

# DUBAI POLO GOLD CUP

"DUBAI OPEN"

SERIES



2014 edition

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DO YOU  
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# GOLD LOUNGE @ THE POLO



Friday, March 14th



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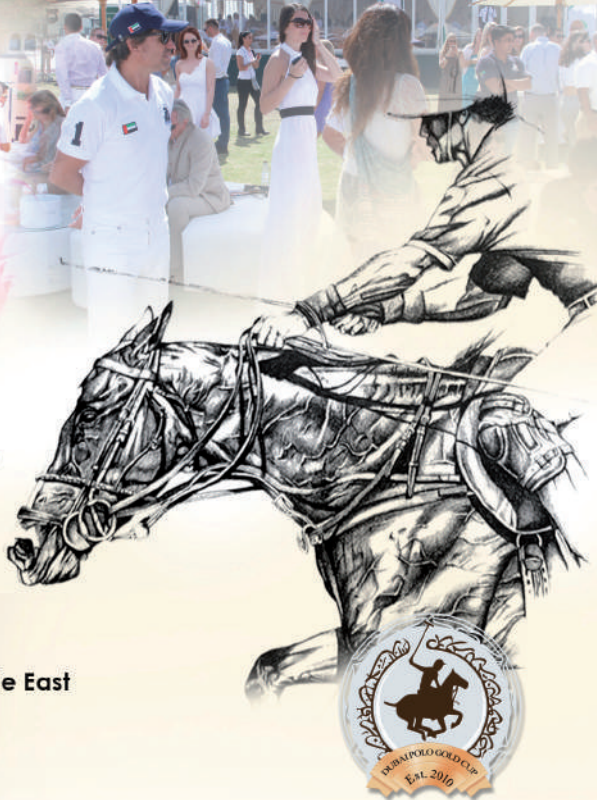
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*Mohammed  
Al Habtoor*



# CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Once again we are honoured that the Dubai Gold Cup is held under the patronage of His Highness Sheikh Maktoum bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Deputy Ruler of Dubai.

I am proud to say the Dubai Polo Gold Cup is well established and now running into its fifth year. The 'Dubai Open' has earned itself a worldwide reputation thanks to the commitment from the patrons and teams that have participated over the years. This year we have a record number of ten teams – with some very well-known polo names participating yet again! It has been an honour to Chair such a prestigious tournament over the years and to watch it grow to what it is today.

The Dubai Polo Gold Cup has achieved so much in such a short space of time. What started out as a 10-12 handicap game in 2010 is now the highest handicap tournament in the Middle East – with a 16 high goal handicap. But that's not all... we are currently studying upping the stakes even further – to an 18 goal handicap next year! This will without

a doubt increase competition even further.

This year, we not only welcome new teams into the Dubai Open, but we are pleased to welcome Her Highness Shaikha Maitha Bint Mohammad Bin Rashid Al Maktoum as patron of her own team. We also welcome His Highness Sheikh Falah Bin Zayed Al Nahyan as Patron of Ghantoot, two Desert Palm teams from the Al Barwardi family and we welcome Sultan Edrees patron of Edrees Polo team.

I am very proud of our achievements so far, and I promise you one thing, we will not let our guard down. Dubai is now well and truly on the world map of polo and we will continue to raise its profile even further. We also have something else to be very proud of this year. Dubai recently won its bid to host the Expo 2020. This is not only another feather in our cap for our country, but it proves we can compete on the world stage... and win!

Finally, I wish all the teams the best of luck in this year's Dubai Open. May the best team win!



PRINCE WILLIAM  
AT THE SANTA  
BARBARA POLO  
ROQUET CLUB IN  
JULY 2011



# FIT FOR A KING... ...AND A PRINCE!

BRITAIN'S BEST-LOVED ROYALS (WILLIAM AND HARRY) ARE WELL-KNOWN ON THE GLOBAL POLO CIRCUIT. THE ROYAL SIBLINGS ARE EXPERIENCED POLO PLAYERS AND PLAY POLO TO SUPPORT VARIOUS CHARITIES.

Polo has long been a popular pastime with members of the Royal Family. It dates back to King Edward VIII who was a keen player when he was Prince of Wales. During a tour of India in 1921 to 1922 he introduced his friend, the future Earl Mountbatten of Burma, to the sport. The Earl in turn encouraged his nephew, The Duke of Edinburgh, to play. His Royal Highness went on to co-found the Household Brigade Polo Club at Smith's Lawn in Windsor Great Park and played there regularly before retiring from the game in 1970.

The tradition has been passed down over the years. The Prince of Wales (Prince Charles) was given his first polo pony 'San Quinina' at the age of 15 and first played in a team captained by The Duke of Edinburgh in 1963. He played for Young England at Smith's Lawn in 1972.

He retired from the sport in 2005, and both his sons, Princes William and Harry are now keen – and experienced – players. The royal siblings often play in matches to support charities close to their heart. Last summer they held a game in aid of SkillForce, of which Prince William is patron, and The Royal Marsden Cancer Charity, of which the Duke of Cambridge is president. Not long after the birth of his first child - Prince George - William raised money for two other charities - the royal couple support, Centrepunt and Child Bereavement UK, while Prince Harry raised funds for WellChild.

We look forward to seeing Prince George follow the family tradition in the not too distant future!



PRINCE HARRY OF WALES GOES FOR A SHOT DURING THE VEUVE CLICQUOT MANHATTAN POLO CLASSIC POLO MATCH ON GOVERNOR'S ISLAND IN NEW YORK IN MAY 2009

©AP Images

**A BUDDING POLO PLAYER?  
PRINCE GEORGE WITH  
THE DUKE & DUCHESS OF  
CAMBRIDGE**

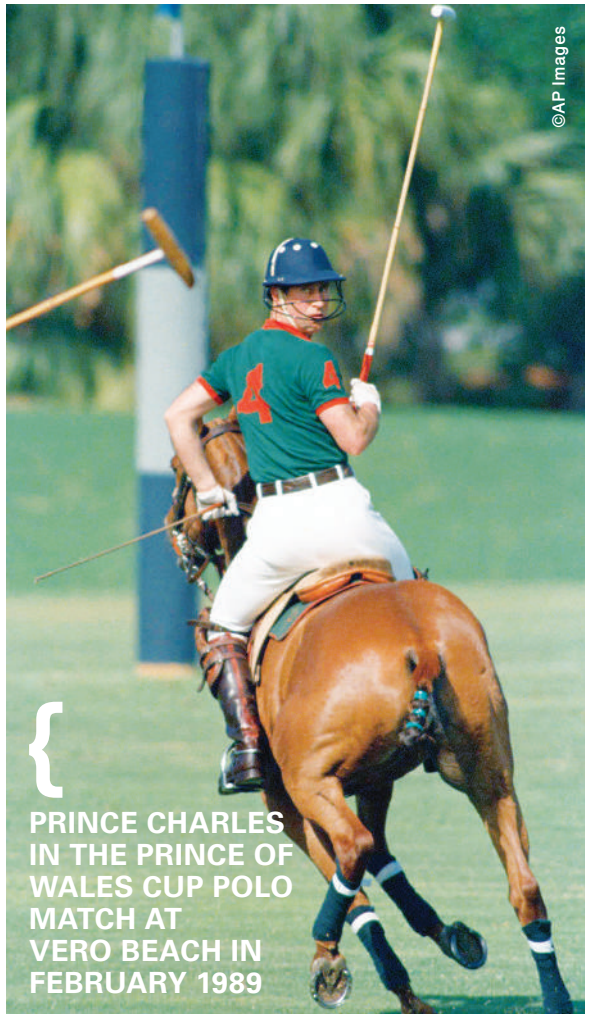


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**PRINCE PHILIP (L) PLAYS A GAME  
OF POLO AT WINDSOR GREAT  
PARK IN JUNE 1965**



