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Dick Butkus brings award to Chicago
 Ceremony to honor linebackers will raise money for charity
 Fred Mitchell
 AROUND TOWN

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Bears Hall of Fame linebacker **Dick Butkus** has reached an out-of-court settlement with the Downtown Athletic Club of Orlando to end a yearlong dispute over the use and distribution of the Butkus Award.

Under the terms of the settlement, the Orlando club has released any trademark claims to the award to the Butkus family, which will present the award in Chicago. Butkus said the first award ceremony would be during the week of Jan. 11 at the National Italian-American Sports Hall of Fame on Taylor Street and would honor the outstanding high school, college and pro linebackers of the year.

"This means we can move forward and go with what the original idea was for," Butkus said from his home in Malibu, Calif. "It's to honor the best college linebacker, but it's more important to raise money for charity for the presentation of the award."

Butkus grew up in Chicago and starred at Vocational before becoming an All-American center/linebacker at Illinois and a first-round draft pick of the Bears in 1965.

He hopes he can do some good with the award.

"What I have learned since playing and being involved in this award is that it's time to give back," Butkus said. "I don't want to sound like goody-two-shoes here, but ... what I have learned is that you have to give back."

The Downtown Athletic Club of Orlando has presented the Butkus Award to the nation's top college linebacker since 1985. The new selection process will be managed by the Chicago-based publication Pro Football Weekly, which will establish a panel of 51 scouts and journalists to narrow the field from an early-season watch list to the final honorees.

The move to Chicago will enable Butkus to use the award to generate proceeds for charitable purposes. The Orlando club expects to continue supporting the award through fundraising efforts, including an annual Pop Warner all-star game in Orlando.

Butkus is heavily involved in the anti-steroid program "I Play Clean," which warns high school athletes, coaches and parents about the dangers of steroids.

"Estimates indicate that anywhere from a half-million to a million kids are on this stuff, including young girls," Butkus said. "We need to bring an end to this."

Butkus, whose jersey No. 51 was retired by the Bears along with fellow Hall of Fame teammate **Gale Sayers'** No. 40 on Oct. 31, 1994, is seeking founders for his new initiative.

"We are looking for 51 people or companies to help with some seed money for the awards and what we want to do from here on out," Butkus said. "They don't have to be from Chicago; this is a national award. We have one [founder] from California and one from Florida already. All funds go to the Butkus Foundation."



Word on the street

The 13th annual Bears Gala, originated by **Nancy McCaskey**, will be May 10 at the United Club in

Soldier Field. More than 50 women make up the event's various committees, including the wives of Bears players, coaches, management and support personnel.

The event has raised nearly \$7 million for breast and ovarian cancer research and treatment programs. Last year's event attracted 900 people and raised more than \$600,000 through the auction items and ticket sales.



Local attractions

Big-league umpires **Ted Barrett** and **Lance Barksdale** will visit the University of Chicago Comer Children's Hospital at 10:15 a.m. Wednesday. The non-profit BLUE for Kids, founded by MLB umpires, is organizing the visit. The organization captures the spirit of the Build-A-Bear Workshop experience and brings it to the hospital. ... Carol Stream native **Ryan Diem**, a four-year letterman at Northern Illinois who has gone on to a Super Bowl-winning career as a starting tackle with the Indianapolis Colts, was honored with the NIU Outstanding Young Alumni Award for 2008 last month. ... Eagles quarterback **Donovan McNabb** and his parents, **Sam** and **Wilma McNabb**, will be in Chicago on Tuesday to help tackle high blood pressure. The McNabbs want to share their family's hypertension story to raise awareness of the risks and consequences. The McNabbs have teamed up with Novartis as part of the educational program, BP Success Zone (www.BPSuccessZone.com). ... ESPN Zone and the White Sox invite up-and-coming singers to belt out their favorite songs for a unique singing competition May 12. The winner will sing the national anthem before a Sox game. Interested participants should reserve a spot at ESPN Zone's SportsCenter Studio Store at 43 E. Ohio St. by Wednesday to reserve a slot in the competition. All contestants must be 13 or older.

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