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9	UNITED STATES	S DISTRICT COURT
10	EASTERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA	
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12	NATALIE RYAN,)
	TWITTELE RIVIN,) Case Number:
13	Plaintiff,)
14	VS.) COMPLAINT FOR DAMAGES
15	PROFESSIONAL DISC GOLF) 1. UNRUH CIVIL RIGHTS ACT
16	ASSOCIATION, DISC GOLF USA,) (CAL. CIV. CODE § 51)) 2. UNFAIR COMPETITON (CAL.
17	LLC, dba DISC GOLF PRO TOUR,) BUS. & PROF. CODE § 17200 et.
18	and 1000 RATED PRODUCTIONS,) seq.)
19	D. C. 1.) 3. INTENTIONAL
	Defendants.) INTERFERENCE WITH) PROSPECTIVE ECONOMIC
20) ADVANTAGE
21)
22) DEMAND FOR JURY TRIAL
23		
24	Disintiff NATALIE DVAN alloc	_
25	Plaintiff NATALIE RYAN alleges as follows: <u>INTRODUCTION</u>	
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	1. Plaintiff is a female professional disc golfer who is transgender. She is	
27	member of the Professional Disc Golf Association ("PDGA") and was a	
28	competitor in the female professional open division on the Disc Golf Pro Tour in	

2022, where she garnered two "Elite Series" victories and finished the tour ranked 1 in the top ten, qualifying to compete on the Tour again in 2023. In November of 2 2022, the Professional Disc Golf Association adopted a rule requiring any 3 transgender woman to have undergone gender-affirming treatment before the age of 12 years-old in order to compete in the female professional open divisions of its elite events. The Disc Golf Pro Tour ("DGPT") simultaneously adopted the same criteria for participation in the female professional open division of all its events. Because Plaintiff did not have gender-affirming treatment prior to her 12th 8 birthday, she has now been deemed ineligible to participate in the female professional open division of DGPT events by the PDGA and DGPT. Plaintiff 10 11 alleges that the policy adopted by the PDGA and DGPT is arbitrary and capricious 12 and in violation of Plaintiff's right to be free from discrimination based on her

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

- 2. Plaintiff NATALIE RYAN ("Plaintiff") is a female citizen of the state of Virginia.
- 3. Defendant PROFESSIONAL DISC GOLF ASSOCIATION ("PDGA) is a Colorado nonprofit corporation headquartered in Appling, Georgia. According to its Articles of Incorporation, the purpose of the PDGA is the "promotion and governance of the sport of disc golf." The PDGA sanctions professional and amateur disc golf tournaments in California, including the OTB Open presented by MVP Disc Sports, scheduled to take place May 12-14, 2023, in Stockton, California ("OTB Open").
- 4. Defendant DISC GOLF USA, LLC is a Delaware Corporation headquartered in Jeffersonville, Vermont and doing business as Disc Golf Pro Tour ("DGPT"). The DGPT is "The Official Pro Tour of the PDGA." The OTB Open is an "elite series" event on the 2023 Disc Golf Pro Tour.

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- 5. Defendant 1000 Rated Productions is a disc golf events corporation incorporated in California and headquartered in San Francisco, California and is the administrator of the OTB Open.
- 6. Jurisdiction in the U.S. District Court of the Eastern District of California is proper pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1332, Federal Diversity Jurisdiction in that Plaintiff is a citizen of Virginia, Defendant PDGA is incorporated in Colorado, with its principal place of business in Appling, Georgia, Defendant DGPT is incorporated in Delaware, with its principal place of business in Jeffersonville, Vermont, Defendant 1000 Rated Productions is incorporated and headquartered in California.
- 7. The amount in controversy exceeds \$75,000 exclusive of interests and costs.
- 8. Venue is proper in this court under 20 U.S.C. § 1367 as the action arises from conduct which occurs in Stockton, San Joaquin County.

