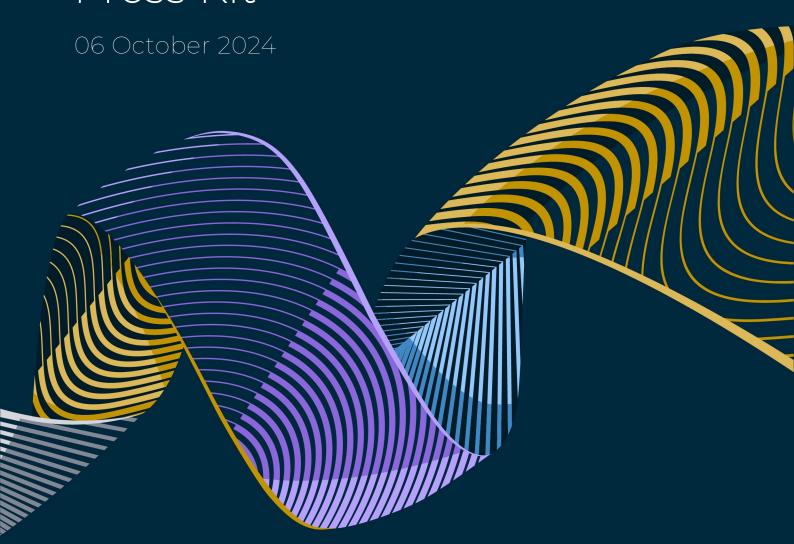


## FINAL - BARCELONA (ESP) -Press Kit



## **Foreword**

### By the FEI President

On behalf of the Fédération Equestre Internationale, welcome to the Real Club de Polo here in Barcelona (ESP), where together we will witness the first prestigious Final of the Longines League of Nations™ come to life. Over the coming days, some of the world's most talented pairs in Jumping will be battling it out for the highly coveted trophy representing national glory.

The Longines League of Nations™ features a unique, unified and global format where the top ten teams compete at four qualifying events around the world, with the top eight making it through to the Final. As the excitement unfolds, we will once again be reminded of what makes Jumping one of the most remarkable of sports. Fully immersed in the action, we



will experience first-hand, the fantastic bond between horse and human. It is this bond which enables impressive feats of athleticism to be achieved and the core around which the whole FEI community revolves

I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to the creation of this new exiting series, especially the participants of the two Task Force meetings organised back in 2022 and 2023, and the FEI Jumping Committee and the Athletes Representative for finalising this unique format.

Thank you also to the Organising Committee, and all those who have dedicated their time and support to the successful running of this event. And of course, thank you to Longines, Title Sponsor and Official Timekeeper of the Longines League of Nations $^{\text{TM}}$  for their unwavering loyalty and willingness to drive our sport forward in an innovative way. Together, we mark a new chapter in the history of Jumping, which will allow us to continue to raise the profile, visibility and reach of equestrianism around the world.

I wish all athletes, their invaluable support teams and nations present here in Barcelona the best of luck! And to the fans, I hope you will enjoy every moment of the best of what our sport has to offer.

Ingmar De Vos FEI President

# Longines League of Nations<sup>TM</sup>

The Longines League of Nations<sup>™</sup> (LLN) is an exciting new chapter in the history of the Nations Cup, equestrian sport's oldest and most prestigious series which as a concept - the nation vs nation competition- has existed since 1909!

The Longines League of Nations<sup>™</sup> represents the best of equestrian sport featuring a unified and global format, unique to the series, where the top 10 nations compete at 4 qualifiers In Abu Dhabi (UAE), Ocala (USA), St. Gallen (SUI)\* and Rotterdam (NED) in order to secure their spot at the Final in Barcelona (ESP), where the best 8 teams go head-to-head for the highly coveted Longines League of Nations<sup>™</sup> Trophy! In



short, it's the best 10 teams, competing over 4 qualifiers, with the top 8 teams from the qualifiers competing in 1 Final.

\*The St. Gallen leg this year was unfortunately cancelled due to bad weather

### **Qualification of Teams**

The best 10 Teams of the Longines League of Nations™ Ranking established based upon the Longines Ranking will be qualified to participate at the LLN Qualifying Events. The Qualification Ranking used for qualification for the LLN will be calculated based on the combined points of each NF's 6 best Athletes of whom at least 1 must be an Athlete under the age of 25 (U25) in the Longines Ranking.

