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Above: Chip Campbell, chairman of the USPA, Bob Puetz, CEO of the USPA and president and CEO of Global Polo Entertainment, David Cummings with The Gauntlet of Polo™ trophy

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COVER: FROM LEFT, GONZALITO PIERS AND HILARIO ULLOA FOLLOWED BY MATIAS GONZALEZ IN THE FINAL OF THE US OPEN COURTESY OF GLOBAL POLO ENTERTAINMENT. THIS PAGE: GLOBAL POLO ENTERTAINMENT

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FOREWORD

In the spring edition, we touch on a number of interesting topics and tournaments in Palm Beach and other parts of the world. The biggest one was the lowering of the USPA tournaments from 26- to 22-goal, introducing prize money and creating the Gauntlet of Polo™. This spawned a new independent 26-goal league and Darlene Ricker describes in Talk how this was a win-win for the game. Women's polo is another theme, and Dawn Jones tells us that having women's only handicaps has been a catalyst for the ladies. One of the benefits of playing polo is the ability to travel and enjoy the game in different locations. One of my personal favourites is Careyes, which is celebrating its 50th year – also look at Daniel Crasemann's article on his club in Mallorca.

In Features, you can read about the pros and cons of cloning, the advantages of tutoring, as well as the rewinding of the Knepp Castle Estate, except for its polo fields, of course! If you come to the Cowdray Gold Cup, Knepp is close by and well worth a visit.

In Action, we cover the 20, 22 and 26 goals as well as the Townsend and the Westchester Cup which the USA won in overtime. Finally, in Archive, Brad Scherer writes about the last all-amateur team to win the US Open in 1971, which was the last time it was played at 22 goals.

For all the latest polo news and action, visit hurlinghampolo.com



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CROCKER SNOW JR is a veteran polo player, father of three former professional players and the Harvard Polo Team head coach. He played polo while working in East Asia, the Middle East, South America and Western Europe and is the author of three books focusing on experiencing climate change.



DANIEL CRASEMANN grew up in Hamburg and has been active in commercial real estate development in Germany since 1988. He started playing polo in Hamburg in 1983 under training from Tom Winter, building the first fields and stud in Hamburg in 1990, and the first fields and stud in Mallorca in 2005.



DAWN JONES is an avid polo player when not on film location as a production stills photographer in the motion picture industry. She counts winning the Women's US Open twice, once awarded the game MVP, and playing in the historic Argentine Women's Open 2017, among her many accolades.



JADE DE VERE-DRUMMOND is the marketing lead for MHF Polo. She first teamed her passion for equestrianism with her flair for marketing upon joining Grandstand Group, organisers of Horse of the Year Show. She then did a stint in Formula One, working for FanVision, F1 team Force India, and Manor Racing.



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ONE TO WATCH

SAYYU DANTATA



DAVID LOMINSKA / POLOGRAPHICS

The 2019 Florida high-goal season was a big leap for Sayyu Dantata of Nigeria. The patron of SD Farm went from playing 20-goal polo last year to 22- and 26-goal this year in Wellington. He considers the 2019 Florida season as the highlight of his polo life, and it's easy to see why. For the first time ever, Adolfo Cambiasso was his teammate, and together they won prestigious 26-goal

tournaments in the newly-formed World Polo League. Dantata began playing tournaments in Nigeria when he was 13 years old. His favourite pony was Lyabo, who he played in 12- and 14-goal polo. A crossbreed (Sudan and Arabian lines), the mare had 'everything,' he says. 'She would go fast, go slow – whatever you wanted. She understood your body movements.' Polo has taken him

to every city in Africa where polo is played, as well as to nine states in the US. He has also played in Asia, Europe, Latin America, Malaysia and the hotbeds of high-goal polo in Argentina, Dubai and England. He likes to win, but says what makes polo special for him is having fun and making friends. 'My uncle, Usman Dantata, and my dad, Idris Dantata, taught me that polo isn't just a sport.'



CHIEF EXECUTIVE

This winter Flannels England teams have once again been featured around the world. At home we saw France making their debut in arena polo for the Bryan Morrison Trophy and in Florida, an England team playing for the Townsend Cup.

More recently, a women's team played the first game on Australia's International Day at Windsor, Sydney and this was followed by a 23 goal international against Australia. With the sun shining in England and chukkas underway, two teams travelled to Florida to play America at under-18 during the weekend of the US Open finals, and for the Westchester the next weekend. Our team went into the last level at four goals but with tensions high and a Penalty 1 against us, victory eluded us and we went down by 4-6. For the Westchester Cup, a young Flannels England team faced three young players and the experienced Mike Azzaro. The USA won in overtime 9 to 8 in a very good game. We had our chances!

