

BLUES LEGEND Buddy Guy JOINS LEGEND IN THE MAKING FRANK THOMAS IN NEW REEBOK TELEVISION COMMERCIAL

STOUGHTON, Ma — Reebok has teamed a legendary musician with a baseball "legend in the making" to help celebrate the start of the 1996 Major League season. Chicago icons Frank Thomas of the White Sox and blues guitarist Buddy Guy appear in the commercial, which is scheduled to break on cable and network telecasts of the National Basketball Association and other programs.

"With the kind of statistics Frank has put up, fans may think it's all come easy to him throughout his playing career," said Scott Helbing, vice president of advertising for Reebok. "As Frank points out, he had to overcome a number of disappointments to get to where he is today. He could have taken the easy way out and just 'cried the blues,'" said Helbing. "Fortunately for baseball fans he persevered."

"Hasn't always been easy for me, Mr. Guy," says Thomas as the blues legend listens in the background while playing the guitar. "Missed the cut as a high school freshman. Wasn't drafted out of high school. Wasn't selected for the '87 Pan Am Games team or the Olympics in '88." Thomas recalls. "How did I get where I am?" he asks. "Well," he answers, "if the blues don't kill you, they'll make you a mighty, mighty man."

In their respective fields, Thomas and Guy are considered "mighty, mighty men." "The Big Hurt" enters the 1996 season with a career .323 batting average after hitting .308 last season with 40 homers and 111 RBIs Thomas won consecutive American League Most Valuable Player awards in 1993-94 and was voted Major League Player of the Year by The Sporting News in 1993.

In each of his five full seasons with the White Sox, Thomas has batted at least .300, hit and least 20 homers and produced at least 100 runs scored, 100 runs-batted-in and drawn 100 bases-on-balls. No one in the history of the game has ever had five consecutive seasons above all those milestones, and certainly not in their first five seasons in the Major Leagues.

Buddy Guy began his career in the 1950s. Like Thomas, his roots are in the South (he was born in Lewtsworth, La) and moved to Chicago in 1957, where his career took off as a popular session player and successful solo artist. In 1994 Billboard awarded Guy its prestigious Century Award which is the publication's highest honor for personal creative achievement. Eric Clapton has described Buddy Guy as "the best -- the consummate-blues musician -- living hisotry."

In 1989, Guy opened his now-famous blues club, Legends, in Chicago. The club has become a stop-off point for visiting bluesmen and blues-influenced rockers.

Rebok International Ltd., headquartered in Stoughton, Mass, is a leading worldwide designer, marketer and distributor of sports, fitness and casual footwear, apparel and equipment. Principal operating units include the Reebok Division, Avia Group International Inc. and the Rockport Company Inc. Sales for 1995 totaled approximately \$3.5 billion.

Reebok can be accessed on the World Wide Web at <http://plantreebok.com>.

