Australian court extends ban on Galaxy tab sales

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In this Oct. 13, 2011 file photo, people walk by a Samsung store in Sydney. Samsung Electronics Co. is closer to selling its new Galaxy tablet computer in Australia after a court on Wednesday, Nov. 30, overturned a ruling that favored Apple's allegations Samsung had copied its iPad and iPhone. (AP Photo/Rick Rycroft, File)

(AP) -- Apple Inc. won a small victory on Friday in its global patent battle with rival Samsung, after Australia's highest court temporarily extended a ban on sales of Samsung's Galaxy tablet computers in the country.

Samsung Electronics Co. is desperate to begin selling the Galaxy in Australia in time for Christmas sales, but the High Court's decision means the device can't go on the market until at least Dec. 9.

Apple took Samsung to court in Australia after accusing the Suwon, South Korea-based company of copying its iPad and iPhone. In October, a Federal Court judge ordered Samsung to halt sales of the device ahead of a trial. Samsung appealed, and on Wednesday, a full bench of the Federal Court threw out the earlier ruling and said Galaxy sales could resume on Friday.

But Apple immediately appealed that decision to the High Court, which on Friday said the temporary injunction against sales would be extended for another week while it considers Apple's latest arguments.

"Samsung believes Apple has no basis for its application for leave to appeal and will vigorously oppose this to the High Court," Samsung said in a statement.

The legal back-and-forth is all part of a larger, international battle over the technology giants' competing tablets. Cupertino, California-based Apple struck first when it sued Samsung in the United States in April, alleging the product design, user interface and packaging of the Galaxy "slavishly copy" the iPhone and iPad. Samsung hit back with lawsuits accusing Apple of patent infringement of its wireless telecommunications technology.

The companies have now filed lawsuits in 10 countries. Courts in several nations, including Germany and the Netherlands, have issued rulings that favor Apple.

Apple spokeswoman Fiona Martin declined to comment on Friday's ruling, instead issuing a general statement blasting Samsung.

"It's no coincidence that Samsung's latest products look a lot like the iPhone and iPad, from the shape of the hardware to the user interface and even the packaging," Apple said in the statement. "This kind of blatant copying is wrong and, as we've said many times before, we need to protect Apple's intellectual property when companies steal our ideas."

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