PARTIES TO THE CIVIL ACTION

- 9. Plaintiff is informed and believes and, on that basis, alleges that each of the named Defendants is legally responsible in some manner for the occurrences herein alleged and that the injuries herein alleged were caused by the acts and/or omissions of such Defendants.
- 10. Plaintiff herein alleges that the Defendants, and each of them, did conspire together and/or aid and abet the others to violate Plaintiff's rights as alleged herein.
- 11. Plaintiff is informed and believes and, on that basis, alleges that there exists, and at all times relevant to this Complaint, existed, a unity of interests between certain of the Defendants, such that any individuality and separateness between these certain Defendants are the alter ego of other Defendants and each exerted control over the other(s). Adherence to the fiction of the separate existence

of these certain Defendants as entities distinct from other certain Defendants will permit an abuse of the corporate privilege and would sanction fraud and/or promote injustice.

FACTS COMMON TO ALL CAUSES OF ACTION

- 12. Plaintiff is a transgender woman, and as such, is within a class of persons protected by the Unruh Act based on gender. Plaintiff has felt like a female since birth and in January of 2018 had gender-affirming surgery. Plaintiff is recognized under California law as a woman.
- 13. Plaintiff is a member of the PDGA and has been so since 2018. At all times, she has been registered as a woman. She is assigned PDGA number 114560.
- 14. Plaintiff first competed in PDGA-sanctioned disc golf tournaments in March of 2019. Since then, she has competed in 61 PDGA-sanctioned tournaments. In 60 of those tournaments, she competed in a female-protected division. The only exception came at a single "C-tier" event that offered no female protected divisions.
- 15. In 2021, Plaintiff competed in five DGPT National Tour events in the Female Professional Open ("FPO") division. Her average finish was 16th place and she earned a total of \$1653.00 in prize money. She also placed second in a DGPT Silver Series event, earning \$750.00.
- 16. In 2022, Plaintiff competed in the FPO division of 13 DGPT Elite Series events. She won two events, had four top-ten finishes, and earned \$19,360.00 in prize money, while finishing the tour as the ninth-rated player in the FPO division. She earned a "tour card" for 2023, entitling her to early and automatic registration into all DGPT events in 2023 and other associated benefits for which she paid \$5077.00.
- 17. In December of 2022, as a direct response to Plaintiff's success on the DGPT, the PDGA adopted new rules regarding the eligibility of transgender

women to participate in the FPO division in 2023. The new policy bans any transgender woman from competing in the FPO division of its major professional events unless they have undergone gender-affirming treatment prior to the age of 12. At the time of its decision, the PDGA knew that Plaintiff would be ineligible to compete under such guidelines. At the same time, the PDGA adopted an alternate policy for non-elite female-protected divisions based upon a minimum length of gender-affirming treatment and maximum blood levels of testosterone. The PDGA left the "Official Pro Tour of the PDGA" to decide for itself which policy to adopt.

- 18. The DGPT immediately announced that it would adopt the policy banning any transgender woman from competing in its events unless they have undergone gender-affirming treatment prior to the age of 12. At the time of its decision, the DGPT knew that Plaintiff would be ineligible to compete under such guidelines.
- 19. On January 24, 2023, the PDGA sent an email to Plaintiff indicating that Plaintiff is not eligible to participate in DGPT events and directing Plaintiff to complete a "gender eligibility verification" form.
- 20. On February 7, 2023, the DGPT sent an email to Plaintiff notifying her that the PDGA had informed it that Plaintiff was ineligible for the FPO division at DGPT events for the 2023 season, even though she had qualified for a tour card by her performance in 2023.

Claims Against the PDGA

- 21. PDGA is a business establishment for the purposes of the Unruh Civil Rights Act, Cal. Civ. Code § 51.
- 22. PDGA is responsible for establishing eligibility criteria for the tournaments it sanctions and providing such eligibility determinations to tournament directors.