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**PRINCE CHARLES  
IN THE PRINCE OF  
WALES CUP POLO  
MATCH AT  
VERO BEACH IN  
FEBRUARY 1989**



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# Abu Dhabi Polo Team



Abu Dhabi Polo Team is a high goal team based out of Desert Palm Polo Club in Dubai. It is the brainchild of its Patron Faris Al Yabhouni. It was formed in 2009. Since then the team has won several prestigious tournaments including the Dubai Gold Cup and the Silver Cup. With a steadily increasing team following, plans for continued growth through regular events, a dedicated merchandise line as well as charity, social and educational gatherings, the team's visibility is set to increase considerably. Abu Dhabi Polo Team is growing organically and with a firm long term vision, projected to gain regional and international presence and exposure.



**Faris Al Yabhouni**

**PATRON**  
**UAE**  
Handicap **0**



**Alfredo Capella**

**Argentina**  
Handicap **8**



**Juan Jose Storni**

**Argentina**  
Handicap **5**



**Victorio Monteverde**

**Argentina**  
Handicap **3**

# Bin Draï Polo Team



The Bin Draï family have long been associated with polo in the UAE. They set up the first polo club in Dubai in the 1970's. Humaid Bin Draï is credited with bringing polo to the UAE. His son, Saeed Bin Draï official started the Bin Draï team in 2002.



**Saeed Bin Draï**

**PATRON**  
**UAE**  
Handicap 0



**Tomas Iriarte**

**Argentina**  
Handicap 4



**Manuel Fernandez Llorente**

**Argentina**  
Handicap 6



**Raul Laplacette**

**Argentina**  
Handicap 6

# Desert Palm Polo 1



Polo in the UAE has come a long way since its humble beginnings when the game was played on sand. Ali Albwardy, an avid polo supporter, built the Desert Palm in 1994. He started the Dubai Polo Team, which has dominated the UK high goal polo scene for more than a decade. The team consistent of his two sons Tariq and Rashid as well as professional polo player Adolfo Cambiaso. With the rising population of the sport, the brothers have created two Desert Palm Polo teams.



**Rashid Al Bawardi**

UAE  
Handicap 2



**Martin Valent**

Argentina  
Handicap 5



**Facundo Castagnola**

Argentina  
Handicap 6



**Ali Paterson**

UK  
Handicap 3

# Desert Palm Polo 2



This is the second team under the Alwardy umbrella at Desert Palm. The patron of the team is Tarik Al Bawardi. The family has worked effortlessly to raise the profile of the sport in the UAE. Each year Desert Palm Polo Club hosts high profile tournaments including the Nations Cup and the Cartier Cup. It is a private club, so you need an invite to attend the matches.



**Tarik Al Bawardi**

**PATRON**  
**UAE**  
Handicap **1**



**Alejo Taranco**

**Argentina**  
Handicap **6**



**Matias Machado**

**Argentina**  
Handicap **4**



**Santiago Laborde**

**Argentina**  
Handicap **5**



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# Ghantoot Polo Team



Ghantoot Polo was established in 1995 by the later rule of the UAE, His Highness Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan. The Patron of the team is Sheikkh Zayed's son, HH Sheikh Falah Bin Zayed Al Nahyan. The team is made up of Emirati players alongside accomplished, high goal Argentine professionals. Ghantoot were the winners of the 2013 Dubai Gold Cup Series.



**PATRON**  
**HH Sheikh Falah Bin Zayed Al Nahyan**

## **Ali Al Merri**

**UAE**  
Handicap **0**



## **Juan Zubiaurre**

**Argentina**  
Handicap **4**



## **Pelayo Berazadi**

**Spain**  
Handicap **4**



## **Facundo Sola**

**Argentina**  
Handicap **8**

# Habtoor Polo Team



Habtoor Polo was established at the turn of the century by Mohammed Al Habtoor just one year after he took up the sport. Fourteen years on and the team is going from strength to strength. Habtoor Polo was the winner of the 2012 Dubai Gold Cup as well as the 2013 Dubai Silver Cup. Mohammed has been instrumental in driving the sport in the UAE and making the Dubai Gold Cup Series the premier polo tournament in the Middle East.



**Mohammed Al Habtoor**

**PATRON**  
**UAE**  
Handicap 0



**Guillermo Cuitino**

**Argentina**  
Handicap 6



**Francisco Elizalde**

**Argentina**  
Handicap 7



**Santiago Gomes Romero**

**Argentina**  
Handicap 3



**Marco Panelo**

**Argentina**  
Handicap 3

# Mahra Polo Team



Rashid Al Habtoor has long been synonymous with Polo in the UAE. He co-founded Habtoor Polo with his brother Mohammed, and later established Mahra competing against family members. Rashid also set up beach polo in Dubai. Mahra has played many international polo events. The team won the Dubai Gold Cup in 2010.



**Rashid Al Habtoor**

**PATRON**  
**UAE**  
Handicap **0**



**Guy Gibrat**

**Argentina**  
Handicap **4**



**Santiago Cernadas**

**Argentina**  
Handicap **6**



**Nacho Gonzalez**

**UK**  
Handicap **6**

# UAE Polo Team



Her Highness Shaikha Maitha bint Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, patron of the UAE team, is the daughter of HH Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, UAE Vice President and Prime Minister and ruler of Dubai. Shaikha Maitha has had a successful career in martial arts and even represented the UAE in Taekwondo at the Beijing Olympics and she won a silver medal in karate at the Asian Games in 2006.



**Her Highness Shaikha  
Maitha bin Mohammed  
bin Rashid Al Maktoum**

**PATRON**  
**UAE**  
Handicap **0**



**Lucas Monerverde**

**Argentina**  
Handicap **9**



**Ollie Cudmore**

**UK**  
Handicap **5**



**Tomas Gagliradi**

**Argentina**  
Handicap **2**

# Zedan Polo Team



Amr Zedan started playing polo sporadically in 2002. However, it wasn't until 2010 that he established the Zedan Polo Team. Today it is one of the most recognised names on the Middle East polo circuit. Zedan is Chairman and Group President of Saudi Arabian company, the Zedan Group.



