



L'Organisation pour la Paix par le Sport



Indian and Pakistani players join forces to promote peace through Wimbledon

London 21 June, 2010 - Lotto testimonials Rohan Bopanna and Aisam-Ul-Haq Qureshi, Indian and Pakistani respectively, have decided to join forces as a doubles team at Wimbledon to help promote peace.

The two players, along with Peace and Sport, the Monaco-based and neutral international organization that works towards bringing together divided communities worldwide by encouraging dialogue and reconciliation through sport, have decided to team up at this prestigious sporting event, in order to help maintain and promote peace in their neighbouring countries.

Together with their technical supplier, Lotto Sport Italia, Bopanna and Qureshi have decided to promote this initiative by designing specially made t-shirts and sweatshirts with the high impact slogan “*Stop War, Start Tennis*”. The t-shirt will be worn during training sessions, whilst the sweatshirt will be used when entering the court before play.

Rohan, currently ranked 54th doubles player in the world, and Aisam, currently ranked 46th, have been friends for over ten years and have teamed up successfully for the last three years. Their respective countries have lived in a situation of unease and tension in the region of Kashmir since it won its independence from the British Empire in 1947. Peace and Sport would like to emphasise how much sport unites, as highlighted by the two players’ partnership.

The two tennis stars took the initiative to promote peace through sport after having noticed that communities from both countries forget hostility when they support them in international competitions. Indeed, during the first ATP tournament in Mumbai in 2007, Pakistani flags were waved inside the stadium during the final.

With the message “*Stop War! Start Tennis!*” Rohan Bopanna and Aisam-Ul-Haq Qureshi remind us that sport is a universal language that facilitates dialogue, going beyond political, racial, religious, ethnical and social differences.

Joël Bouzou, President and Founder of Peace and Sport, said: « *Rohan and Aisam are big stars in their respective countries. Their story of friendship through sport is a real inspiration for youngsters. By transmitting a message of peace, they hope to change the mentalities and attitudes in India and Pakistan as well as other areas of the world destabilized by conflict. We are extremely proud to support this message that will benefit from the extensive publicity that Wimbledon attracts.*

Alberto Fraticelli Marketing & Communications Director, from Lotto Sport Italia adds : « *It is with great pleasure and good will that we decided to develop this initiative, in fact we already support “FreeFromLaces”, the movement that through blogs, forums, social networks, music and video, collects and proposes to the entire web community content and ideas that invite the user to reflect and ponder on “laces” that limit our daily routine: those personal, mental, virtual, social, cultural and physical ties that often seem impossible to untie. Through their initiative and personal backgrounds, Aisam et Rohan are perfect incarnations of this philosophy; thanks to sport we can rise above the hate and prejudice that condemns mankind to perpetual conflict, and we are extremely proud to have international representation of our brand, through players like Rohan and Aisam.*”



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ABOUT PEACE AND SPORT

“Peace and Sport, L’Organisation pour la Paix par le Sport” is a neutral and apolitical international initiative. It is based in the Principality of Monaco and placed under the High-Patronage of HSH Prince Albert II.

Peace and Sport puts sport and its structuring values at the heart of development projects led within communities in crisis around the world. With interventions in areas of post-conflict, extreme poverty or lacking social cohesion, Peace and Sport makes sport a vehicle for tolerance, respect, sharing and citizenship at the service of sustainable peace.

Supported by governments, world sport governing bodies, international organizations, major international companies in the private sector and international sports champions, Peace and Sport creates synergies between various different stakeholders to carry out four types of action:

- Organizing an annual International Forum (next edition in Monaco, 1 - 3 December 2010)
- a Resource Centre for sport and peace,
- The Peace and Sport Awards, to reward individuals and initiatives contributing to peace,
- Locally-Based Projects; concrete actions in different regions of crisis in the world.

Today, Peace and Sport has operations in Cote d'Ivoire, Burundi, Israel-Palestine, Timor Leste, Colombia and in Haiti.

Peace and Sport was founded by Joel Bouzou, current President of the organisation. Joel Bouzou is an Olympic medallist, world champion of Modern Pentathlon and current Secretary General for the International Union of Modern Pentathlon (UIPM). He is also an Advisor to H.S.H. Prince Albert II of Monaco.

ABOUT LOTTO SPORT ITALIA

Lotto Sport Italia is the Italian leader in the production and distribution of apparel, footwear and accessories for sport. Founded in 1973, the company first started producing tennis and football footwear with international endorsers in its portfolio. A few years later, the company expanded and today its products range into 5 main sporting disciplines: football, tennis, futsal, running and fitness, along with an extensive leisure line now present in more than 80 countries worldwide and with more than 300 mono-brand stores.

Sponsorships have always been one of the keys to success for the Italian company, with tennis legends of the past and present such as John Newcombe, Boris Becker and Robin Soderling, and Francesca Schiavone to name a few, and football players of the calibre of Ruud Gullit, Andriy Shevchenko, Luca Toni and Glen Johnson, along with sponsoring numerous football teams across all five continents.