Looking ahead to the season in England there have been few changes to the rules. The removal of the throw in if the ball went out over the sidelines sped up the game last season and will benefit this season too; penalties have to be taken within 20 seconds and the ball will be thrown in 25 seconds after a goal is scored.

Finally, we will be without Adolfo Cambiaso in the 22 goal for the first time for many years. His impact on polo has been huge and it will be interesting to see whether his absence opens up the 22 goal.

David Wood

POLO IN THE PORT

Porto Montenegro, the Mediterranean's leading luxury yacht homeport and marina village located in the picturesque Boka Bay, is set to welcome Montenegro's inaugural polo event Polo in the Port, which will be held at the new arena venue piloting this summer season from 1-3 August 2019. Presented by Global Citizen Forum, four teams will compete on a pop-up polo field, overlooking the world's finest superyachts, with sun, food, music and groups of sporting and social excellence. For more information email events@portomontenegro.com.



YALE ARMORY

Home to the Yale Polo program from the 1920s to 2009, the Yale Armory was finally razed this January. The Armory and adjacent cavalry barn were constructed in 1917 for Yale with a donation from Conger Goodyear of the Class of 1899. It housed the Yale ROTC's artillery pieces and cavalry horses during World War I. The Yale Polo and Equestrian Center was run by the ROTC until World War II, after which the Armory operated as part of the university. The men's polo team was formed in the 1920s. Since then, the team has garnered the most intercollegiate championships of any school in the United States. A women's team was formed in 1972 and subsequently won the first two women's collegiate championships. Former 10-goal players including Winston Guest, Stewart Iglehart and Michael Phipps led the teams of their day.



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**HOOKED ON POLO:
TIMMY DUTTA**

Timmy Dutta, 17, has lived in Wellington, Florida, most of his life. He is an eleventh-grader at University of Nebraska High School. Originally a show jumper, he started playing polo when he was 13. He plays at the 20- and 22-goal levels and won all three 20-goal tournaments of the 2019 IPC winter season.

I fell in love with polo the first time I stick-and-balled at Ruben Gracida's stable with my dad (Tim Dutta). I just couldn't stop! Polo is one of the few sports where you can have family bonding. My dad plays, and my mom (international dressage competitor Susan Dutta) helps me manage my stable. I'm able to express myself through polo, almost like an art form. Polo has taken me to Germany and Argentina. This year's final of the Ylvisaker Cup was my most memorable game. All the hard work over the years paid off: we played perfectly that day, and our horses were great. One of my favourite mares is Chelsea, who we got from Memo Gracida. She's ten and has played the US Open. She has an amazing heart and will always fight for me – she never tells me 'no'. I still have Pava, the horse I learned to play on, who is one in a million. Pava made it so easy for me to learn, she gave me confidence and made me fall in love with polo.



**HAWAII
WOMEN'S POLO**

On 23 March, Cabo Wabo and Hawaii Polo Life entered the Susan G. Komen US Open Women's Polo Championship Final 3-0 at the International Polo Club Palm Beach in Wellington, Florida. An offensive powerhouse from the start, Hawaii Polo Life successfully prevented Cabo Wabo from completing any of their set plays in the first chukka, but they really peaked in the fourth, delivering an explosive series of four consecutive field goals to win the championship title 10-5. Responsible for seven out of Hawaii Polo Life's 10 goals, Nina Clarkin (left) was named MVP. J. Michael Prince (pictured) presents the prize.



GLADIATOR POLO

Team Dublin, sponsored by Horseware Ireland, rallied from a loss at the start of the season to reign supreme in the Gladiator Polo™ Championship Final after defeating Team Palm Beach, sponsored by Five Star Builders, with a final score of 17-14. Team Dublin (above, from left, Mariano Obregon, Juan Martin Obregon, and Tito Ruiz with Tom MacGuinness) surged back from an early deficit in the first chukkas to overtake the lead in the fifth chukka to secure the win. Team Palm Beach (Geronimo Obregon, Toro Ruiz, and Tommy Biddle) almost sent the match into overtime after nearly tying the game in the sixth chukka with Obregon and Ruiz tallying a combined three points for Team Palm Beach. However, Mariano Obregon totalled five points in the match and helped lift Team Dublin to victory, winning the MVP award in the process. 'We just kept shooting and even when we were down, we kept our cool and kept going through the game and it paid off,' said Mariano Obregon. Gladiator Polo™ will return to Wellington in 2020.