### **Competition Format**

The LLN Competition is run over two rounds, with identical courses. Both rounds are run according to Table A against the clock.

The starting order of the first round of the first LLN Competition of the Season will be the reverse order of the Qualification Ranking for the LLN Series; from the 2025 season onwards the winner of the LLN Final of the preceding LLN Season (if eligible to participate in the LLN Season) will go last.

For the subsequent LLN Competitions, the starting order of the first round will be the reverse order of the LLN Standings established after the previous LLN Competition.

You can check the full Longines League of Nations™ Rules here





FEI Series





**BEST NATIONS** IN THE WORLD



ABU DHABI (UAE) SUN 11 FEB 2024

OCALA, FL (USA) SAT 23 MAR 2024

ST. GALLEN (SUI) FRI 31 MAY 2024

**ROTTERDAM (NED)** FRI 21 JUN 2024



**BEST TEAMS QUALIFY FOR** THE FINAL



FINAL

BARCELONA (ESP) **SUN 6 OCT 2024** 





**LONGINES** 

FEI.org/LLN

## The Venue

Barcelona will host the Longines League of Nations<sup>™</sup> Final. The Real Club de Polo de Barcelona is located in a unique setting within the city of Barcelona, which offers an environment of rich, cultural diversity. If there were only three words to describe Barcelona's city centre, they would be culture, style, and harmony.



In this environment, you will find the Real Club de Polo de Barcelona. Founded in 1897, and situated on a 23-hectare property, the club boasts nearly 10,500 members and offers various sports activities, including equestrian events, polo, hockey, tennis, and padel.

In preparation for the equestrian events of the 1992 Barcelona Olympics, the equestrian facilities at the Real Club de Polo underwent a complete renovation.

Recently, a new, more modern, comfortable, and sustainable grandstand with increased capacity and improved visibility of the arena has just been completed. The first CSIO Barcelona took place in 1902 in Ciudadela Park and is currently the oldest international sporting event in Spain.

