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Une version française est également disponible

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Akaash Maharaj Stands Down as CEO of Equine Canada

Ottawa, ON — It is with sincere regret that Equine Canada reports that Akaash Maharaj has announced his decision to stand down from his post as our Chief Executive Officer. Akaash accepted the position of CEO in 2008, stating that he would remain in the role for one quadrennial cycle.

“The years have rushed by faster than I could ever have imagined,” said Akaash. “It has been a time of many joys and friendships, and leaving is more difficult than I had expected. In a life blessed beyond my deserts, one of my greatest privileges has been the opportunity to serve my country and my sport by helping to build Equine Canada into a national institution worthy of its name. But I feel as strongly today as I did when I began, that for any institution to progress, it must periodically rejuvenate itself with new leadership, new perspectives, and new blood.”

Before joining Equine Canada, Akaash rode for Canada in Equestrian Combat Sports, and was a triple gold medallist at the International Championships in the FEI regional discipline of Tent Pegging. He is the first national equestrian athlete to serve as the professional head of the federation.

As Akaash arrived as our CEO, Equine Canada achieved Canada’s greatest Olympic medal results and our greatest Paralympic medal results of all time, and as his tenure continued, we achieved our largest number of FEI World Equestrian Games medals of all time. Equine Canada also secured our highest private revenue, our highest public revenue, and our largest membership of all time.

Simultaneously, the federation implemented a series of fundamental constitutional and organisational reforms, to strengthen our institution, to professionalise our services, and to increase direct accountability to our individual members. While carrying out these reforms, Akaash was invited by the International Equestrian Federation (FEI) to chair its worldwide Constitutional Task Force, and invited by the Canadian Olympic Committee to serve on its national Ethics and Governance Committee.

"Akaash rode into the world of high performance sport as a breath of fresh air, in what is often a turbulent and conflicted place," said Chris Rudge, former CEO of the Canadian Olympic Committee. "His calm demeanour, gentle comportment, unparalleled intellect, and mastery of the nuance of his sport quickly raised the profile of Equine Canada, and moved his federation to a position of leadership among Canadian national sport federations. He stood out as a leader among his peers, and his integrity and principle set him apart in a world that is all too often distorted by the intoxication of power. He will be missed by all sport in Canada, and his legacy will endure beyond the exceptional achievements of equestrian sport on the international stage during his tenure."

"It has been a pleasure to work with Akaash for almost four years," said Mike Gallagher, president of Equine Canada. "I think his most positive asset has been his tremendous public speaking skills that have helped Equine Canada present their position at several forums."

"I intend to take pause to catch my breath after the whirlwind pace of governance of the national equestrian system," said Akaash, "and I am looking forward to having some time of my own again, to ride my horse and to reflect before beginning the next chapter of my life. The moment has come for me to ride off into the sunset, and I hope that Canadians will judge that I leave Canadian equestrianism stronger than when I arrived."

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About Equine Canada

Equine Canada is Canada's national governing body for equestrianism. A member-driven, charitable institution, it is the executive branch of the Canadian Equestrian Team, and the national authority for equestrian competition; the national voice for recreational riders; and the national association for equine welfare, breeding, and industry. Equine Canada is recognised by the Government of Canada, the International Equestrian Federation (FEI), and the Canadian Olympic Committee as the national organisation representing equestrian sport and equine interests. For more information about Equine Canada, please visit www.equinecanada.ca .

Attached Photo (above)

Akaash Maharaj riding for UNICEF Team Canada, on the stallion Shomool, at the FEI International Tent Pegging Championships in the Sultanate of Oman.

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