

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **FIFPRO TO HOST ONLINE LAUNCH OF NEW BOOK: 'THE SECRET BALANCE OF CHAMPIONS – HEALTH CHALLENGES IN ELITE SPORT'**

Hoofddorp, The Netherlands – 25 January 2021 – FIFPRO will host an online event to launch *The Secret Balance of Champions – Health Challenges in Elite Sport*, a new book by Vincent Goutteborge, Gino Kerkhoffs and Margriet de Schutter.

The book includes interviews with 32 athletes including Mo Farah, Chris Froome, Petr Cech, Kiki Bertens and Arjen Robben. The livestream launch will be on Thursday February 4, from 3-5pm CET. Several current and former athletes including Marco van Basten will take part.

Link to the livestream here: <https://livestream.com/accounts/78314/events/9484284/player>

In *The Secret Balance of Champions – Health Challenges in Elite Sport* the athletes talk about coping with injuries, mental health, motivation, fitness and life after sport. Each of the 32 athlete interviews is accompanied by photos and an online video accessible via a QR barcode.

The book is co-edited by FIFPRO Chief Medical Officer Dr. Vincent Goutteborge, Amsterdam-based orthopedic surgeon Professor Gino Kerkhoffs and former Dutch short track speed skater Margriet de Schutter, who runs an online platform for athletes. It features medical information from experts on a range of topics such as detraining, concussion and career transition.

In September 2019, Margriet de Schutter began visiting athletes to prepare the book before switching to video calls during the covid-19 pandemic. From February 4, the video part of the interviews will be available on [SecretBalanceofChampions.com](https://SecretBalanceofChampions.com).

De Schutter said: “At first I found it really challenging to speak to the athletes by video call and I was convinced that you need ‘real contact’ to get closer, but in fact it turned out to be the opposite. With video calls you sort of get invited into someone’s home, as though you are sitting together in their living room or kitchen, or in their children’s bedroom with their children jumping around in the background. This made me feel part of the family for a little while. We are very thankful for the flexibility, hospitality and openness of all these champions.”

Dr. Goutteborge said: “The Covid-19 pandemic is impacting the mental health of elite athletes, along with the rest of the population. It is also putting their bodies under extra stress in many cases. I hope this book provides some inspirational tips and useful medical guidance during this challenging period.”

Prof. Kerkhoffs said: "It was a pleasure to collaborate with some of the foremost international sports medicine experts to compile this book and I would like to thank them all for their assistance. The result is a nice combination of medical science and experience from some of the world's best-known athletes."

The book includes comments by:

- Olympic running champion Mo Farah on how he works on mental resilience
- Former Premier League goalkeeper Petr Cech on relaxing in high-pressure situations
- Olympic cycling champion Chris Hoy on a mini identity crisis when he retired as an athlete
- Arsenal goalkeeper Lydia Williams on how taking a DNA test has helped with nutrition
- Long jump champion Dwight Phillips on dealing with missing out on the Olympics by 2 cm.

The following is the complete list of athletes interviewed for the book: Petr Cech, Mo Farah, Marianne Timmer, Kiki Bertens, Dwight Phillips, Ila Borders, Pieter van den Hoogenband, Geremi Njitap Fotso, Danka Barteková, Arjen Robben, Maarten van der Weijden, Abhinav Bindra, Lydia Williams, Evgeniy Levchenko, Marit Bjørgen, Niccoló Campriani, Dorian van Rijsselberghe, Epke Zonderland, Blake Leeper, Elise Christie, Nouchka Fontijn, Zanele Mgodana, Florence Schelling, Alistair Overeem, Sarah Gregorius, Willie Gault, Chris Hoy, Steven Kitshoff, Jetze Plat, Suresh Raina, Apolo Anton Ohno, Chris Froome and foreword by Marco van Basten.

*Ends.*