**Amr Zedan**

**PATRON**  
**KSA**  
Handicap **0**



**Luis Gagliardi**

**Argentina**  
Handicap **2**



**Felipe Viana**

**USA**  
Handicap **4**



**Pelon Stirling**

**Uruguay**  
Handicap **10**

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# Edrees Polo Team



**Sultan Edrees**

---

**PATRON**  
**KSA**  
Handicap **0**



**Briec Rigaux**

---

**France**  
Handicap **5**



**Max Charton**

---

**UK**  
Handicap **6**



**Pierre-Henri N'Goumou**

---

**France**  
Handicap **5**



2013

RESULTS

MARCH

APRIL

## Dubai Polo Silver Cup

WINNER 2013: HABTOOR POLO TEAM

RUNNER-UP: ABU DHABI POLO TEAM

	TIME	QUALIFICATIONS	MAT CHES	FIELD	UMPIRES	3RD MAN
SATURDAY 2ND	14:30	GHANTOOT ABU DHABI	11 10	1	Ferrari - Wright	TBC
	16:00	ABU DHABI BIN DRAI	5 10	1	Ferrari - Wright	TBC
SUNDAY 3RD	16:00	HABTOOR ZEDAN	8 7	2	Ferrari - Wright	TBC
TUESDAY 5TH	15:00	GHANTOOT BIN DRAI	9 5	2	Dixon - Wright	Ferrari
WEDNESDAY 6TH	14:30	HABTOOR ABU DHABI	3 2	1	Dixon - Ferrari	Wright
	16:00	MAHRA ZEDAN	7 8	1	Dixon - Wright	Ferrari
FRIDAY 8TH	15:00	GHANTOOT ZEDAN	8 4	1	Dixon - Ferrari	Wright
SATURDAY 9TH	14:30	MAHRA ABU DHABI	3 5	2	Ferrari - Wright	Dixon
	16:00	HABTOOR BIN DRAI	5 6	2	Dixon - Wright	Ferrari
<b>SEMIFINALS</b>						
TUESDAY 12TH	14:30	HABTOOR BIN DRAI	7 6	1	Ferrari - Wright	Dixon
	16:00	GHANTOOT ABU DHABI	9 10	1	Dixon - Wright	Ferrari
SATURDAY 16TH	14:30	BIN DRAI GHANTOOT	2 6	2	Dixon - Wright	Ferrari
<b>FINALS</b>						
SATURDAY 16TH FINAL	16:00	HABTOOR ABU DHABI	10 9	1	Wright - Ferrari	Dixon

# 2013

## RESULTS

### MARCH

### APRIL

# Dubai Polo Gold Cup

WINNER 2013: GHANTOOT POLO TEAM  
 RUNNER-UP: HABTOOR POLO TEAM

	TIME	QUALIFICATIONS	MAT CHES	FIELD	UMPIRES	3RD MAN
MONDAY 25th	14:30	GHANTOOT ZEDAN	5 4	2	Ferrari - Wright	Dixon
	16:00	ABU DHABI BIN DRAI	7 6	2	Wright - Dixon	Ferrari
TUESDAY 26th	16:00	HABTOOR MAHRA	6 5	1	Ferrari - Dixon	Wright
THURSDAY 28th	15:00	GHANTOOT ABU DHABI	5 6	2	Ferrari - Dixon	Wright
FRIDAY 1ST	14:30	MAHRA BIN DRAI	9 14	1	Wright - Dixon	Ferrari
	16:00	HABTOOR ZEDAN	7 6	1	Ferrari - Wright	Dixon
MONDAY 4TH	14:30	HABTOOR BINDRAI	5 6	2	Ferrari - Dixon	Wright
	16:00	ZEDAN ABU DHABI	10 9	2	Ferrari - Wright	Dixon
TUESDAY 5TH	16:00	MAHRA GHANTOOT	3 8	1	Wright - Dixon	Ferrari
THURSDAY 7TH	15:30	BIN DRAI ZEDAN	7 6	2	Wright - Dixon	Ferrari
FRIDAY 8TH	14:30	ABU DHABI MAHRA	6 3	1	Ferrari - Dixon	Wright
	16:00	HABTOOR GHANTOOT	8 7	1	Ferrari - Wright	Dixon
MONDAY 11TH	14:30	HABTOOR ABU DHABI	8 6	1	Ferrari - Wright	Dixon
	16:00	GHANTOOT BIN DRAI	10 5	1	Ferrari - Dixon	Wright
FRIDAY 15th FINAL	14:30	ABU DHABI BIN DRAI	7 10	1	Wright - Dixon	Ferrari
	16:00	GHANTOOT HABTOOR	14 6	1	Wright - Ferrari	Dixon

THE MATCH

Here are some of the highlights from the Dubai Silver and Gold Cup in 2013.



Matias Logioco (Zedan) and Martinez Ferrario Ezequiel Edwardo



Mohammed Al Habtoor  
Habtoor Polo Team



Facundo Sola



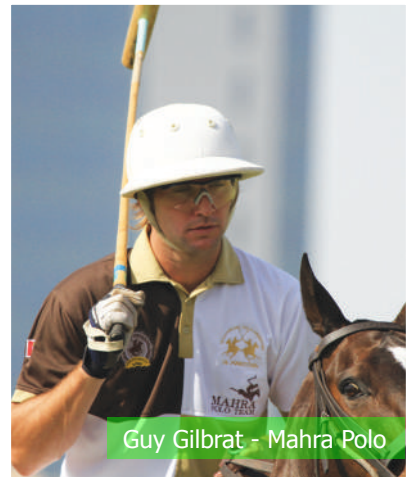
Mohammed Al Habtoor



Salvador Ulloa (Bin Draï) and Agustin Canale (Mahra)



Ghanoot the winning team!



Guy Gilbrat - Mahra Polo



Saeed Bin Draï



Ignacio Ithurburu (Brin Draï) and Facundo Sola (Ghantoot)



Facundo Sola (Ghantoot), Ignacio Bello and Ezequiel Eduardo (Habtoor)