## **LLN Barcelona Final Teams**



**Daniel COYLE** 

<u>Denis</u> LYNCH <u>Cian</u> O'CONNOR Mark MCAULEY



<u>Laura</u> KRAUT Lucy DAVIS Alex MATZ Spencer SMITH



Simon DELESTRE Olivier PERREAU Olivier ROBERT <u>Julien</u> EPAILLARD



Jörne SPREHE Christian KUKUK Richard VOGEL

Andre THIEME



Martin FUCHS

Steve GUERDAT Pius SCHWIZER <u>Alain</u> JUFER



<u>Lars</u> KERSTEN Harrie SMOLDERS Kevin JOCHEMS <u>Kim</u> EMMEN



Malin BAYARD-JOHNSSON Peder FREDRICSON Rolf-Göran BENGTSSON Amanda LANDEBLAD



Stephan
DE FREITAS

<u>Luciana</u> **GUIMARAES** 

<u>Yuri</u> MANSUR Marlon MODOLO ZANOTELLI

#### **HOST TEAM - SPAIN**

Alberto MARQUEZ GALOBARDES Mariano
MARTINEZ
BASTIDA

Santiago NUÑEZ RIVA

Imma ROQUET AUTONELL

# **Longines League of Nations™ Standings\***

$\langle \ \rangle \   \   \   \  $	UAE <b>Abu Dhabi</b> 11 - 11 Feb 2024	USA <b>Ocala, FL (WEC)</b> 23 - 23 Mar 2024	SUI <b>St Gallen</b> 31 - 31 May 2024	NED <b>Rotterdam</b> 21 - 21 Jun 2024
1.   Ireland Total: 235 pts	Rank Pts. <b>2 90</b>	Rank Pts. 1 100	Rank Pts.	Rank Pts. <b>8 45</b>
2. Sweden Total: 210 pts	Rank Pts. <b>3 80</b>	Rank Pts. 9 40	Rank Pts.	Rank Pts. 2 90
3. Germany Total: 200 pts	Rank Pts. 1 100	Rank Pts. <b>5 60</b>	Rank Pts.	Rank Pts. <b>9 40</b>
3. Switzerland Total: 200 pts	Rank Pts. <b>5 60</b>	Rank Pts. <b>2 90</b>	Rank Pts. - <b>0</b>	Rank Pts. <b>7 50</b>
5. S Brazil Total: 185 pts	Rank Pts. <b>4 70</b>	Rank Pts. <b>6 55</b>	Rank Pts.	Rank Pts. <b>5 60</b>
5. France Total: 185 pts	Rank Pts. 9 40	Rank Pts. <b>8 45</b>	Rank Pts. - <b>0</b>	Rank Pts. 1 100
7. United States of America Total: 170 pts	Rank Pts. <b>6 55</b>	Rank Pts. <b>3 80</b>	Rank Pts.	Rank Pts. 10 35
7. Netherlands Total: 170 pts	Rank Pts. <b>8 45</b>	Rank Pts. <b>4 70</b>	Rank Pts. - <b>0</b>	Rank Pts. <b>6 55</b>
9. Great Britain Total: 165 pts	Rank Pts. <b>7 50</b>	Rank Pts. 10 <b>35</b>	Rank Pts.	Rank Pts. <b>3 80</b>
10. Belgium Total: 155 pts	Rank Pts. 10 35	Rank Pts. 7 50	Rank Pts.	Rank Pts. <b>4 70</b>

<sup>\*</sup>St. Gallen leg was cancelled due to adverse weather conditions. The league will continue with the next leg in Rotterdam on 21 June, and the standings for Barcelona (ESP) have been calculated based on the 3 Qualifiers of Abu Dhabi (UAE), Ocala (USA) and Rotterdam (NED), instead of 4.



### **LLN Barcelona Preview**

## Star-studded teams confirmed for historic Longines League of Nations™ Final

By Louise Parkes



The inaugural Longines League of Nations™ Final is set to be a thriller when it takes centre stage at the Real Club de Polo in Barcelona, Spain on October 6 with eight of the world's best teams vying for their place in history.

There was much speculation when the long-established Nations Cup Jumping format was altered for the new series which got underway in early 2024, but at the end of this first season it has proven a big winner with fans who have been kept on the edges of their seats as the action played out. The three-per-team format with all scores counting in the second round has ratcheted up the tension and excitement like never before.

The countries that have made the cut into the Final are Brazil, France, Germany, Ireland, The Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland and the USA and they will be joined by the hosts from Spain who will be making a guest appearance.

With all three individual medallists from the Paris 2024 Olympic Games joined by four of the top 10 in the latest world rankings, the series finale promises a fierce fight for the honour of becoming the very first country to claim the prestigious new title.

#### Stole the show

It was Team Germany who stole the show at the opening leg of the series in Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates in February where the top-10 ranked nations set out on in their quest to qualify amongst the best eight and thereby make the cut into next week's finale.

The Germans pipped the Irish who were ranked first in the world as the year began but who had to settle for runner-up spot ahead of Sweden in third.

"It's a super start to the Olympic season and I'm very proud of my four riders!", said German Chef d'Equipe Otto Becker. And that proved quite prophetic because one member of his side, Christian Kukuk, would go on to clinch individual gold in Paris six months later.

The Irish had their revenge when coming out on top at the second leg in Ocala, USA in March where they pinned Switzerland into second place ahead of USA in third. This was another mighty battle in which the new three-per-team in the second-round format ensured another gripping finish.

Last Irishman into the ring, Cian O'Connor had not jumped the first round and a fence down would have led to a jump-off with the Swiss, but with just a single time fault he clinched it.

#### In the balance

The third leg scheduled to take place in St Gallen, Switzerland in June was cancelled due to adverse weather conditions, so qualification was still very much hanging in the balance at the final leg in Rotterdam later that month where Team France came out on top.

In a super-tight contest Simon Delestre, Julien Epaillard, Kevin Staut and Olivier Perreau produced seven flawless performances for victory over Sweden in second and Great Britain in third. However, it was all too late for the British at this stage in the series as, along with Belgium, they failed to qualify for the Final just a few weeks before Great Britain went on to win Team gold in Paris.

#### Top

Ireland finished top of the inaugural League table and Chef d'Equipe, Michael Blake, sends Daniel Coyle, Denis Lynch, Cian O'Connor, Michael Pender and Mark McAuley to Barcelona next week.