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The Royal Windsor Cup 2018

CHUKKAS

2018 was the first time in 62 years that a Heguy did not play in the Argentine Open. The run was started by Antonio Heguy in 1956 and ended with Eduardo and Pepe, but there is a talented fourth generation who will play in a few years.

The AAP raised Hazel Jackson from 9 to 10 goals in the Women's Handicaps, effective January 1. She joined Nina Clarkin who is the only other 10- goaler. There are a number of young women moving up the ladder who will no doubt make it to the exclusive 10-goal club.

Max Charlton was raised to 10 goals in the Arena in January after winning 15 goal Championships. Max is the second Englishman to reach 10 goals after Chris Hyde. Max is the only 10-goal arena player in the world!

History was made on March 29, when Chilean Leon Schwenke, at age 13, became the youngest player in the US Open! He substituted for Postage Stamp's Annabel Gundlach. His older brother Tomas played for Aspen in The Gauntlet of Polo™ series and was MVP in the Gold Cup.

In the first round of the US Open, the chairman of the USPA, Chip Campbell, played with the president of the Argentine Polo Association, Eduardo Novillo Astrada, for the Cessna team. They played Aspen, captained by USPA secretary Stewart Armstrong, who won 14-8!

La Natividad (Matias Torres Zavaleta, Ignatius Du Plessis, Camilo and Barto Castagnola) will play the qualification for the Open. Three quarters of the team will debut in England this summer as Dubai, with Rashid Albwardy replacing Matias Torres Zavaleta.

NATIONAL INTERCOLLEGIATE CHAMPIONSHIPS SWEEP

The men and women of Texas A&M University (TAMU) became the second team in history to complete a rare double-double in the world of intercollegiate polo earlier this year, following the example of the University of California Davis men and women who swept the competition at the national championship in 1981, 1982 and 1983. Held at the Virginia Polo Inc. in Charlottesville, Virginia, the women's final saw Texas A&M (Marissa Wells, Ally Vaughn, Hannah Reynolds) claim victory over the University of Virginia (UVA – Demitra Hajimihalís, Meghan Milligan, Sadie Bryant) 20-9. The seasoned Texas A&M men (Christian Aycinena, Fritz Felhaber, Mariano Silva, Colton Valentine) entered as underdogs and, despite being down 5-0 in the first chukka of the final against the Cavaliers, they won the game 21-18 in a closely-fought second half.



SMS GOLD VASE

The 8-goal SMS Gold Vase was played in Delhi at the Jaipur Polo Ground earlier this year in March. Jindal Panther (Sameer Mecca, Naveen Jindal, Tom Brodie and Simran Singh Shergill) and Sahara Warriors (below: Hurr Ali, Vandit Golecha, Salim Azmi and Matt Perry) earned their places in the final, and after two very close first chukkas leaving the score at 2-2 at half-time, Amzi scored twice in the third chukka to give Sahara Warriors a one-goal advantage. Englishman Matt Perry broke through and scored in the final chukka to secure a 5-4 victory for the Sahara Warriors.



DAVID LOMINSKA, ROBSON SENNE. ©MIKE RYAN/UNITED STATES POLO ASSOCIATION, COURTESY OF RED MORGAN



**SADDLE UP WITH...
MATIAS GONZALEZ**

**COUNTRY: UNITED STATES
HANDICAP: 3 (US)
AGE: 20**

When and how did you start playing polo?

My dad brought me into the sport. When I was about 8 years old, I started playing in Wellington. I was in the Polo Training Foundation program. It's a great way for a kid to learn about polo. I competed in my first high-goal tournament when I was 14. I played for Zacara with Facundo Pieres. It taught me discipline, commitment and how to work hard and be a pro.

What makes polo special for you?

It's not just one thing. I love the tradition, the sport, the horses – everything together. And everyone in my family played.

How do you feel about your 2019 Florida season?

It was great playing for Pilot! Winning The Gauntlet of Polo™ series was a dream come true, especially because in my home town.

Before that, what was your most memorable polo game?

When I was 14, playing with Facundo [Pieres], we beat Adolfo Cambiaso and went into the semis in Sotogrande.

What are you doing this summer?

On 1 May I go from Florida to Sotogrande, Spain, to play in the medium-goal (14). I love playing there. Sotogrande is beautiful.