Al Habtoor Polo Team



Mahra Polo Team



Augustine Canale - Mahra Polo

THE MATCH



Bin Draï Polo team and Mahra Polo Team



Ghantoot Polo Team and Mahra Polo Team



Juan Jose Brane  
Bin Draï Polo



Guillermo Cuitino  
Habtoor Polo



Faris Al Yabhouni  
Abu Dhabi Polo



Ghantoot Polo Team battling  
with Bin Draï Polo Team



Bin Draï Team winning the subsidiary final gold cup



Matias Logioco - Zedan Polo

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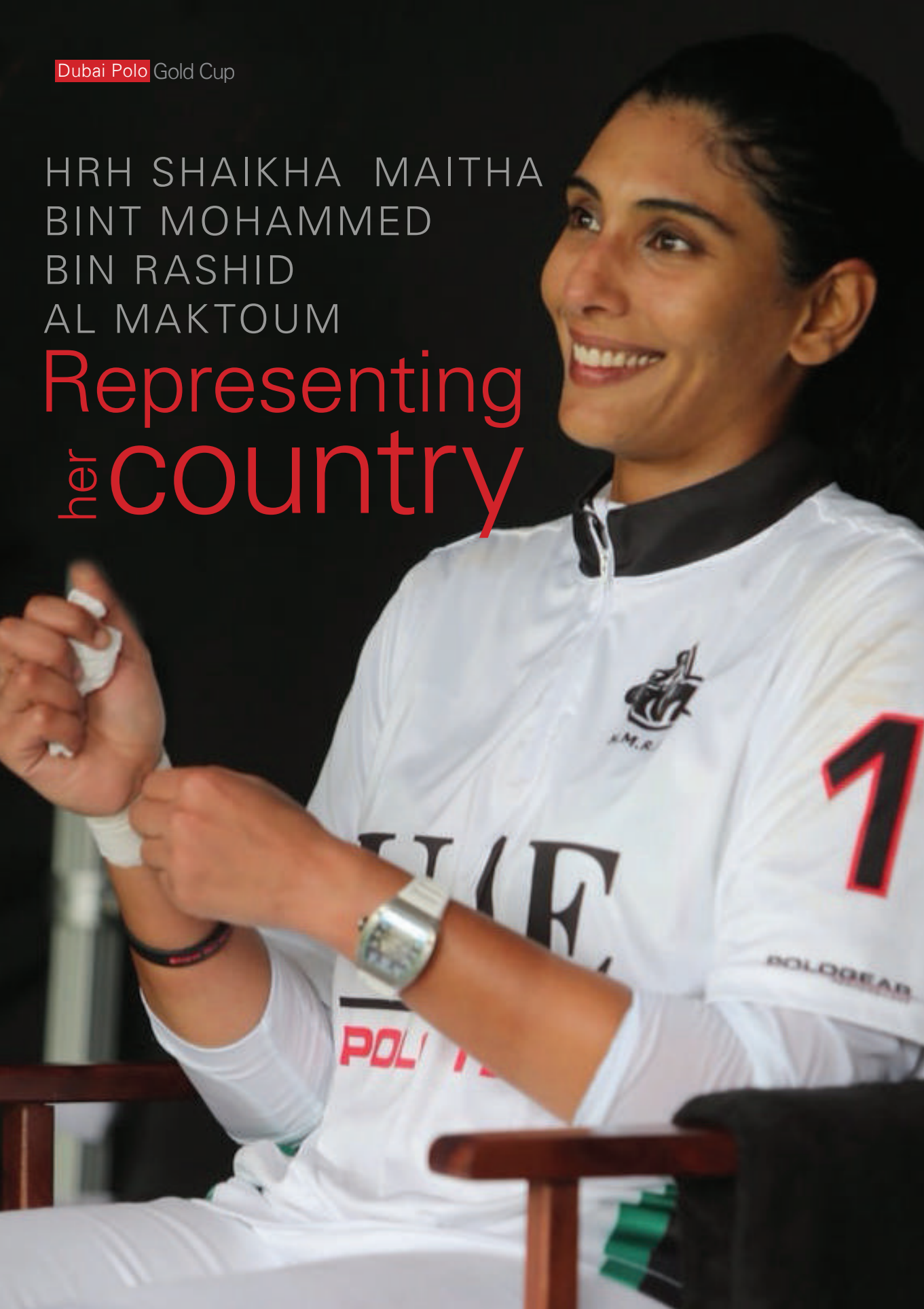
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Dubai Polo Gold Cup

HRH SHAIKHA MAITHA  
BINT MOHAMMED  
BIN RASHID  
AL MAKTOUM

# Representing her country



## WINNING DOESN'T COME EASILY BUT WITH HARD WORK AND DEDICATION ANYTHING CAN BE ACHIEVED!



**HRH SHAIKHA MAITHA BINT MOHAMMED BIN RASHID AL MAKTOUM** IS THE DAUGHTER OF HH SHEIKH MOHAMMED BIN RASHID AL MAKTOUM, VICE PRESIDENT AND PRIME MINISTER OF THE UAE AND RULER OF DUBAI. HER ROYAL HIGHNESS IS A PROFESSIONAL SPORTS PERSONALITY IN HER OWN RIGHT, AND IS BEST-KNOWN FOR HER MARTIAL ARTS (KARATE AND TAE KWON DO). SHE HAS COMPETED IN MANY INTERNATIONAL SPORTING EVENTS, INCLUDING REPRESENTING HER COUNTRY AT TWO OLYMPIC GAMES. SHAIKHA MAITHA RECENTLY TWEETED HER ATTENDANCE IN THE DUBAI GOLD CUP SERIES. **JOANNA ANDREWS** WENT TO FIND OUT WHAT THE COMPETITION MEANS TO HER ROYAL HIGHNESS...

### **WHY THE DECISION TO PARTICIPATE IN THE UPCOMING DUBAI OPEN?**

The decision this year was to take part in all the tournaments in the UAE polo season.

### **WHEN AND HOW DID YOU GET INTO POLO?**

I tried it years ago and got back into it with the help and encouragement of Ali Albwardy.

### **IT IS TYPICALLY A SPORT THAT IS DOMINATED BY MEN. WHAT IS YOUR VIEW ON THIS, AND HOW DO YOU GO ABOUT CHANGING THE MINDSET?**

Any mindset will change once you prove you are a serious contender!

### **WHAT HAVE BEEN THE MAIN CHALLENGES FOR YOU – WHEN PLAYING POLO?**

My personal challenge was going from an individual sport mindset to a team sport mindset.

### **YOU ARE KNOWN FOR YOUR SKILLS IN KARATE AND TAE KWON DO. HOW DID YOU GET INTO THE SPORTS? WHICH DO YOU PREFER?**

Martial Arts, like horse riding is a family hobby, I just decided to take it more seriously. I prefer whatever sport I'm playing at the moment but like all sports - the fundamentals are the same.

### **WHAT HAS BEEN THE HIGHLIGHT OF YOUR SPORTING CAREER?**

I was fortunate to be in the right place at the right time, so being part of the 'firsts' to win, participate,

or being the flag bearer at the many major events are all highlights for me.

### **YOU WERE THE FIRST WOMEN TO REPRESENT THE UAE IN THE BEIJING OLYMPICS. HOW DID THAT FEEL?**

It felt surreal!

### **HOW DID YOU FEEL WHEN YOU HEARD THAT DUBAI WON THE BID TO HOST EXPO 2020?**

I was happy but also busy trying to win the 1st International Ladies tournament! I think we'll realize the impact of the Dubai Expo 2020 closer to the actual event.

### **TELL ME ABOUT YOUR EFFORTS TO PROMOTE SPORTS IN THE UAE LOCALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY?**

My efforts are to achieve my potential in competition and represent my country to the best of my ability.

