

## For Immediate Release

### **Zedan Racing Stables, Inc. Sues Churchill Downs, Inc. to Overturn its Illegal Ban of the Most-Qualified Thoroughbreds from Competing in the 150<sup>th</sup> Kentucky Derby**

*Zedan's horse, Muth, which was trained by Bob Baffert, won The Arkansas Derby, normally an automatic qualifier for the Kentucky Derby*

*Lawsuit seeks to end an arbitrary ban fueled by Churchill Downs CEO Bill Carstanjen's bitter, personal vendetta against one of racing's most successful trainers, Bob Baffert*

Lexington, KY, April 3, 2024 – [Zedan Racing Stables Inc.](#) (Zedan) announced today that it has filed a civil lawsuit in Kentucky Circuit Court against Churchill Downs Incorporated (CDI), the company that operates the Kentucky Derby. The lawsuit seeks a temporary injunction that would enjoin the illegal ban of Zedan, and all other, horses trained by storied trainer Bob Baffert from running in this year's Kentucky Derby. The lawsuit was filed after Zedan's horse, Muth, which was trained by Baffert, won the Arkansas Derby on March 30, normally an automatic qualifier for the Kentucky Derby. Muth is considered one of the fastest three-year-olds in the country.

The complaint asserts that CDI's indefinite extension of its ban on Baffert-trained horses, led by CEO Bill Carstanjen, "has no basis in law or in fact (apart from Carstanjen's inflated ego and personal vendetta), and it cannot withstand scrutiny."

Under Carstanjen's direction, CDI imposed a ban after the 2021 Kentucky Derby, which by its terms was to expire after two years on the condition that Baffert did not incur additional violations. The ban was then extended indefinitely despite Baffert having demonstrably and unequivocally complied with this stipulation. The complaint specifically alleges that CDI's most recent extension of its ban, which was publicly announced by Carstanjen in 2023:

- **Is not grounded in any contractual or common law.** CDI based its two-year ban on two 2021 agreements that were no longer in effect in 2023, rendering them inapplicable.
- **Defies the federal authority of the Horse Racing Integrity and Safety Authority (HISA).** HISA was established by Congress specifically to standardize horseracing regulations and prevent situations like this from occurring. CDI supported the creation of HISA. But at the moment, racetracks owned by CDI are the only place where Baffert-trained horses cannot race if they otherwise qualify to compete. As the complaint alleges, this is a direct challenge to HISA's authority, "imperiling the assurance of industry-wide safety and integrity that HISA is meant to ensure."
- **Threatens to undermine the preeminent value of the Kentucky Derby – CDI'S most prized asset.** This year, with the omission of the country's best horses, the Derby is "relegating the winning horse to having an asterisk next to its name." In the future, CDI is risking that "subsequent Derbies may be rendered largely irrelevant as industry leaders transition elsewhere." This scenario has outsized adverse implications for CDI's key stakeholders, including its venerable institutional shareholders like BlackRock, Fidelity and

Vanguard, and for the Commonwealth of Kentucky, which depends on both the Derby as a key source of revenue and on the thoroughbred horseracing business as a major driver of economic growth. Carstanjen, the complaint alleges, is consequently “putting his own personal interests above those of all stakeholders.”

“I am a longtime admirer of the Kentucky Derby and specifically headquartered my stables in the Commonwealth of Kentucky because it is world renowned for horse breeding. Bringing this lawsuit is the last thing I ever wanted or expected. But due to Bill Carstanjen’s vindictive personal vendetta against our stable’s trainer Bob Baffert – who happens to be one of the most legendary trainers in the history of our sport – the horse racing industry I revere is being compromised,” said, Amr Zedan, the Founder of Zedan Racing Stables Inc. “Because of the unjustified ban horse racing fans in the grandstand and around the world will be deprived of the most competitive and best possible Run for the Roses on its auspicious 150th anniversary. Mr. Carstajen has refused any attempts at negotiations, even though his egotistical decision is inflicting an undeniable yet completely avoidable wound to the sport of horseracing, which is a point of pride for Louisville, the Commonwealth of Kentucky and the entire country. Consequently, this lawsuit is the only means available for our stable to seek an end to CDI’s injustice, and ensure that only the best possible Thoroughbreds can compete on May 4<sup>th</sup>.”

Zedan Racing Stables is seeking a temporary and permanent suspension of CDI’s ban so that any qualified horses trained by Bob Baffert can compete in the 150th Kentucky Derby on May 4, 2024, and future Kentucky Derbies.

Zedan Racing Stables is represented in this matter by a team led by John Quinn of the law firm Quinn Emanuel Urquhart & Sullivan, LLP and local counsel at Wicker Brammell.

### **About Zedan Racing Stables:**

Zedan Racing Stables, Inc. is the Thoroughbred racing venture of businessman and philanthropist Amr F. Zedan that he founded in 2016. Zedan Racing Stables is proudly headquartered in Lexington, Kentucky, and has competed on the world’s largest stages, including the Dubai World Cup, the Saudi Cup and the Breeders’ Cup. More information about Zadan Racing is available [here](#).

### **Media Contact:**

Andrew Frank / Eric Andrus  
KARV  
[ZRSMedia@KARV.global](mailto:ZRSMedia@KARV.global)