Sweden finished second in the League, and Henrik Ankarcrona will expect a big result from Malin Baryard-Johnsson, Amanda Landeblad, Peder Fredricson, Rolf-Göran Bengtsson, and longtime world number one Henrik von Eckermann - the latter three in the side that finished sixth in Paris.

Led by newly-crowned individual Olympic champion Christian Kukuk, Otto Becker's German crew that also includes Jörne Sprehe, Andre Thieme, Jana Wargers and Richard Vogel looks nothing short of formidable. And the Swiss are also super-strong - Martin Fuchs has been on fire with big results of late while reigning individual European champion Steve Guerdat reminded the world of his class when claiming individual silver at the Paris 2024 Games. This pair will be joined in Barcelona by Alain Jufer, Pius Schwizer and Géraldine Straumann.

Brazil finished equal-fifth with France in the Longines League of Nations™ rankings, and reigning Pan-American individual champion Stephan de Freitas Barcha will be flying the Brazilian flag along with Marlon Modolo Zanotelli, Yuri Mansur, Pedro Veniss and Luciana Christina Guimarães Lossio. The French however may prove the ones to beat as Henk Nooren sends out his full side that claimed team bronze on home ground in Paris - Simon Delestre, Olivier Perreau and Julien Epaillard - and with Kevin Staut and Olivier Robert also in his selection.

#### Tied

Meanwhile the USA and The Netherlands tied for seventh spot on the final series leaderboard, and they too are coming out next week with all guns blazing.

The Americans are on form after victory in Dublin (IRL) last month, and Robert Ridland brings three of that side - Lucy Davis Kennedy, Aaron Vale who also finished third in the Dublin Grand Prix and Spencer Smith who produced a brilliant double-clear in the Nations Cup. Completing the US line-up are Alex Matz and the legend that is Laura Kraut who was a member of America's silver-medal-winning team in Paris. It is quite clear that this is a side that means business.

The Dutch however will definitely be ones to watch. They finished fourth in Paris, squeezed off the third step of the team podium by an agonising half a second when sharing a seven-fault result with the French.

Kim Emmen was hugely impressive in the team competition at Versailles when double-clear with her lovely grey, Imagine, while Maikel van der Vleuten and the brilliant Beauville Z won individual bronze at their second consecutive Olympic Games. Harrie Smolders picked up just a single time fault in the team competition and with Kevin Jochems and Lars Kersten also on call-up this Dutch side is a powerhouse of potential.

So don't miss a hoofbeat.....



# What happened in Rotterdam?

#### French produce perfect result at last leg in Rotterdam

By Louise Parkes



With exquisite timing, just five weeks ahead of the Paris 2024 Olympic Games, Team France soared to victory when producing an impeccable performance at the fourth and last leg of the Longines League of Nations<sup>TM</sup> 2024 in Rotterdam, The Netherlands.

Copybook clears from Simon Delestre (I Amelusina R 51), Kevin Staut (Scuderia 1918 Viking d'La Rousserie), Julien Epaillard (Donatello d'Auge) and Olivier Perreau (GL Events Dorai d'Aiguilly) saw them stand alone on a zero scoreline at the end of a thrilling day of sport that had their own supporters, and the electric Dutch crowd, on the edges of their seats.

In an epic contest Henrik Ankarcrona's all-powerful Swedish side had to settle for second this time out when fractionally faster than the third-placed British who also finished on a four-fault tally. Belgium lined up in fourth, Brazil slotted into fifth, the Dutch finished sixth, Switzerland seventh and Ireland lined up in eighth place.



It was a tense and close-fought affair from start to finish - so close that two giants of the sport, Team Germany and Team USA, missed out on the second round when slowest of four teams sharing a four-fault result at the end of round one.

For French team manager Henk Nooren and his side however it was a glorious win after a period of inconsistency. And the timing couldn't be better. "To have seven out of seven clears - that was for me was something to be really proud of!" he declared this evening.

#### Quality

The quality of the field was such that 25 of the 40 starters jumped clear in the first round, not because the 12-fence track set by Dutch course designer Quintin Maertens was easy, but because the teams were filled with Olympic-level combinations all striving to either confirm their selection potential or to prove that they have what it takes.

