

# IRANIAN HERITAGE NIGHT: THE NBA & HAMED HADDADI

**I**ranian Heritage Night was conceived earlier this year by Memphis Grizzlies center **HAMED HADDADI**, the 1st Iranian in the NBA, and his manager, **MAYARZOKAEI**, after groups of Iranians around the nation started to show up for informal rendezvous during the Grizzlies road games.

The first such event was initiated in Los Angeles in early 2009 by Clippers associate Farbod Azizi, and the event has garnered immense popularity and traction for the 2009-2010 NBA season. Iranian Heritage Nights are produced by **Javanan Magazine** and **One Group Events** in association with the NBA and its respective teams, and are currently being planned for Northern California (Golden State Warriors, 11/4/09) Los Angeles (Clippers, 11/29/09), Atlanta (12/16/09), Portland (1/5/10), Toronto (2/17/10), Washington (2/24/10), New York (2/27/10), Chicago (03/04/10), Boston (3/10/10), Houston (3/24/10), Orlando (4/4/10), Dallas (4/7/10) and Denver (4/12/10). Fans attending the various Iranian Heritage Nights receive commemorative t-shirts and pictures of Haddadi, in addition to unprecedented perks such as: a chance to bid on Haddadi-autographed jerseys and basketballs; early access to enter the arenas to witness courtside shoot arounds by both teams; opportunities for those under 18 to experience the NBA fun tunnel; and witnessing history as Iranian national anthem singers and dancers are slated to perform during pregame and halftime festivities. Fans also get to meet Haddadi after the game.

On the heels of his successful youth basketball camp in early September in LA (which boasted over 100 attendees and a special guest appearance by L.A. Laker forward **RON ARTEST**), Haddadi also announced that he has spearheaded his own Foundation, which will award college scholarships to high school student-athletes nationwide. Haddadi and Zokaei will also expand the basketball camp to other areas in the summer of 2010, including Northern California, New York, D.C. and Toronto. Zokaei also announced plans for a major grass-roots online voting campaign to help Haddadi garner the 2 million votes necessary to become the starting center for the Western Conference for the 2010 All-Star Game in Dallas, Texas. "With the majority of Iranians being internet savvy, and with almost 100 million of us in the world, it's conceivable that during the voting period between mid-November and mid-January, we can get Hamed elected," Zokaei explained. "A new website, [www.Vote4Haddadi.com](http://www.Vote4Haddadi.com), will soon launch."

The Nov. 4th game between the Grizzlies and the Golden State Warriors kicks off Iranian Heritage Night 2008-2009, as renowned Iranian pop singer **FARSHID AMIN** will helm national anthem duties, while popular bay area troupe **Niosha Dance Academy**, led by **Niosha Nafei Jamali**, will perform before the game. The L.A. event will feature **ANDY** singing the anthem, and dancing by **Luna Raqs**.

For more information on upcoming Iranian Heritage Night events or sponsorship opportunities, please visit [www.HaddadiHoops.com](http://www.HaddadiHoops.com), or call (310) 775-9201.

*At press time, Javanan Magazine learned that former Lakers Hall of Fame center **KAREEM ABDUL-JABBAR** was slated to be introduced as a new Grizzlies assistant coach. Abdul-Jabbar was spotted at dinner with Haddadi and a few teammates recently in Memphis. This is great news for the promising Iranian center, has learning from a mentor like Abdul-Jabbar will ensure that Haddadi will have a good role model to emulate, both on and off the court. Abdul-Jabbar has previously visited Iran and can sparsely communicate in Farsi.*