### **YOU ARE A GREAT ROLE MODEL FOR EMIRATI WOMEN. WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE WOMEN FROM THE MIDDLE EAST WHO ARE CONSIDERING A CAREER IN SPORTS?**

The best advice I can give anyone is to persevere. Winning doesn't come easily but with hard work and dedication anything can be achieved! Sports demands resilience along with obvious: talent, focus, intelligence, passion and heart. Be patient and brave in your attempts always!



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# HISTORICAL WINS

THE DUBAI GOLD CUP SERIES IS NOW IN ITS FIFTH YEAR. HERE'S A LOOK AT THE WINNERS OVER THE PAST FOUR YEARS.

**T**his year the winner has something extra to smile about. The WPT recently upped the ante – it announced the winner of the Dubai Gold Cup will win 50 points, instead of 40 previously. Finalists will be eligible for 25 points, instead of 20. The Dubai Gold Cup is now the highest tournament in terms of points inside the Challenge Cup category. Congratulations!

Who's going to take away the prize this year? It's anybody's game!

2010  
Rashid Al Habtoor



Mahra Polo Team

2011  
Faris Al Yabhouni



Abu Dhabi Polo Team

2012  
Mohammed Al Habtoor



Habtoor Polo Team

2013  
Ali Al Merri



Ghantoot Polo Team  
(Sheikh Falah Bin Zayed  
Al Nahyan - Patron)



INTERVIEW

Rashid Al Habtoor

**Rashid Al Habtoor**, a well known UAE-based businessman, is an avid sportsman. His name has long been associated with polo in the UAE. He is after all the man who is seen responsible for developing polo in the Emirates – and introducing beach polo to the world. **Joanna Andrews** went to find out more.

**HOW HAS POLO EVOLVED IN DUBAI?**

I started playing polo in 1991 when Dubai had something like 10 players. Today there are over 150 polo players in Dubai. That is significant growth. But to expand the sport further we need to have more good polo fields – and this costs money. We need an addition 4-6 fields. A good field you cannot play more than one or two times a week.

**HOW HARD IS IT ATTRACTING GOOD TALENT HERE?**

Today Dubai is a destination for polo. Argentina is number one, England is number two and then comes Dubai and the United States - but today we are even bigger than the US because of the Silver and Gold Cup. However we have the drawback of having to fly horses to Dubai whereas in Europe it is very easy as they can travel across land from England or France or Spain.

**WHAT ARE YOUR LONG TERM HOPES FOR POLO IN DUBAI?**

The sport has been quickly gaining popularity, and I think what we are going to see is more private clubs coming up. There are several clubs controlled by families already like us, the Bawardy's, the Bin Drai's, the Al Ghurair's, but we will likely see more come to the fray.

**THIS YEAR SHAIKHA MAITHA WILL PARTICIPATE IN THE GOLD CUP SERIES WHEN YOU PLAY AGAINST A FEMALE IS IT AN EQUAL PLAYING FIELD?**

Yes. Once we are on the field there is no difference.

**HOW COMPETITIVE ARE YOU- AND HOW HARD IS IT PLAYING AGAINST ANOTHER AL HABTOOR TEAM?**

I have built a very good organisation this year and I have got 14 new horses and it is very important for us. We have Mahra and Habtoor is because of the handicap. That's why we have two teams. It is good for competition and good for us and good for the image of polo. We are playing very competitive and I am trying my best this year to win.

**SO IS MOHAMMED!**

So is everyone else!

**HOW MANY HORSES DO YOU HAVE FOR EACH PLAYER?**

For the Silver and the Gold I am planning on having about 7 horses per player.

**WHAT DOES IT REQUIRE TO BE A PATRON OF A POLO TEAM?**

A lot of money. Millions in fact. You need to buy horses, you need to organise, you need strong players. It all costs a lot of money.

**WHAT OTHER INTERNATIONAL EVENTS DO YOU PLAY IN?**

I play in the Silver and Gold in Spain. I play the Royal Windsor, and hopefully this year I might get the chance to play with Cartier.

**WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO ANY KEEN POLO PLAYERS?**

I really encourage parents to let their children start polo early from a very young age.

**ARE THE SKILLS DIFFERENT WHEN PLAYING POLO COMPARED TO TRADITIONAL RIDING?**

The first thing you have to have is the patience. Polo is a sport you either love or hate and like I said, once you start you have to be involved and like Winston Churchill said 'polo is your passport to the world'. Because of polo today I can pick up the phone and speak to anybody around the world.

**YOU ALSO INTRODUCED BEACH POLO IN DUBAI. HOW DID THAT COME ABOUT?**

I took up beach polo because I played polo once in the snow and I said if we can play polo in the snow then we can play anywhere.

**SO THEN IT BECAME A REAL DUBAI SPORT?**

Yes, but they are now playing all over the world, in Miami, Marbella, Ibiza.

**SO YOU WERE THE ONE THAT STARTED IT BUT IT HAD A FILTER EFFECT AROUND THE WORLD?**

Yes.

**HOW ARE THE GAMES REGULATED WHEN YOU PARTICIPATE IN THE TOURNAMENTS HERE?**

We follow the HPA – the English rules.

**WHAT WAS THE MOST CHALLENGING GAME YOU HAVE EVER PLAYED - AND WHY?**

The Queen's Cup, because it is the Formula 1 of polo. We made it to the semi finals.

**WHAT DO YOU EXPECT OUT OF THE DUBAI OPEN THIS YEAR?**

Well I think I have a very good team. But of course everyone is getting ready. But we will do well.



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# THE YEAR OF THE HORSE



GIVEN 2014 IS THE YEAR OF THE HORSE IN THE CHINESE ASTROLOGY CALENDAR, WE THOUGHT IT APTLY TIED IN WITH THE POLO SEASON. **JOANNA ANDREWS** LOOKS AT WHAT IT MEANS FOR THE YEAR AHEAD.

**T**he year of the green, wooden horse kicks off on February 4th, 2014. Chinese Astrology is a prediction theory using Yin-Yang five elements (Metal, water, wood, fire and earth) and 12 animals (rat, ox, tiger, rabbit, dragon, snake, horse, goat, monkey, rooster, dog, and pig).

The horse is said to represent true spirit, pure determination, vitality and endurance. The horse, which is the seventh sign in Chinese astrology is a symbol of nobility, fame, elegance and determination. The wood element suggests high moral standing and great confidence.

According to Chinese astrologers this year will be a year for leaders. And if ancient astrology is to be believed, this year will be a thrilling year with plenty of opportunities – if you are willing to take the risk! The year of the wooden horse is a rather temperamental year though. And, only those who are strong and have perseverance, competitive and are capable of working hard for what they want will be able to achieve whatever they want to succeed.