Qualification for the inaugural Longines League of Nations™ Final was also on everyone's minds, especially the athletes from Belgium, France and Great Britain who were languishing at the bottom of the League table from which only the best eight of the ten competing nations would make the cut to the much-anticipated finale at the Real Club de Polo in Barcelona (ESP) in October.

Despite putting up a mighty fight today the British and Belgians won't be making that trip to Spain. The French however rose like a phoenix from the ashes and lifted themselves out of the danger-zone to finish joint-fifth in the final standings.

#### Sharing the lead

At the halfway stage they were sharing the lead on a zero score with Sweden, Britain and Brazil while the Dutch and Belgians were close behind carrying just a single time fault.

But when Maertens raised and widened a number of fences his course began to take a greater toll in round two. Swedish stars Henrik von Eckermann with the great King Edward and Peder Fredricson with the evergreen Catch Me Not S each secured double-clears, but Malin Baryard-Johnsson and H&M Indiana faulted once, and with just three athletes in each team in the second round that proved costly.

Ben Maher and Point Break and Harry Charles and Romeo 88 also kept a double clean sheet, but Joseph Stockdale and Equine America Cacharel fell victim to the middle element of the triple combination at fence seven which loosened Great Britain's grip. And when both Stephan de Freitas Barcha with Chevaux Primavera Imperio Egipcio and Luciana Diniz with Vertigo du Desert left a pole on the floor then Brazil also slipped off top spot. Because the French were just too good.

All four jumped in the first round despite the fact that they had their zero score in the bag after great runs from Epaillard, Perreau and Delestre. Staut, according to team manager Henk Nooren, had something to prove when going last. And when Perreau was left on the bench second time out, Staut did just that when executing a brilliant second clear after Delestre led the way with another fault-free performance.



The result was left in the hands of Epaillard, the world number 4 athlete who was runner-up at the Longines FEI Jumping World Cup™ Final 2024 in Riyadh (KSA) in April and individual bronze medallist at last year's FEI Jumping European Championship in Milan (ITA). Sweden's Baryard-Johnsoon had faulted before he went into the arena as the second-last rider to go, and the man who thrives on riding at speed knew what he had to do, wrapping it up with another classic run from Donatello to ensure his was the only country to finish on that coveted clean sheet.

#### Reflected

Team manager Henk Nooren reflected on how French fortunes have played out during this first season of the Longines League of Nations $^{\text{TM}}$ . It certainly wasn't a smooth run.

As he explained his team was short of combinations suitable to compete in the LLN or any 5\* Nations Cup competition "so we gave all the possibilities to new and upcoming combinations to see if we could create some. Leg one in Abu Dhabi was not a good start because we ended up last of last, but Ocala was already better and then St Gallen was cancelled. So everybody was really, really sharp to prove themselves here!", he pointed out. They didn't disappoint today.

"Our biggest goal is the Olympics, especially because it is a home Olympics, but we also wanted to qualify for Barcelona Final at the same time", Nooren explained.

His Olympic selections seem to be clarified this evening, Simon Delestre already in the running with Cayman Jolly Jumper "but Amelusina now especially after this performance today is definitely one that could replace in a couple of weeks", he said.

He was clearly impressed by the performance of Kevin Staut who had a smile as wide as an ocean after he left the ring for the second time.

"The last time Kevin jumped in a Nations Cup was 2022, he got injured in April 2023 and only got back in the ring in the beginning of this year...so for Kevin today there was not only the pressure from the Nations Cup and the LLN and but it was also an enormous pressure to prove himself again that he has a horse to go perhaps to Paris within a couple of weeks", the French Chef d'Equipe pointed out.

He didn't need to see so much of Olivier Perreau's GL Events Dorai d'Aiguilly because "we saw the horse a couple of times last year coming up to the level and jumping clear...especially at the European Championships where he had three really great days and ended up eighth individual and we've seen him quite a bit ever since. That's why we took him out of the second round today because we wanted this half to get more information about the other horse/rider combinations. With him we have basically enough information for ourselves", he said.

"And then Donatello - no matter how much success he already had he never jumped in any Nations Cup in his life. The first choice for Julien is Dubai that's for sure. But now it's also clear that over two rounds and let's say the second round today was a really championships round. So yes, he also has a replacement if necessary.