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- 23. PDGA has established discriminatory guidelines for the participation of transgender women, including Plaintiff, in the FPO division of professional major events and DGPT events by requiring that transgender women undergo gender-affirming treatment prior to the age of 12 in order to compete in said events.
- 24. Plaintiff's inability to compete in the FPO division of professional major and DGPT events sanctioned by the PDGA has limited her professional disc golf career.
- 25. PDGA's policy of requiring its transgender women members to undergo gender-affirming treatment prior to the age of 12 in order to compete in the FPO division of its professional major and DGPT events has denied Plaintiff and other transgender women, who in the eyes of California law are women, full and equal access to the accommodations, advantages, facilities, privileges, and/or services of Defendant's organizations.
- 26. PDGA acted intentionally to discriminate as a business establishment in violation of the Unruh Civil Rights Act, Cal. Civ. Code § 51. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and thereupon alleges, that PDGA and/or its employees sought to preclude Plaintiff from access to competition in the FPO division of professional major and DGPT events and the associated attendant accommodations, advantages, facilities, privileges, and services because of her gender as a transgender woman. Plaintiff is further informed and believes, and thereupon alleges, that the exclusion of transgender women from competition in the FPO division of professional major and DGPT events and the associated attendant accommodations, advantages, facilities, privileges, and services is the policy of the PDGA.

27. Plaintiff suffered damages that include economic losses, mental suffering, emotional distress, grief, anxiety, humiliation, shock, indignity, and embarrassment.

Claims Against the DGPT

- 28. DGPT is a business establishment for the purposes of the Unruh Civil Rights Act, Cal. Civ. Code § 51.
- 29. In 2021 and 2022 DGPT had no rule that transgender women must undergo gender-affirming treatment prior to the age of 12 in order to compete in its FPO division. Thus, Plaintiff was eligible to compete and did compete in the FPO division of DGPT events in 2021 and 2022, and qualified to compete in 2023 before DGPT adopted the policy at issue.
- 30. DGPT has established discriminatory guidelines for the participation of transgender women, including Plaintiff, in the FPO division of DGPT events by requiring that transgender women undergo gender-affirming treatment prior to the age of 12 in order to compete in said events.
- 31. Plaintiff's inability to compete in the FPO division of DGPT events has limited her professional disc golf career.
- 32. DGPT's policy of requiring its transgender women members to undergo gender-affirming treatment prior to the age of 12 in order to compete in the FPO division of its events has denied Plaintiff and other transgender women, who in the eyes of California law are women, full and equal access to the accommodations, advantages, facilities, privileges, and/or services of Defendant's organizations.
- 33. DGPT acted intentionally to discriminate as a business establishment in violation of the Unruh Civil Rights Act, Cal. Civ. Code § 51. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and thereupon alleges, that DGPT and/or its employees sought to preclude Plaintiff from access to competition in the FPO division of

DGPT events and the associated attendant accommodations, advantages, facilities, privileges, and services because of her gender as a transgender woman. Plaintiff is further informed and believes, and thereupon alleges, that the exclusion of transgender women from competition in the FPO division of DGPT events and the associated attendant accommodations, advantages, facilities, privileges, and services is the policy of the DGPT.

34. Plaintiff suffered damages that include economic losses, mental suffering, emotional distress, grief, anxiety, humiliation, shock, indignity, and embarrassment.

CLAIMS FOR RELIEF

-COUNT ONE-

Violations of the Unruh Civil Rights Act
(Cal. Civ. Code § 51)

(Against All Defendants)

35. Plaintiff incorporates by reference the allegations contained in the paragraphs above as though fully set forth herein.

