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GLOBAL CHAMPIONS LEAGUE FILES COMPLAINT AGAINST THE FEDERATION EQUESTRE INTERNATIONALE OVER ANTI-COMPETITIVE EXCLUSIVITY CLAUSE

Brussels – June 8, 2015 – Global Champions League (GCL), the new show jumping league and team competition developed by Global Champions Tour (GCT), has filed a complaint with the Belgian Competition Authority in Brussels accusing the sport's governing body, the Federation Equestre Internationale (FEI), of breaching European Union competition law.

The complaint centres on the FEI imposing its so-called "exclusivity clause" on riders to prevent them competing in events not organized by the FEI itself.

The FEI exclusivity clause prohibits riders, horses, and officials from taking part in any non-FEI approved event for a period of six months prior to their participation in an FEI event. Given the year-round nature of world class competitive show jumping, the exclusivity clause effectively bans riders from taking part in non-FEI events.

The complaint also highlights that the FEI acts both as the governing body of the sport, setting the rules for all competitions, while also running its own commercial show jumping events in competition with other organizations it governs.

This action comes following more than a year of talks between GCT and the FEI over the new GCL format, which has been developed to create an exciting series that will invigorate the sport and expand its reach and popularity around the world. Team owners will recruit star riders, selecting two riders from a squad of four to compete in each week's event, resulting in a dynamic new format.

The measures sought in the complaint includes a request for an interim injunction which, if granted, would prevent the FEI from penalizing any riders, horses, owners or officials who did participate in non-FEI approved events until the case is resolved.

Initially planned for a 2015 launch, the team competition would build upon the ten successful years of GCT's existing series, the current event calendar, and associated rider and horse travel arrangements. Team competitions would take place during the GCT events.

The new format would increase interest in top-level show jumping and attract new sponsors. It is foreseen the new revenues and heightened profile would dramatically benefit riders, horse owners, spectators, and the broader equestrian community. It would also create new opportunities for developing young riders into tomorrow's professional show jumping athletes.

However, as a result of the FEI choosing not to address sanctioning the team competition in a timely manner, and further compounded by the looming threat to riders, horses, and officials posed by the FEI's anti-competitive exclusivity clause, the launch of GCL and the team competition was delayed and a legal resolution is now being sought.

Leading international sports business attorney Jean Louis-Dupont, who is representing GCL in this matter, with co-counsel Filip Tuytschaever, competition law attorney and professor, said: "The FEI exclusivity clause is a clear breach of EU competition law and is therefore illegal."

"It stifles the ability to organize and market any events in competition to those run by the FEI itself. Recent precedents involving show jumping events in both Ireland and Italy back our case."

Previously, Mr. Dupont helped lead the legal team that brought about the Bosman ruling that banned restrictions on foreign EU players within national leagues and allowed players in the EU to move to another club at the end of a contract without transfer fee. He also represented the G-14, the association of top European football teams, in the Charleroi case which resulted in an agreement between FIFA and UEFA enabling clubs to receive compensation when players are provided for national team competitions.

GCT President Jan Tops said: "It is with regret that the FEI has left us with no choice but to resort to legal action as has been the case in other sports in similar situations to overturn anti-competitive practices."

"For over a year we have entered into discussions in good faith with the FEI. We informed them of our intention to launch a team competition which has the support of riders and stakeholders and will bring about another much-needed revolution in our sport."

"In the spirit of compromise, we agreed to make some changes which it appears were designed to protect the FEI's Nations Cup. However, since then the FEI has refused to give us the go ahead and has caused us to postpone the launch at considerable expense."

Frank H. McCourt, Jr., co-owner of GCT said: "Jan and I share a vision for a new team-based competition that would bring more fans to show jumping across the world, generate a new level of excitement and energy around the sport, and redefine what it means to be an equestrian. Why the FEI would impede development of a new concept that will both advance the sport and benefit riders makes no sense unless their core mission is to protect their own commercial interests."

"Once we overcome this challenge, the real winner will be the sport of show jumping. Over time, a rapidly-growing global show jumping community will translate into new and exciting opportunities for owners, riders, managers, trainers, grooms, event organizers, equestrian product manufacturers and retailers, and so on. And, the next generation of equestrians will be attracted in greater numbers into every aspect of show jumping from places all around the world."

Since 2006, the Global Champions Tour has transformed show jumping by opening it to new audiences, offering unprecedented prize money to the world's top riders and expanded the number of participants competing in stunning city venues across the world. The tour was founded by Jan Tops, the four times Olympic equestrian and Dutch team gold medalist in the 1992 Barcelona Olympics. Its impact on the profile of the sport has seen a transformational growth in TV audiences, spectator attendances, and new international markets such as China. Its hallmark has been spectacular outdoor equestrian events in the heart of some of the world's major cities, including London, Paris, Shanghai, Miami Beach, Madrid, and Monaco.

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