LOVE OF MY LIFE

**PONY'S NAME: MR POLO
SEX: GELDING
ORIGIN: AMERICAN**

The first time I saw Mr Polo was in 1980 at Sunland Park in El Paso, Texas visiting my uncle Chino who had told me he had a racehorse for polo. Mr Polo had the presence, the eye and temperament of a champion. He played his first US Open in 1981 at four years old and, a year later, he became my best horse and helped me achieve my 10-goal handicap. I played him two chukkas in the 82 Open, and he continued to play in 1983, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89 and 1990, helping me to win seven US Opens, where I played him in two chukkas in almost every one. In 1991, we made the decision to retire Mr Polo, and he lived until 2015 when he was 38 years old. In February 2019 he was inducted into the Museum of Polo Hall of Fame. By Memo Gracida (pictured above with Mr Polo in 1985).

**A GENT
EXTRAORDINAIRE**

Willy Von Raab, a pillar of the Virginia Polo Community, sadly passed away in February at the age of 77 after a brief illness. His love affair with polo started as an undergraduate at Yale and continued throughout law school at the University of Virginia. After practicing law, he served as the US Customs Commissioner in the Regan and Bush administrations. He subsequently went on to form the Oldford Polo Club, which has been active for several decades. The club will continue its play under



the guidance of his son Nicholas Von Raab, who is an able player in his own right. Willy's keen wit and dry sense of humour will be sorely missed.



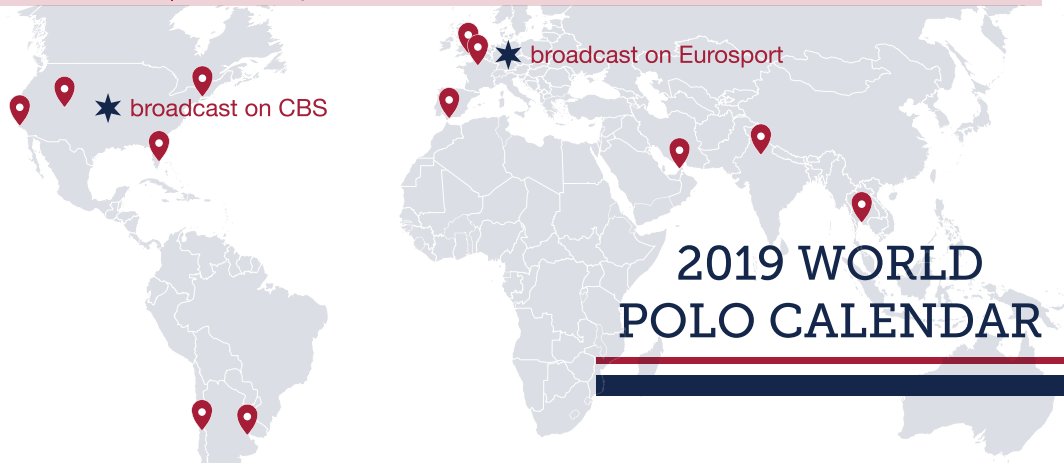
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Where	CLUB Tournament	Goals	When
Palm Beach	IPC Ylivasker Cup	20	11 January 10 February
Palm Beach	IPC Townsend Cup	24	26 January
Palm Beach	GCP The Sterling Cup	20	26 January 9 February
Palm Beach	WPC The All Star Challenge	26	6-17 February
Palm Beach	IPC Lucchese 40-Goal Polo Championship	40	16 February
Pattaya	THAI POLO Queen's Cup Pink Polo (Women)	Open	16-17 February
Dubai	HABTOOR Dubai Gold Cup	18	18 February 8 March
Palm Beach	IPC CV Whitney Cup GAUNTLET	22	13-24 February
Palm Beach	IPC USPA Gold Cup GAUNTLET	22	24 February 24 March
Palm Beach ★	IPC US Open Polo Championship GAUNTLET	22	27 March 21 April
Palm Beach	IPC US Open Women's Polo Championship	22	23 March
Palm Beach	IPC Westchester Cup	26	28 April
Windsor	GUARDS Cartier Queen's Cup	22	21 May 16 June
Midhurst	COWDRAY Duke of Sutherland	18	20 May 9 June
Midhurst	COWDRAY King Power Gold Cup	22	25 June 21 July
Windsor	GUARDS Indian Empire Shield	18	2-20 July
Midhurst	COWDRAY British Women's Open	18	14-20 July
Midhurst	COWDRAY Challenge Cup	18	22 July 4 August
Berkshire	RCBPC Coronation Cup	26	27 July
Aspen	AVPC Silver Cup	22	August
Chantilly	CHANTILLY Open de France	16	August September
Chantilly	CHANTILLY Open de France - Women	16	August September
Santa Barbara	SBPC Pacific Coast Open	16	15 August 1 September
Soto Grande	SANTA MARIA Gold Cup	20	19-30 August
Greenwich	GPC East Coast Open	20	25 August 8 September
Tortugas	TORTUGAS Tortugas Open	Open	September October
Jaipur	JAIPUR Bhopal Pataudi Cup	12	12-19 October
Hurlingham	HURLINGHAM Hurlingham Open	Open	November
Palermo	BUENOS AIRES Argentine Open	Open	November December
Palermo	BUENOS AIRES Argentine Women's Open	Open	November December
Aspen	AVPC Snow Polo World Cup	17	December
Palermo	BUENOS AIRES Copa Camara de Diputados	29	December
Santiago	SAN CRISTOBAL Chilean Open	24	December