PDGA

- 36. Plaintiff was subjected to the above-referenced conduct, including but not limited to discrimination on the basis of gender by the PDGA.
- 37. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and thereupon alleges, that she was targeted for discrimination on the basis of gender because she is a woman who did not receive gender-affirming treatment before the age of 12.
- 38. At all times relevant, PDGA has had an explicit policy of requiring transgender women to have undergone gender-affirming treatment before the age of 12 in order to compete in the FPO division of its professional major and DGPT events. This policy has denied Plaintiff and other transgender women from equal

- 39. As a direct and proximate result of PDGA's unlawful conduct, Plaintiff has suffered special damages to be proven at time of trial.
- 40. As a direct and proximate result of PDGA's unlawful conduct, Plaintiff has suffered general damages including but not limited to shame, humiliation, mental suffering, shock, embarrassment, intimidation, inconvenience, physical distress and injury, fear, stress, and other damages to be proven at trial, including loss of income and endorsements.
- 41. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and thereupon alleges, that PDGA committed the acts herein alleged maliciously and oppressively in conscious disregard for Plaintiff's rights. Accordingly, Plaintiff is entitled to recover punitive damages according to proof.
- 42. As a result of the conduct of PDGA, Plaintiff was forced to retain an attorney in order to protect her rights. Accordingly, Plaintiff seeks reasonable attorney's fees incurred in this litigation in an amount according to proof at trial and other relief as requested in Plaintiff's prayer for relief below.
- 43. Plaintiff requests an injunction against PDGA to prohibit it from conducting business activity in California as long as it continues to violate the rights of Plaintiff and other transgender women.
- 44. Plaintiff requests an injunction allowing Plaintiff to compete in the FPO division of the OTB Open in Stockton California in May of 2023.

DGPT

45. Plaintiff was subjected to the above-referenced conduct, including but not limited to discrimination on the basis of gender by the DGPT.

- 46. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and thereupon alleges, that she was targeted for discrimination on the basis of gender because she is a woman who did not receive gender-affirming treatment before the age of 12.
- 47. Because of Plaintiff's success on the DGPT in 2022. DGPT deliberately changed its policy so as to exclude Plaintiff and other transgender women from competition in the FPO division by requiring that transgender women undergo gender affirming treatment prior to the age of 12 in order to compete. This policy has denied Plaintiff and other transgender women from equal access to the accommodations, advantages, facilities, privileges, and/or services of Defendant's business.
- 48. As a direct and proximate result of DGPT's unlawful conduct, Plaintiff has suffered special damages to be proven at time of trial.
- 49. As a direct and proximate result of DGPT's unlawful conduct, Plaintiff has suffered general damages including but not limited to shame, humiliation, mental suffering, shock, embarrassment, intimidation, inconvenience, physical distress and injury, fear, stress, and other damages to be proven at trial, including loss of income and endorsements.
- 50. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and thereupon alleges, that DGPT committed the acts herein alleged maliciously and oppressively in conscious disregard for Plaintiff's rights. Accordingly, Plaintiff is entitled to recover punitive damages according to proof.
- 51. As a result of the conduct of DGPT, Plaintiff was forced to retain an attorney in order to protect her rights. Accordingly, Plaintiff seeks reasonable attorney's fees incurred in this litigation in an amount according to proof at trial and other relief as requested in Plaintiff's prayer for relief below.

- 52. Plaintiff requests an injunction against DGPT to prohibit it from conducting business activity in California as long as it continues to violate the rights of Plaintiff and other transgender women.
- 53. Plaintiff requests an injunction allowing Plaintiff to compete in the FPO division of the OTB Open in Stockton California in May of 2023. WHEREFORE. Plaintiff prays for the relief as set forth below.

-COUNT TWO-

Unfair Competition

(Cal. Bus. & Prof. Code § 17200 et. seq.)

(Against All Defendants)

54. Plaintiff incorporates by reference the allegations contained in the paragraphs above as though fully set forth herein.