But be warned, there could be turbulence in the financial markets, according to some analysts. One thing is for sure, the prognosticators and doomsayers are out in force... predicting all kinds of trouble for the global markets. Nouriel Roubini, the New York

economist who predicted Wall Street's 2008 meltdown, says 2014 will see asset bubbles inflating in many parts of the world including Australia, New Zealand, China, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Singapore and Turkey.

And well-known fund manager, Marc Faber, who is famous for his 'Dr. Gloom, Boom & Doom' report is down on everything from equities to commodities and from art to collectibles. He is also concerned about zero-interest rate policies of the US Federal Reserve and other central banks, which he warns may 'bankrupt the world'.

As the rest of the world saddles up and braces for a turbulent year ahead, the UAE can look on and rub its palms with glee. Following Dubai's successful bid to host the World Expo in 2020 – this region is sure to gallop ahead!

# A-Z OF POLO

MUCH LIKE CRICKET, POLO ISN'T THE EASIEST SPORT TO UNDERSTAND. SO HERE ARE THE A TO Z BASICS FROM THE HURLINGHAM POLO ASSOCIATION TO GET YOU STARTED...

## APPEALING

Claims by players for a foul generally expressed by the raising of mallets above the head or by a helicoptering motion. Over demonstrative appealing is considered very bad form.

## BALL

White and made of plastic. It weighs four and a half ounces and is three and a half inches in diameter.

## CHUKKA

There are six chukkas in high handicap matches, each lasting seven minutes plus up to 30 seconds of overtime.



## DIVOTS

Turf kicked up by ponies' hooves.

## ENDS

The back lines of a polo pitch.

## FIELD

A full size polo field is 300 yards by 160 yards, or the area of three soccer pitches. The goal posts are set eight yards apart.

## GOAL

Any time the ball crosses, at any height, the line between the goal posts, it is considered a goal

regardless of who knocks it through, including the pony.



## HANDICAP

All players are rated on a scale of -2 to 10 (the higher the better). Although the word 'goal' is often used after the rating, it bears no relation to the number of goals a player scores in a match, but to his overall playing ability.

## HOOKE

Provided the player is on the same side of the opponent's pony as the ball, he may spoil the opponent's shot by putting his stick in the way of the striking player's.

## INTERVALS

Three- minutes long rest periods between chukkas. Half time is five minutes.

## JUDGES

Goal judges are positioned behind each goal to signal whether a goal has been scored. Hard hats are worn for protection.

## KNOCK-IN

Should a team hit the ball across the opponent's backline during an attack, the defending team resumes the game with a free hit from the backline



where the ball went over. It is equivalent to a goal kick in soccer.

## LINE OF THE BALL

'Crossing the line' is the most frequent foul in polo. The line of the ball, namely the imaginary line along which the ball travels, represents a right of way for the player following nearest that line.

## MALLET/STICK

The shaft is usually made from bamboo cane and the head from a hard wood, although plastic composite shafts are increasingly common. Polo mallets range in length according, principally, to the height of the pony played, and extend from 48-54 inches.

## NEARSIDE

The left hand side of the pony.

## NECKSHOT

A ball which is hit under the pony's neck.

## OFFSIDE

The right hand side of the pony.



## PENALTY

A free hit towards goal is awarded when a foul is committed. The hit is taken from a set distance, dependent on the severity of the offence.

## PONIES

Although termed 'ponies' they are in fact horses. Most are of the Argentinean Criollo breed or pure or cross thoroughbreds. Their main qualities are speed and stamina; the ability to accelerate, stop and turn quickly; and temperaments that are amenable to the rigours of the game.

## QUARTET

The number of players in a team.

## RIDE-OFF

Two riders may make contact and push each other off the line to prevent the other from striking the ball. It is primarily intended for the ponies to do the pushing, but a player is allowed to use his body, but not his elbows.

## SAFETY

Also known as a Penalty 6, a safety is awarded when a defending player hits the ball over his own backline, the shot is taken 60 yards out from the backline, opposite the point at which the ball went over.

## TREADING-IN

The replacement at half time of divots of turf. This is the duty of all spectators.

## UMPIRES

Two mounted umpires (one for each side of the field) who regulate the game. They usually wear striped shirts.



## VIP

The team patron!

## WELLINGTONS

Rubber boots ideal for treading-in in wet weather. Usually green.

## XTRA-TIME

In the event of a tied score at the end of the final chukka, there will be a five minute break to allow the players to catch their breath and change to a fresh mount before beginning a sudden-death chukka. The first team to score wins. In extra time, the goal area is usually widened by moving the goal posts an extra 8 yards apart.

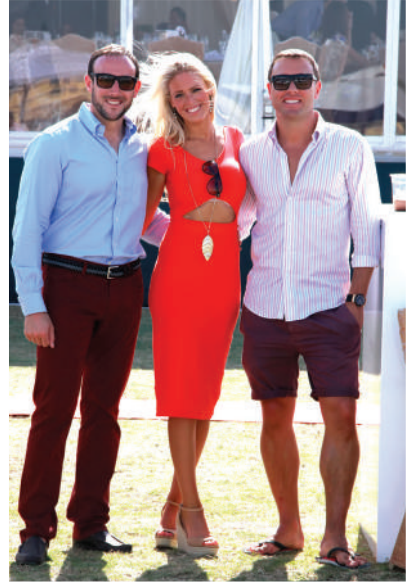
## ZONE (SAFETY)

The area immediately around the pitch that is out of bounds for spectators during play.



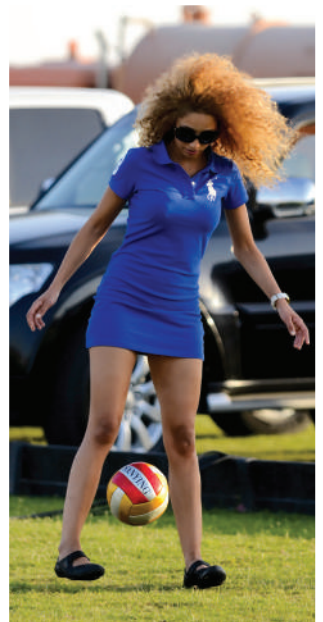
FASHION PARADE

Polo is considered a sport for kings... but is it a sport for all to enjoy, and when the polo elite come out, so too does the polo socialites who are always dressed to impress!





FASHION PARADE



# LEARN TO PLAY POLO



INTERESTED IN TAKING UP POLO? IT IS ALL VERY WELL 'LOOKING THE PART', BUT TO SERIOUSLY TAKE UP THE SPORT DOESN'T JUST REQUIRE 'THE LOOK'. POLO IS A HIGH SPEED EQUESTRIAN GAME WITH MANY COMPLICATED RULES AND DIFFICULT MANEUVERS. THEREFORE, IT REQUIRES A LOT OF COMMITMENT AND DETERMINATION.

**P**olo is one of the fastest – and most exiting sports in the world. Here are our top 5 tips to succeed in the sport 'fit for kings!'

