

Bernie Ecclestone appears in court over alleged fraud

Former Formula One boss Bernie Ecclestone has appeared in court to deny a charge of fraud.

The 91-year-old is accused over an alleged failure to declare £400m of overseas assets to the government.

He faces a charge of fraud by false representation between 13 July 2013 and 5 October 2016.

According to the charge, he claimed he had established a single trust in favour of his daughters.

He is also alleged to have said that he was not the beneficiary of any other trust in or outside the UK.

Ecclestone – who has three grown-up daughters, Deborah, 67, Tamara, 38, and Petra, 33, and a young son, Ace – allegedly made the representations “intending to make a gain, namely not stated, for yourself”.

Ecclestone was met by a horde of cameras upon arrival at Westminster Magistrates’ Court on Monday morning, even though they had been warned not to mob him because of his age.

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He was walked in through the building's exit by court security along with his legal team.

Chief magistrate Paul Goldspring allowed him to stand outside the dock after his barrister Clare Montgomery QC said her client was "having a little bit of trouble hearing".

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Ecclestone confirmed his name, date of birth and address in Knightsbridge, central London, before indicating a not guilty plea.

He was granted unconditional bail ahead of his next appearance at Southwark Crown Court on 19 September.

The charge against the billionaire was authorised by the Crown Prosecution Service last month after an investigation by HM Revenue and Customs, which said the probe had been "complex and worldwide".