PDGA

- 55. The PDGA has engaged in unfair business acts and practices, including unlawful discrimination, as set forth above.
- 56. At all times relevant, PDGA has had an explicit policy of requiring transgender women to have undergone gender-affirming treatment before the age of 12 in order to compete in the FPO division of its professional major and DGPT events. This policy has denied Plaintiff and other transgender women from equal access to the accommodations, advantages, facilities, privileges, and/or services of Defendant's business.
- 57. By engaging in these acts and practices, as set forth above, PDGA committed one or more acts of unfair competition within the meaning of Section 17200.
- 58. The conduct of the PDGA was unlawful under Section 17200 as it included business acts and practices that are discriminatory in violation of the

- 59. The conduct of the PDGA as outlined above was unfair within the meaning of Section 17200 because it was against established public policy and was pursued to attain an unjustified monetary advantage for the PDGA at the expense of the privacy, reputation, business, and occupation of Plaintiff. As such, the business practices and acts of the PDGA have been immoral, unethical, oppressive, and unscrupulous.
- 60. The injury to Plaintiff caused by the conduct of the PDGA is far greater than any countervailing benefit.
- 61. By and through the unfair and unlawful business practices and acts described herein, the PDGA have benefitted from discrimination against Plaintiff and other transgender women and have deprived Plaintiff and others of valuable rights and benefits guaranteed by law, all to Plaintiff's detriment.
- 62. As a result of the unlawful actions of the PDGA, Plaintiff has suffered injury in fact and actual, general, and special damages, including but not limited to harm to her business, occupation, and reputation.
- 63. Plaintiff is seeking an injunction enjoining the PDGA from engaging in these unlawful acts.
- 64. Plaintiff seeks an order of this Court against the PDGA awarding restitution, disgorgement, injunctive relief and all other relief allowed under Section 17200, including interest and attorney's fees and costs pursuant to California Code of Civil Procedure §§ 1021.5 and 1032.

DGPT

65. The DGPT has engaged in unfair business acts and practices, including unlawful discrimination, as set forth above.

- 66. At all times relevant, DGPT has had an explicit policy of requiring transgender women to have undergone gender-affirming treatment before the age of 12 in order to compete in the FPO division of DGPT events. This policy has denied Plaintiff and other transgender women from equal access to the accommodations, advantages, facilities, privileges, and/or services of Defendant's business.
- 67. By engaging in these acts and practices, as set forth above, DGPT committed one or more acts of unfair competition within the meaning of Section 17200.
- 68. The conduct of the DGPT was unlawful under Section 17200 as it included business acts and practices that are discriminatory in violation of the Unruh Civil Rights Act, the California Constitution, and well-established public policy.
- 69. The conduct of the DGPT as outlined above was unfair within the meaning of Section 17200 because it was against established public policy and was pursued to attain an unjustified monetary advantage for the DGPT at the expense of the privacy, reputation, business, and occupation of Plaintiff. As such, the business practices and acts of the DGPT have been immoral, unethical, oppressive, and unscrupulous.
- 70. The injury to Plaintiff caused by the conduct of the DGPT is far greater than any countervailing benefit.
- 71. By and through the unfair and unlawful business practices and acts described herein, the DGPT have benefitted from discrimination against Plaintiff and other transgender women and have deprived Plaintiff and others of valuable rights and benefits guaranteed by law, all to Plaintiff's detriment.

- 72. As a result of the unlawful actions of the DGPT, Plaintiff has suffered injury in fact and actual, general, and special damages, including but not limited to harm to her business, occupation, and reputation.
- 73. Plaintiff is seeking an injunction enjoining the DGPT from engaging in these unlawful acts.
- 74. Plaintiff seeks an order of this Court against the DGPT awarding restitution, disgorgement, injunctive relief and all other relief allowed under Section 17200, including interest and attorney's fees and costs pursuant to California Code of Civil Procedure §§ 1021.5 and 1032.
- WHEREFORE. Plaintiff prays for the relief as set forth below.

-COUNT THREE-

Intentional Interference with Prospective Economic Advantage

75. Plaintiff incorporates by reference the allegations contained in the paragraphs above as though fully set forth herein.