#### Long way back

Staut was understandably delighted this evening. As he said "it's been a really long way to come back to this level so it's really emotional. Some clears don't have the same value as others for this reason. We have had tough days, tough weeks, tough shows and a few weeks ago I was not really sure that we could come here and be ready - but here we are! I'm proud of my horse and all the team around us!"

The brand new Longines League of Nations™ series has produced some unforgettable sport this season and today was another fantastic contest.

Despite their disappointing result today Team Ireland still finished at the top of the League table and they will fight for the inaugural series title in October along with Sweden, Germany, Switzerland, Brazil, France, USA and The Netherlands.





# The Longines League of Nations™ Trophy



Find out more about the Longines League of Nations™ Trophy <a href="here">here</a>



## The Longines League of Nations™ Anthem



The Series anthem has been written by Portuguese composer Rui Ribeiro, who has made a name for himself in the world of classical crossover music with his compositions that are often based on the sounds of nature.

Ribeiro's anthem for the equestrian Series primarily revolves around a horse's footfall, which refers to the pattern in which a horse moves its feet when it walks, trots, canters and gallops.

With a duration of 5 minutes and 11 seconds, the anthem will serve as a basis for shorter adaptations which will accompany TV and web spots. Parts of the anthem will also be used in-venue to highlight different aspects of sports presentation and will be produced by Ricardo Ferreira who co-owns Lisbon based BLIM Records with Ribeiro.

Listen to the full anthem **here** 

Listening guide to the Longines League of Nations™ anthem

## **FEI Online Pressroom**

The FEI has the pleasure of announcing that the new <u>FEI Online Pressroom</u> is now available. This innovative platform offers comprehensive resources, all in one convenient place, to help with remote journalistic coverage of all qualifiers and the grand Final of the Longines League of Nations<sup>TM</sup> series 2024.

#### Features include:

- **Press Conference Livestream**: Watch livestreamed post-competition press conferences, where you can submit questions directly to the participants.
- Key Documents: Find essential documents such as course plans, starting lists, previews, etc. conveniently located in one place and downloadable as PDFs.
- **Participant Biographies:** Access detailed information about all participating athletes in each qualifier.
- **Full Results and Standings:** Stay informed with competition results and the latest standings in the series.
- Photo & Video Resources: Discover a collection of high-quality images for use in your reports and coverage of the Longines League of Nations™.

In order to be eligible for access, each applicant must be a reporter, photographer, editor, or influencer for a recognised news outlet, news service, newspaper, website, radio, or television station. You can register for the FEI Online Pressroom <a href="here">here</a>. Please, follow these steps (In case you already have an FEI ID, you can directly go to Step 3):

- 1. Fill up the self-registration form. Please, be sure you register under the "Press" category.
- 2. You will receive your FEI ID.
- 3. Once you have received your FEI ID, you need to send an email to usersupport@fei.org with your FEI ID and the Media Outlet you work for.
- 4. After reviewing your details, you will receive a confirmation email to access the FEI Online Pressroom.

Once you have been granted access, this will be for all Longines League of Nations Qualifiers and Final. In case you encounter any issues, please send an email to usersupport@fei.org



## **FEI Online resources**

Keep up to date with the latest news from the Longines League of Nations<sup>TM</sup> Final in Barcelona (ESP) **here**.

Schedules and results will be available **here**.

You can register for the FEI Online Pressroom here

The League of Nations<sup>TM</sup> Final in Barcelona (NED) will be broadcast live on **FEI TV**, the FEI's official broadcasting platform.

Free images for editorial purposes are available from the **FEI Flickr account** in the photostream and in the dedicated **album** 

Biographies from the main participants are available **here**.

You can find the Longines League of Nations<sup>TM</sup> on <u>Facebook</u>, <u>X</u>, <u>Instagram</u>, <u>TikTok</u> and <u>YouTube</u>.

The "Non-Rights Holders' Guidelines for publishing on Social Media at FEI-named events" have been updated and are available **here** 

Join the action on Social Media by using the hashtags #LonginesLeagueOfNations #LLN and #Jumping

Get all the info about the Longines League of Nations<sup>TM</sup>, including venues, rules, participating teams, etc. on the <u>Longines League of Nations<sup>TM</sup> Hub</u>

Find historical info from past editions of the Longines FEI Jumping Nations  $Cup^{TM}$  here



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