mark the occasion by making the ceremonial "first pull" on the Red Claws Ale tap, and Dajuan Eubanks, vice president of corporate partnerships for the Red Claws, will present Pfeffer with an official, signed jersey to hang on the wall of Gritty's Portland. Additional Gritty's pub locations in Freeport and Lewiston also will commemorate the launch of Red Claws Ale with food and drink specials for local fans.

## **Availability of Red Claws Ale**

As official beer of the Maine Red Claws, Gritty McDuff's beer will be the only Maine microbrew product available during games at The Expo (239 Park Avenue). Beginning December 10, Gritty's also will be offering its signature Red Claws Ale on draught at Gritty's three Maine brew pub locations (Portland, Freeport, and Lewiston/Auburn) and in select bars and restaurants in Maine. Twenty-two ounce bottles of Red Claws Ale will be available at many area retailers. A sought-after item among collectors and beer and sports enthusiasts, Red Claws Ale tap handles also will be available at Gritty's Brewtique in Portland by the first of the year.

Throughout the NBA season (December 4, 2009 – April 3, 2010), Gritty's will offer a variety of game-night specials. In addition, Gritty's will toast wins, new players, and the play-off season with a variety of pub specials and events throughout the season, with plans underway for a "Team Draft" party for fans during the official NBA Draft.

## **About the Maine Red Claws**

2009-10 will mark the inaugural season for the Maine Red Claws. The NBA D-League team will begin play in November at the Portland Expo Building. The franchise is owned and operated by Maine Basketball, LLC, which is principally owned by Bill Ryan Sr., the chairman of TD Bank, and Bill Ryan Jr., owner and operator of Oxford Plains Speedway. Jon Jennings, a partner in Maine Basketball, LLC and former Boston Celtics assistant coach, is the team's president and general manager.

## **About Gritty McDuff's Brewing Company**

Since its founding in 1988, Gritty McDuff's, Maine's first brew pub since Prohibition, has brewed creative, quality beers that have earned awards ranging from repeat First Place wins at the annual Real Ale Festival in Chicago, to its most recent award: a silver medal at the prestigious 2007 Great British Beer Festival for Gritty's cask-conditioned version of the 21 IPA. Gritty's Brew Pubs also have frequently won in statewide polls the titles of "Maine's Best Brew Pub," "Best Maine Microbrew," and "Best Bar."

In addition to brewing, Gritty McDuff's operates three popular brew pubs in Maine. Located in Portland, Freeport and Lewiston/Auburn, the locations draw crowds of all ages. Known for their four seasonal ales and five year-round ales, tempting pub fare and welcoming atmosphere, Gritty's pubs have been named an Editor's Pick by *Condé Nast Traveler*, highlighted as "a legend among New England brewpubs" by *The Boston Globe*, and cited by *Playboy.com* as one of the best bars in America. Gritty's has earned numerous accolades from a wide variety of beer blogs and industry press outlets, as well, including *Every Day with Rachael Ray*, *Forbes.com*, *DRAFT* magazine, *Cosmopolitan*, and *Santé*.

*For additional information, or to schedule an interview with Publican Richard Pfeffer  
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*Downloadable images and logos are available at [www.frontburnerpr.com/grittys](http://www.frontburnerpr.com/grittys) .*