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LIFE'S A BEACH

Susan Stovall explores the evolution of Mexico's Costa Careyes resort as it celebrates its 50-year anniversary

Imagine flying over Mexico, seeing an eight-mile-long pristine coastline and saying, 'I want that!' Well, that was the dream of Gian Franco Brignone in 1968. A dirt road was all that connected northern point Puerto Vallarta and southern point Manzanillo, where the movie *10*, featuring Bo Derek and Dudley Moore, was shot on location at Las Hadas Resort in 1978.

A large coconut plantation was visible, as well as the jungle, but almost nothing else. Brignone and his friend Luis de Rivera thought they had found heaven. Starting with some small bungalows on the Playa Rosa

beach – one of the most beautiful bays on the coastline – they developed a hotel called El Careyes, characterised by vibrant colours featuring Mexican and Mediterranean architectural influences, building casitas on the hillside overlooking the beach.

El Careyes Club and Residences is now a proper village, just minutes from the beach, home to seven restaurants and 65 large villas with owners from all over the world. The polo fields were the vision of Brignone's son, Giorgio, who became enamoured with the sport in his early 30s, and created two mature Bermuda grass

fields 30 years ago. The polo facilities have expanded over the years, and since the polo club was formed in 1990, it now provides stabling for 150 horses.

Polo is currently played four days a week and tournaments are scheduled throughout the season from November to April. There are 60 playing ponies suitable for all levels of play on site during the season, ready with grooms and full tack.

The famous Agua Alta tournament that was held in 2000 saw Costa Careyes Polo Club become a truly international club. Michael Butler, Antonio Herrera,

Memo and Carlos Gracida, Lyndon Lea, Major Hugh Dawnay, Tom Barrack, Ambassador Glen Holden, and more recently Nick Clarke of the Salkeld Gold Cup team, Sebastian Dawnay, the Donoso brothers, Guillermo Steta, President of the Mexican Polo Federation, and the De Alba family of Balvanera, Mexico, are just some of the polo greats who have played on the polo fields.

Many others have visited El Careyes including Horacio Heguy's father, polo

instructor extraordinaire Rege Ludwig and Australian patron Hana Grill Zavaleta.

Careyes Polo Club has also twice hosted the playoffs for Zone A for the Federation of International Polo and played two Ambassadors' Cups, and this year it celebrated the 20th Agua Alta tournament initiated by Alberto Ardissonne, which was held at the Club in April 2019.

However, whether you wish to play polo or just unwind in the stunning surrounds, the El Careyes Club and Residences has

recently reopened after a major renovation, with a fresh new design introduced by Mexican architects, Gabriela Carrillo and Mauricio Rocha.

The new development is homage to the original Hotel Careyes, with an emphasis on luxurious relaxation and exquisite hotel services. Evoking a more contemporary atmosphere and style to provide top tier accommodation, it combines fantastic polo with an outstanding holiday destination for players and their family and friends.

THE FAMOUS AGUA ALTA TOURNAMENT THAT WAS HELD IN 2000 SAW COSTA CAREYES POLO CLUB BECOME A TRULY INTERNATIONAL CLUB

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Previous page: Mexico's Careyitos Beach. This page, from left: Giorgio Brignone, Gian Franco Brignone and Alberto Ardissonne

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THE JOY OF POLO

Exporting Thai hospitality and mixing it with Argentine charm, Thai Polo founder Harald Link has started a movement, which grows bigger and better every year, says Carolina Beresford



20

An international circuit of competitive polo played in Argentina, Thailand and England, Thai Polo's fifth year in Argentina was celebrated with four tournaments played over the spring, making the 2018 South American season the most action-packed to date.

