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**GKIDS ACQUIRES NORTH AMERICAN DISTRIBUTION RIGHTS
FROM TOEI ANIMATION TO
THE FIRST SLAM DUNK**

**Japan Academy Prize-Winning Box Office Smash Hit
Feature Directed by Original Manga Creator Takehiko Inoue**



[View Trailer](#)

NEW YORK (May 1, 2023) – GKIDS, celebrating its 15th anniversary as a producer and distributor of award-winning and artist-driven animation from around the world, announced today it has acquired North American distribution rights for **THE FIRST SLAM DUNK** from globally acclaimed and industry-leading animation studio Toei Animation.

The smash hit film opened domestically in Japan on December 3, 2022, and has gone on to break box office records in a number of countries during its current international release. With a current global box office of over \$212 million, the film has become the 24th highest grossing film of all time in Japan. Upon the film's South Korea release, it climbed to #2 at the box office for its opening weekend – becoming, at the time, the most-watched Japanese movie ever in South Korea. Most recently, **THE FIRST SLAM DUNK** opened in Mainland China and with \$55.2 million reported at the box office on opening weekend, became the biggest opening ever for an imported animated film in the country.

Written and created by Takehiko Inoue, "Slam Dunk" is a beloved manga which was serialized from 1990-1996. The original manga is one of the best-selling manga series of all time, with over 170 million copies sold globally, and has been adapted to various media and video games, including a hit anime series that ran from 1993-1996. **THE FIRST SLAM DUNK** marks the first new feature-length film from the globally cherished franchise in over 28 years, as well as original manga creator Takehiko Inoue's directorial debut. The film went on to be awarded this year's Japan Academy Prize for Best Animation of the Year – marking the first nomination and win for Inoue.

GKIDS will release **THE FIRST SLAM DUNK** theatrically in the United States and Canada in both its original Japanese language and an all-new English dubbed version later this summer.

The North American distribution deal for theatrical and physical home video rights for the film was negotiated between GKIDS and Toei Animation.

"I am very thankful to our partners at Toei Animation for working together with us on what I consider one of the best sports films ever made," said David Jesteadt, president of GKIDS. "*THE FIRST SLAM DUNK* is thrilling but also deeply emotional, and it has captured the hearts of audiences worldwide. We can't wait to share the film with *SLAM DUNK* fans, as well as those who are discovering this work for the first time."

"We're thrilled to work with GKIDS to bring Toei Animation's blockbuster film *THE FIRST SLAM DUNK* to North America," said Masayuki Endo, president of Toei Animation Inc. "*THE FIRST SLAM DUNK* has been a smash hit in Asia since premiering in Japan last December and we're excited to see the response from U.S. and Canadian audiences when it premieres this summer."

"I want to welcome North American fans – both new and old – to the world of *SLAM DUNK*," said Toshiyuki Matsui, producer of *THE FIRST SLAM DUNK*. "*THE FIRST SLAM DUNK* offers the unique excitement and thrills of *SLAM DUNK* that can only be experienced in a movie theatre."

Country: Japan

Original Language: Japanese

Runtime: 124 min

Original Manga "SLAM DUNK" Written and Directed by: Takehiko Inoue

Sequence Director: Naoki Miyahara, Katsuhiko Kitada, Toshio Ohashi, Yasuhiro Motoda, Humihiko Suganuma, Haruka Kamatani,

Animation Character Designer: Takehiko Inoue, Yasuyuki Ebara

CG Director: Daiki Nakazawa

Animation Director: Yasuyuki Ebara

Art Director: Kazuo Ogura

Color Designer: Shiori Furusyo

Compositing Director: Shunsuke Nakamura

Editor: Ryuichi Takita

Sound Director: Koji Kasamatsu

Animation Producer: Kazuhiro Nishikawa

Producer: Toshiyuki Matsui

Production Company: Toei Animation, Dandelion Animation Studio

Japanese Voice Cast: Shugo Nakamura, Jun Kasama, Shinichiro Kamio, Subaru Kimura, Kenta Miyake

Official English Synopsis

Shohoku's "speedster" and point guard, Ryota Miyagi, always plays with brains and lightning speed, running circles around his opponents while feigning composure. Born and raised in Okinawa, Ryota had a brother who was three years older. Following in the footsteps of his older brother, who was a famous local player from a young age, Ryota also became addicted to basketball.

In his second year of high school, Ryota plays with the Shohoku High School basketball team along with Sakuragi, Rukawa, Akagi, and Mitsui as they take the stage at the Inter-High School National Championship. And now, they are on the brink of challenging the reigning champions, Sannoh Kogyo High School.

Official Movie Website (North America)

www.slamdunkmovie.com

Follow **THE FIRST SLAM DUNK** on social media with hashtag #SlamDunkMovie.

About GKIDS

Celebrating its 15th anniversary, GKIDS is the producer and distributor of artist-driven and award-winning animation from around the world. The company has scored an astounding 12 Best Animated Feature Oscar nominations with *The Secret*

of *Kells* in 2010, *A Cat in Paris* and *Chico & Rita* in 2012, *Ernest & Celestine* in 2014, *The Tale of The Princess Kaguya* and *Song of the Sea* in 2015, *Boy and the World* and *When Marnie Was There* in 2016, *My Life as a Zucchini* in 2017, *The Breadwinner* in 2018, *Mirai* in 2019, and *Wolfwalkers* in 2021. GKIDS handles North American distribution for the famed Studio Ghibli library of films, one of the world's most coveted animation collections with titles *Spirited Away*, *My Neighbor Totoro*, *Princess Mononoke* and others; as well as the critically acclaimed television series, NEON GENESIS EVANGELION. Also, GKIDS is the founder and host of ANIMATION IS FILM, the annual LA-based film festival which embraces the highest aspirations of animation as a cinematic art form, and is a vocal advocate for filmmakers who push the boundaries of the medium to its fullest range of artistic expressions. www.gkids.com

About Toei Animation

Based in Los Angeles, Toei Animation Inc. manages the distribution of Toei Animation's top properties, including franchise series *Dragon Ball*, *Sailor Moon*, *One Piece*, *Digimon*, *Saint Seiya* and many others, to North America, Latin America, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand. Toei Animation's Los Angeles office further handles all categories of consumer product licensing based on its film and television brands within these territories. For more information, please visit toei-animation-usa.com.

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