

NEW, GLOBAL GRAND PRIX SAILING TOUR SET TO SAIL IN MARCH

Auckland, New Zealand -- The 2000 Swedish Match Grand Prix Sailing Tour was announced today at the America's Cup during the Louis Vuitton Cup in Auckland, New Zealand. The Tour features eight of the world's most highly regarded events from the match race circuit, spanning eight countries from March through October 2000. Swedish Match AB, Octagon World-wide, and the Match Race Association (MRA) partnered to combine these leading professional sailing events into an overall championship series. In addition, this group is working closely with The International Sailing Federation (ISAF), which will provide support services at each Tour event including the Umpire Program, the Racing Rules, event grading criteria and the World Ranking System.

The Grand Prix Sailing Tour will begin with the first race on March 21, 2000 at the Steinlager/Line 7 Cup in Auckland. In addition to over US\$400,000 in individual event prize money, the Swedish Match Grand Prix will award US\$150,000 to the top eight sailors on the Tour. The overall winners will be determined by a point system that is based on a sailor's best six finishes during the eight Grand Prix Sailing Tour events, with the first-place skipper netting US\$50,000.

"Swedish Match is proud to be a partner in the establishment of this world-wide sailing tour," said Bo Aulin, Senior Vice President, Corporate Affairs, at Swedish Match. "We are long-time supporters of international sailing with our own entry, Swedish Match, in the last Whitbread 97-98 and the annual Swedish Match Cup in Marstrand, Sweden, as the main features. We believe that the Swedish Match Grand Prix Sailing Tour can be developed into one of the world's most important sailing events along with Americas Cup and Volvo Ocean Race."

Top skippers are expected to compete in the Grand Prix Sailing Tour including Paul Cayard (USA), Russell Coutts (NZ), Peter Gilmour (JPN), Bertrand Pace (FRA), Jesper Bank (DEN), Magnus Holmberg (SWE) and Gavin Brady (HK). New, talented skippers including Andy Green (UK), James Spithill (AUS) and Dean Barker (NZ) will also have the opportunity to gain experience and compete for points and the overall prize purse.

"We are excited to be a major part of this new Tour," said Harlan Stone, President of Octagon North America. "This partnership with Swedish Match further strengthens our commitment to sailing world-wide. Octagon sees our involvement in the Tour as a great growth opportunity. It allows us to tap into the international popularity of sailing, as well as utilise our world-wide resources to further support the sport."

The Swedish Match Grand Prix Sailing Tour venues are: Steinlager/Line 7 Cup, Auckland, New Zealand; Sun Microsystems Australia Cup in Perth, Australia; ACI Cup/Match Racing Worlds, Split, Croatia; Lake Constance Match Cup, Lake Constance, Germany; Swedish Match Cup, Marstrand, Sweden; Trofeo Challenge Roberto Trombini, Ravenna, Italy; 2000 Danish Cup Open, Skovshoved Harbour, Denmark and Colorcraft Presents The King Edward VII Gold Cup, Hamilton, Bermuda. In addition to 30 hours of host broadcast television coverage, the Grand Prix Sailing Tour will distribute eight, half-hour programs world-wide through a partnership with Octagon/CSI (a leading global distributor of sports and entertainment programs).

"We are very excited about launching the Swedish Match Grand Prix Sailing Tour on the heels of the Americas Cup," said Scott MacLeod, Tour Director. "The Tour uses the same format as the America's Cup races; however, sailors compete in identically supplied racing yachts on short courses close to shoreside venues with spectators at each event. Many of the top skippers here at the America's Cup will be frequent participants on the Tour."

For additional information and updated point standings on the Grand Prix Sailing Tour, please contact Julie Segel or Christine Ryan. The Swedish Match Grand Prix Sailing Tour Internet partnership and website will be launched prior to the Steinlager Cup.

2000 Swedish Match Grand Prix Sailing Tour Events Schedule

Date	Event	Location
March 21-25 NEW ZEALAND	Steinlager/ Line 7 Cup	Auckland,
March 27-April 2 AUSTRALIA	Sun Microsystems Australia Cup	Perth,
May 23-27 CROATIA	ACI Cup/Match Racing Worlds	Split,
June 7-12 Constance, GERMANY	Lake Constance Match Cup	Lake
July 3-9 Marstrand, SWEDEN	Swedish Match Cup	
July 11-16 ITALY	Trofeo Challenge Roberto Trombini	Ravenna,
Aug. 15-20 Skovshoved Harbour, DENMARK	2000 Danish Open	
Oct. 22-29 BERMUDA	Colorcraft Presents The King Edward VII Gold Cup	Hamilton,

Swedish Match is an international group with its head office in Stockholm, Sweden. The company produces an extensive range of OTP (Other Tobacco Products: smokeless tobacco, cigars and pipe tobacco) and matches and lighters, which are sold in 140 countries. The company's sales for the twelve-month period ending September 30, 1999 were approximately US\$1.2 billion. The Swedish Match share is listed on the Stockholm Stock Exchange (SWMA) and NASDAQ (SWMAY). Octagon World-wide is a leading sports marketing and entertainment company. The Match Racing Association is a Bermuda-based association of leading professional sailing events.

Contact: Julie Segel, +1 703-905-3343, or julie.segel@octagon.com, or Christine Ryan, +1 703-905-3335, or christine.ryan@octagon.com, both of Octagon