The club started the season with a new 14-goal challenge, the B. Grimm Thai Polo

Master, before hosting the traditional Thai Polo, Technopolo and Tanoira Cups. The series of competitions, organised by Licere PR and Minuto Siete, were played in clubs around General Rodriguez, largely considered to be the epicentre of the polo world.

The B. Grimm Thai Polo Master began the season with a bang in November 2018, as

12 teams fought hard to take the title. After several days of bad weather suspended play, Shyam Mehta's Mumbai Paisano and Claudio Porcel's Balanz Capital qualified for the main final. The big day began with a charity match in aid of Asociación Centro de Vida, a centre that provides support for those struggling with addiction, and leading players such as

*Opposite: Harold Link and some future stars with Augustin (left) and Juan Martín Nero (right).
Below: By Jai's Jaime García Huidobro and Cruz Marchini celebrate*

Pablo Mac Donough, Juan Martín Nero, Pelon Stirling and Bautista Heguy saddled up to support the cause.

When the final came around it was a fast-paced affair, and in the end, Balanz Capital were able to snatch the 9-7 win. In usual Thai Polo fashion, a fantastic party marked the end of the first competition – the fun had just begun.

The fifth edition of the Thai Polo Cup followed, as eight 14-goal teams united in the name of fast, friendly polo. The tournament, first played in 2014, has grown stupendously over the years, both in terms of logistics and performance on the field. After two weeks of play, the final was set between By Jai and Las Tapias. Gracing the field for By Jai was 15-year-old Mackenzie Weisz, who proved to be unstoppable in attack, and 11-year-old Cruz Marchini.

Guided by Chilean Jaime García Huidobro and Colombian Juancho Uribe, two highly experienced players, By Jai was able to win the final and take the Thai Polo title. It was also special to see Agustín and Juan Martín Nero lead a wonderful chukka between six- and seven-year-old children, including Juan Martín's own son, Lorenzo. The tournament concluded with a grand party, with live music, a DJ set and fireworks, all in true Thai Polo style.

The third tournament to wear Thai Polo's badge of honour was the annual Tanoira Cup, played in memory of the great Gonzalo Tanoira. A dozen 12-goal teams lined up to compete in the tournament hosted by the Tanoira family at Cuatro Vientos, their 100-hectare club in Pilar. Ten days of entertaining polo ensued, with Chateau d'Aulne taking the trophy after defeating Altamira in the final. The event ended with

a touching speech by Gonzalo's youngest son Santiago, who thanked players and friends for gathering to remember his father in the best possible way.

Franck Dubarry was entrusted to finish the series with flair, with the seventh edition of his Technopolo Cup. The tournament was extremely competitive, and several of the 10 12-goal teams had a strong shot at winning the title. After a well-fought tournament, Alejandro Metro's La Trinidad came out as champions for the second year in a row. The late Jorge Mac Donough was honoured, as was Yvan Guillemin, an important member of the French Federation of Polo and Dubarry's polo professor.

Each of the four tournaments shone for fair play, intensity and family-oriented atmosphere. As promised, Thai Polo delivered a season full of fireworks, on both sides of the board. 'We try to export Thai hospitality and mix it with Argentine charm,' says Thai Polo founder Harald Link. 'It seems that all players like our tournaments, and then other venues asked Thai Polo and Minuto Siete to do the same with them. We are very happy to do that and are sure that later everyone who wants to implement this method can do it very well. There is no secret sauce, except for the wish for others to be happy. At Thai Polo we think that friendship and the joy of the game is most important.'



AHEAD OF THE GAME

Dawn Jones discusses how the introduction of the women's specific handicap a decade ago has contributed to improvements in women's polo



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While playing polo over the course of the last 2 years, I have seen significant changes for the better, especially in women's polo. The women's specific handicap is one of these notable improvements.

It was created in 2009 by Argentina's Samantha (Samy) Perrusi, who recognised the need to build a women's handicap along with a conversion scale to the general handicap so that one woman player could be differentiated from another more accurately when competing in women's polo. Samy understood the compression issues

female players faced within the general handicap scale, particularly from -2 to 2, and she also understood there was a need to differentiate between female players who had comparably different skill sets. By 2013, the USPA board approved and started using the Women's Handicap in January 2014.