## 1. FIND A CLUB

Most people see the sport as fast and glamorous... but be warned, it is hard work and time consuming. First you need to find a club that offers lessons. Speak to the polo manager of the club and see if they can offer you a complete course for beginners through to experienced. Polo schools use seasoned polo ponies, to ensure a safe and fun experience. Once you have mastered the basics of riding you can then learn how to swing a mallet and be introduced to the rules of the game.

## 2. WALK BEFORE YOU JUMP

You don't need any riding experience to get started in polo. Many new players come into the sport with little to no riding experience. You can learn how to ride horses and play polo at the same time. Don't rush...

beginners must hone in on the basics first before galloping full stream down a field. Before you even get on a horse, it is important to do some stretching exercises so you don't pull a muscle.

## 3. EQUIPMENT

You will need to purchase either a pair of polo boots or a pair of short jodhpur boots to wear with chaps to protect your legs and a riding hat or polo hat. It is also advisable to wear a pair of gloves.

## 4. PLAY SAFE

Imagine you've got a half-tonne animal running at 25-30 miles per hour and a ball flying through the air much faster – at speeds of 110 miles an hour. Safety is very important in polo. It is not just about wearing the required safety equipment, but playing safe too.

## 5. BE A TEAM PLAYER

Polo is a team game, so it is important to be a team player and trust your teammates.

# POLO & INDIA A REGAL STATUS

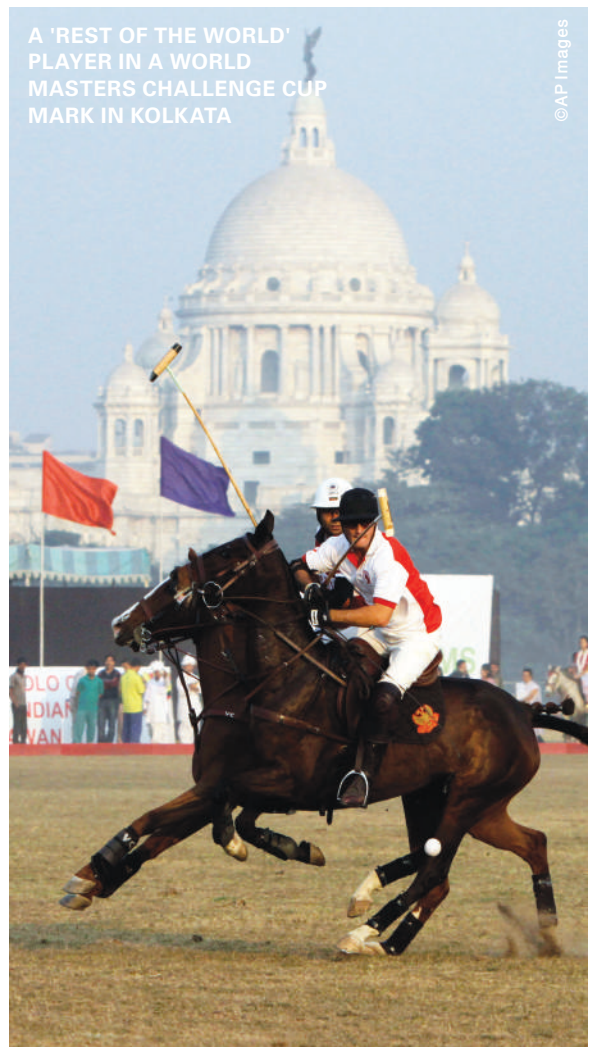
POLO IS A SPORT THAT CONJURES UP IMAGES OF ARISTOCRACY AND STYLE. IT SIGNIFIES POWER, BEAUTY, ELEGANCE AND TRADITION. NOT SURPRISING THEN THAT INDIA HAS A LONG HISTORY AND TRADITION WITH POLO. THE SPORT IS BELIEVED TO DATE BACK TO THE 1850'S WHEN BRITISH TEA PLANTERS DISCOVERED THE GAME IN MANIPUR - ON THE BURMESE BORDER WITH INDIA, OR PERHAPS EVEN EARLIER...

**M**anipur, considered the antiquity of polo, is shrouded with myths and rituals of the sport. There are accounts of the first recorded polo match organised between royal friends of King Nongda Lairen Pakhangba as early as 33AD.

Years later Babar, the founder of the Mughal dynasty in the 15th century, was said to have helped establish the popularity of polo in India. Polo was a popular sport with the Emperors, who called it 'Chougan'. Emperor Akbar, who made it popular in Agra, which was then the capital, was the first of the Moghuls, to introduce certain rules and regulations for this game. However, the period between the decline of the Mughal dynasty and the rise of the British Imperial rule, meant polo almost vanished from the country – apart from in remote mountainous enclaves of the subcontinent... Gilgit, Chitral, Ladakh and Manipur.

It wasn't until 1862 that the first polo club was formed by the Brits at Silchar, west of Manipur. Polo is known locally as 'Sagol Kangjei' in Manipur. It is a freestyle game that does not have a goal post and is played by seven players each side on a small pony. Also handling the ball is permitted in the game. India is believed to be home to the oldest existing polo club in the world - the Calcutta Polo Club, which dates back to the 1860s.

The popularity of the sport in India has waned – and risen many times since. It was, however, British



influence and initiative that gave it global popularity. There is recorded evidence to suggest that modern polo in India was introduced following the arrival of the British Army in India – by officers of a British Cavalry Regiment stationed in the country. Over the past decade or so, the emergence of privately owned teams in India has ensured a renaissance in Indian polo.



**"LET OTHER PEOPLE PLAY  
AT OTHER THINGS;  
THE KING OF GAMES  
IS STILL THE GAME OF  
KINGS"**

- J.K. STEPHEN,  
ENGLISH POET (1859–1892)



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# A Journey to Jaipur

**COLONEL K.S. GARCHA** IS ONE OF INDIA'S BEST KNOWN POLO PLAYERS. HE IS NOT ONLY ONE OF THE COUNTRY'S FOREMOST POLO PLAYERS, BUT HE ALSO COACHED THE INDIAN NATIONAL TEAM AND WAS AWARDED THE COVETED ARJUNA AWARD - THE HIGHEST ACCOLADE FOR OUTSTANDING SPORTSMAN. **JOANNA ANDREWS** WENT TO FIND OUT MORE...

**C**olonel Garcha played and represented India for more than three decades (from the 1970s to the 1990s). He won the 'Open India' championship for a record 13 times and played polo in some 25 countries. The retired Colonel is the founder of the Jaipur Polo and Riding Club, which he set up in 2000. The club is located in Jaipur, the capital of Rajasthan state in India.

## **INDIA HAS A LONG HISTORY WITH POLO. WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE SPORTS ROOTS IN INDIA?**

The precise origin's of polo are obscure and undocumented but going by the verse "Let other people play other things, the king of games is still the games of kings," which is inscribed on a tablet on the silk route from China to the West gives us a clue that polo perhaps is the oldest organised sport in the world being played for the past 2,500 years. No one really knows when the stick first met the ball but it seems likely that polo was played in the Indian subcontinent when the horse was domesticated by the tribes of Central Asia. However it is for a fact that modern polo as it is played today was taken back by the British from India. Polo was played in Manipur and is still played in Manipur with the same format when it started.