DGPT

- 76. Plaintiff had a prospective economic benefit as one of the top ten female professional disc golfers in the world which included, *inter alia*, the probability of future economic benefit from winning and/or performing well at DGPT events, bonuses from sponsors and additional endorsements from future sponsors.
- 77. Plaintiff is sponsored by certain entities and is entitled to bonuses from those entities for performance in DGPT events. Plaintiff was also engaged in negotiations with prospective sponsors prior to the commencement of the 2023 season.
- 78. DGPT had knowledge that Plaintiff was sponsored by certain entities and entitled to bonuses for performance in DGPT events. DGPT also had

knowledge that Plaintiff was engaged in negotiations with prospective sponsors prior to the commencement of the 2023 season.

- 79. DGPT's intentional act of excluding Plaintiff from competing in the FPO division of DGPT tournaments were designed to disrupt Plaintiff's economic relationship with her sponsors and prospective sponsors. The change in eligibility requirements was an independent wrong committed by the DGPT, which was in violation of the Unruh Act and unfair competition laws.
- 80. As a result of DGPT's actions Plaintiff lost her ability to compete in the FPO division of DGPT events, Plaintiff lost her ability to earn performance bonuses from her sponsors. In addition, all entities with whom Plaintiff was negotiating sponsorships for the 2023 season withdrew from negotiations following DGPT's adoption of its new discriminatory policy. This caused an actual disruption in Plaintiff's relationship with certain entities that sponsored, or were interested in sponsoring, Plaintiff's career as a professional disc golfer.
- 81. Plaintiff lost her ability to earn bonuses from her sponsors and lost prospective sponsorship opportunities, causing economic loss. Such economic loss was proximately caused by DGPT.
- 82. The conduct of DGPT was malicious and oppressive as defined under California Civil Code § 3294, and, as such, warrants the imposition of punitive damages against them, in an amount to be determined at time of trial. WHEREFORE. Plaintiff prays for the relief as set forth below.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, Plaintiffs prays that process be issued and judgment be entered against Defendants, and each of them, as follows:

For the First Cause of Action:

- a. Special damages in a sum according to proof against all Defendants;
- b. General damages in a sum according to proof against all Defendants;

- c. Statutory damages of a maximum of three times the amount of actual damages or a minimum of \$4000.00;
- d. For interest provided by law including, but not limited to, California Civil Code § 3291 against all Defendants;
- e. For attorney's fees as allowed by law against all Defendants;
- f. Costs of suit and for other such and further relief as the court deems proper against all Defendants;
- g. For civil penalty provided by law including, but not limited to, that provided by California Civil Code § 52 against all Defendants;
- h. For punitive damages against all Defendants;
- i. A permanent injunction against PDGA and DGPT enjoining them from denying transgender women from competing in the FPO division of disc golf tournaments and from doing business in California so long as they continue to violate California law and the rights of transgender women;
- j. A declaratory judgment that the Unruh Civil Rights Act, Cal. Civ.
 Code § 51 applies to Defendants and that Defendant's actions violated the Act;
- k. Costs of suit incurred herein; and
- 1. For other and further relief as the Court deems proper.

For the Second Cause of Action:

- a. Special damages in a sum according to proof against all Defendants;
- b. General damages in a sum according to proof against all Defendants;
- c. For costs of suit;
- d. For restitution, disgorgement, injunctive relief and all other relief allowed under § 17200, including interest and attorney's fees and costs;

- e. A permanent injunction against PDGA and DGPT enjoining them from denying transgender women from competing in the FPO division of disc golf tournaments and from doing business in California so long as they continue to violate California law and the rights of transgender women;
- f. For pre-judgment and post-judgment interest at the legal rate; and
- g. For other and further relief as the Court deems proper.

For the Third Cause of Action:

- a. Special damages in a sum according to proof against DGPT;
- b. General damages in a sum according to proof against DGPT;
- c. For costs of suit;
- d. For punitive damages in an amount to be determined at trial;
- e. For pre-judgment and post-judgment interest at the legal rate; and
- f. For other and further relief as the Court deems proper.

DATED: February 22, 2023

/s/Brian R. Sciacca
Brian R. Sciacca
Attorney at Law

Attorney for Plaintiff Natalie Ryan