Since 2014, a higher level of interest began to emerge as teams were built with more accurate handicaps for a level playing field of competition. Thankfully, each country already implementing the system is taking measures through their women's handicap

committees to fine tune each female registered member's handicap within the 0-10 handicap scale, with translation charts, benchmark scales, and a handicap criteria code for clear and uniform guidelines.

Several noticeable benefits have resulted from introducing a women's specific handicap. More women's tournaments are being organised globally, and the more often women's-specific tournament opportunities are provided with a women's handicap, the more often a female player will be seen, evaluated and able to improve her handicap.

There has also been a significant increase in the quality of women's play at all levels, particularly at the 16 to open goal level. The largest polo associations in the world are recognising its potential to attract more women to the game. Indeed, it's no accident that the Argentine Women's Open finals is played at Palermo field two on the same day as the men's Open finals on field one. In England, women are playing on Lawns 1 at Cowdray, and playing the finals on the Queens Ground at Guards partnered with causes such as Breast Cancer Haven.

The USPA, the International Polo Club, and Port Maraca Polo Club organised the

2019 US Open Women's Polo Championship to host the finals on field one at IPC in March. This was a historic moment for women's polo with the opportunity to play on one of the best fields in the world. I believe this year's record eight 18-22 goal teams in the Women's US Open is a direct result of work done by Sunny Hale through her Women's Championship Tournament mission to give women more opportunities to play polo around the world under Perrusi's unique handicap scale.

This season in Florida, the World Polo League has introduced an innovative format to promote women's polo in a 22-goal Mixed Doubles Championship where two women

play off their women's handicap alongside two men who play off their general handicap. And, the International Polo Club is promoting women's polo further with a customised arena polo format called Amazon Polo to engage an entirely new audience.

Thanks to the women's handicap, the -2 to 2 goal compression issues are being successfully addressed, and are providing talented players such as Nina Clarkin the opportunity to reach 10 goals in the women's handicap. Their achievements have inspired other women's players to improve their game, their horses, and strive to become polo professionals too.

SEVERAL NOTICEABLE BENEFITS HAVE RESULTED FROM INTRODUCING A WOMEN'S HANDICAP

Opposite: Airborne Dawn Jones pursues the ball. This page, from left: La Dolfina Brava's Nina Clarkin chases El Overo's Lia Salvo during the Argentine Women's Open 2018 in flying form.





LARGER THAN LIFE

When a polo fall almost ended Peter Barfoot's life, writing his autobiography helped set him on the road to recovery

Hampshire farmer Peter Barfoot's love of horses can be traced back to his youth when he rode in the New Forest near his home village of Botley and, later, as joint master of the New Forest Buckhounds, but it was polo that became his true passion. It was also polo that was set to change his life dramatically.

Peter's introduction to the game came by chance when the president of the New Forest Polo Club, Jack Broughton,

suggested: 'Come along on your hunters and join in'. The line was cast and Peter was quickly hooked and reeled in.

Peter soon realised, if he was going to play seriously, he needed some lessons. On his ex-racehorse and expert polo pony Maui, and under the watchful eye of trainer Paul Dukes, Peter made rapid progress. By this point, Peter was in his 40s, and for him, polo offered the chance to play, at a competitive level, a high-adrenaline

sport unencumbered by what would be considered advancing years in most other games.

Peter's playing went from strength to strength, as did his passion. He acquired a string of ponies, moved up the rankings and found himself playing both in the UK and across the world.

His polo career culminated in his appointment as chairman of Cowdray Park Polo Club and the establishment of the

IT HELPED JOIN THE PAST WITH THE PRESENT AND, HOPEFULLY, THE FUTURE

successful Maiz Dulce team, the name a reference to the sweetcorn produced by Peter's business.

Like most polo players, Peter took a few knocks, but it was a fall in 2016 that was to leave him fighting for his life.

Peter, now 66, was playing in an eight-goal match at Cowdray when his horse lost its legs. It wasn't spectacular, and he should have rolled away unscathed, but instead, his head was speared into the ground, during which Peter recalls suddenly seeing a ball of orange light and then – nothing.

He was airlifted to hospital where he was given a 10 per cent chance of survival having suffered a severe brain bleed. In a coma, he was transferred to a specialist unit, where his long road to recovery began.

Amazingly, 15 weeks later, Peter was discharged, but he was still far from his normal self. A tracheotomy had left him unable to speak or swallow properly and he was in need of constant care as his cognitive functions were severely compromised.