## **HOW HAS IT EVOLVED OVER THE YEARS?**

Polo over the years evolved keeping in mind the safety of the players and of the horses. In the yester years it was played on small horses and hence the word 'Polo Pony'. A pony is a horse which is fourteen hands or below in height. However, over the years different types of horses have been brought into the game. After the British took back the game to England it slowly spread its wings across the globe. In India, it was the favourite sport of the Maharajas of the erstwhile royal states of India. It did take a toll during World War II when horses gave way to mechanisation. In India, after

Independence, the government decided to maintain a full-fledged horse cavalry which is the 61st cavalry. In England, one of India's great polo players Late. Rao Raja Hanut Singh along with the Late. Maharaja of Jaipur revived the sport in the 50's and 60's. From the late 60's onwards it again became a popular sport around the world and as of today it is played in over 50 countries.

## **YOU FOUNDED THE JAIPUR CLUB. TELL ME ABOUT THE JOURNEY?**

I founded the Jaipur Riding and Polo club in the year 2000. I served with Indian Army the 61st cavalry from June 1966 till January 1997. After retirement I wanted to be in touch with horses and to give back to this unique sport in some way because it had changed my entire life style and gave me a name in Indian sport. Fortunately my son Satinder Garcha, who himself plays polo and runs his private team called Elevation in Argentina, did well for himself and had the means to invest in opening a new polo club. Hence the beginning of Jaipur Riding and Polo Club. The club has imported a lot of Argentine polo ponies and catered for accommodation for polo players.

## **YOU ARE CONSIDERED ONE OF INDIA'S MOST WELL-KNOWN POLO PLAYERS? WHAT WAS THE HIGHLIGHT OF YOUR POLO CAREER?**

I was lucky to get the opportunity to play for India as early as 1973 and was lucky to have been invited to play across the globe. I was rated as the +5 goal player for many years. One of the highlights was in 1979 when I was posted as the equitation instructor at the Indian Military Academy, Dehradun. My team participated in 14 tournaments and we were in the finals of 12 and we won 10 cups. We also in the same year won the National shoe jumping and the National three day event.

**WHAT IS THE MOST CHALLENGING MATCH YOU HAVE PLAYED?**

The most challenging match I played was in 1972 when my team of total handicap of 8 played the finals of the National Polo Championship against the 20 goal team. The game was played without handicap and we lost in the dying moments.

**I UNDERSTAND YOU ALSO COACHED THE NATIONAL TEAM? CAN YOU TELL ME A BRIEF STORY ABOUT THE SUCCESS OF THE TEAM?**

I have been the coach for the national team on many occasions but being the coach of the national team in the world cup 1995 and 2000 were the times when the Indian team made it to the finals in the world cup. In the 1995 our team got the fair played trophy and scored the maximum number of goals in the tournament.

**WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO KEEN SPORTSMEN/WOMEN WANTING TO TAKE UP POLO?**

Polo is a time consuming sport, it is expensive, it requires good quality horses and opportunity to play. If one has all the above then the budding polo players must have a lot of dedication, improve the horsemanship, acquire good quality horses and practice as much as they can. However, having said this most people play for pleasure. Someone once said, "Polo is a disease and the only cure is poverty or death." That sums it up all!

**YOU WERE AWARDED THE ARJUNA AWARD – THE HIGHEST ACCOLADE A SPORTSMAN CAN GET. HOW DID IT FEEL TO BE GIVEN THE AWARD?**

Yes, I did get my Arjuna Award in the year 1987. Though I knew my name had been recommended but I was not sure whether I would get it. But it gave me great pleasure one day when I was watching the news they announced the Arjun Awardees list and saw my name flash up on the screen. It gave me a sense of achievement because it was my parents who always thought that I was a deserving candidate.

**WHAT IS REQUIRED TO BE A GOOD POLO PLAYER?**

I think the requirement of a good polo player are:-

- Hot blood and cool mind
- Good horsemanship
- Team play
- Anticipation
- Knowledge of rules and regulations
- Hitting ability
- Of course the dedication and resolve to put in the best on the ground.

Finally, the support of a good wife who has to put up with traveling around the world. I have been lucky to have the support of my wife Inderjit Garcha.







## How much do YOU know?

TIME TO TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF POLO.  
ARE YOU A FOUNTAIN OF KNOWLEDGE OR A BIG PRETENDER?  
ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS TO EXPOSE THE TRUTH...

### 1. What are the time periods called in Polo?

- a. Chukkas
- b. Quarters
- c. Periods
- d. Semesters

### 2. Polo is played on horses of what size?

- a. Any height
- b. Only ponies
- c. Horses 14 hands and under
- d. Horses 14 hands and over

### 3. What are the dimensions of the playing field?

- a. Length 180 meters - Width 250 meters
- b. Length 250 meters - Width 180 meters
- c. Length 230 meters - Width 200 meters
- d. Length 210 meters - Width 190 meters

### 4. What is the width of a polo goal?

- a. 6.30 meters
- b. 8.30 meters
- c. 7.30 meters
- d. 9.30 meters

### 5. How many players are there in a polo team?

- a. 2
- b. 4
- c. 6
- d. 8



6. How many umpires are there per match?

- a. 2
- b. 1
- c. 3
- d. 4

7. The maximum duration of a match will be \_chukkas:

- a. 2
- b. 4
- c. 6
- d. 8

8. How long is the half time interval?

- a. 7 minutes
- b. 5 minutes
- c. 10 minutes
- d. 3 minutes

9. What are the players mounts called?

- a. Sports horses
- b. Polo horses
- c. Polo ponies
- d. Mounts

10. What is the term Penalty 1

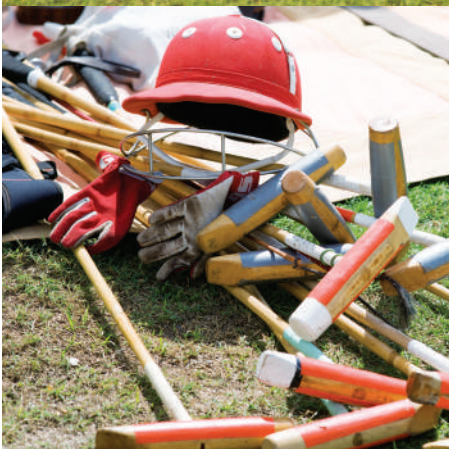
- a. Line up
- b. Automatic goal
- c. knock in
- d. Safety

11. What sort of bridle do most players use?

- a. Hackamore
- b. Gag
- c. Snaffle
- d. Double Bridle

12. What is Surcingle used for in Polo?

- a. Stop a pony galloping
- b. to hit the ball
- c. Back up girth
- d. Hold on rug





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