It was his wife Angela, at his side through the darkest of days, who identified a solution to kick-start the cogs in Peter's brain. She decided he needed a project, and, as this was the ideal time to reflect on a life well lived, she bought an autobiography service from LifeBook, which was created by Roy Moëd, chairman of Ranelagh Farm Polo Club.

Having never ridden a horse until the age of 50, Roy started polo on Fat Boy and ended up founding his own polo club and playing against Peter at Cowdray.

A personally assigned interviewer visited Peter at his home on a regular basis to record his life story in his own words, which was then written up in instalments by a professional ghost-writer. Every couple of weeks, Peter reviewed the story and made amendments or additions where necessary. The project gave him something positive

to focus upon but without the enormous effort that would otherwise have been entailed in such an undertaking.

Initially, it was tough. Peter's voice would tire and he would suffer from coughing attacks, but his interviewer sat patiently, and, as his composure regained, she gently encouraged him to continue.

As memories flooded back and his strength returned, Peter's enthusiasm for the project grew. Now, instead of dreading the meetings as he had done at the start, he actively looked forward to them. While

Peter's body was physically recovering, his LifeBook was becoming his own tailor-made mental recuperation programme.

'Writing the book was possibly the biggest factor of my rehabilitation,' says Peter. 'It got my brain going again, even though, sometimes, my brain felt like scrambled egg afterwards.'

Importantly, the project gave him the chance to reflect on where he had come from, what he had achieved and what was important to him. 'It helped join the past with the present and, hopefully, the future.'



BUSINESS AND PLEASURE

The 10th Atlantic Cup polo challenge involved not just intense competition on the playing field, but also a serious session in the classroom, reports Crocker Snow Jr



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The latest Atlantic Cup was played last autumn between Oxford, Cambridge, Harvard and Yale, hosted by Harvard at the Myopia Hunt Club north of Boston, on Saturday 23 September. Between the Friday semi-finals and the Sunday finals, five or six players from each visiting team travelled to the Harvard Business School campus in Cambridge/Allston to take part in a truncated B-School case study about the Argentinian polo gear and apparel company La Martina.

With its classy logo of duelling polo players, the enterprise had been the subject of a full-scale Business School case study in 2015, entitled *La Martina: Leveraging Polo's Luxury Lifestyle*, authored by professor Anat Keinan. Three years later, it was revised around the core question of whether La

Martina should 'stick to its knitting' by focussing on polo equipment and clothing, or keep expanding step by step into more luxury lifestyle clothing lines.

The polo-playing students were given a 12-page summary of the case beforehand, and most absorbed it on an hour-long minivan trip from the polo activity north of Boston, less than one third of the time that the average, sleep-deprived B-School students spent.

Harvard Business School professor Josh Lerner put the players through their paces 'They weren't half bad considering the situation,' Lerner remarked afterwards. 'They didn't do the same number-crunching that MBAs typically do, but as polo players they had a much more nuanced approach to the subject than the standard MBA.'

After two hours of puzzling the business dilemma, the student athletes were asked to decide whether La Martina should stay as a niche business or keep pushing out and away from its exclusive polo-related focus.

The outcome was almost a hung jury: six in favour of sticking to polo, eight arguing that the polo world is too finite and La Martina must continue to evolve beyond it, and two or three were undecided.

'Not too surprising,' said Lerner. 'Most MBAs opt for scale and a "getting big fast" strategy for most enterprises.'

La Martina CEO Adrian Simonetti, who was present at the original classroom wrap-up in 2015, was unable to attend this sequel. Had he done so, he might have argued the votes. 'Polo is and will be our

core identity for all our conceptual creations, from the store concepts and products to our marketing and communication,' he said on the phone later.

But then qualified himself: 'Yes, the polo narrative is changing, and the digital speed needed to adapt as a business is constant. We've widened our scope of the "aspirational crowd" that represents a more cosmopolitan, traveller lifestyle and could engage in polo in different ways than a player per se.'

Simonetti felt he learned from the initial Business School work. 'The Harvard study was a real eye-opener and an exercise in opening our ideas to be challenged and setting new goals. It's always great to have such brilliant minds sharing ideas.'

One by-product has been La Martina's commitment to research priorities. The enterprise has opened a small R&D lab in the UK to study and launch new polo products. 'The horses and players are in constant evolution – new breeds, clones,

new rules and how the game is being tweaked for a new spectator,' said Simonetti. 'These are all things we want to be on top of.' So what about the polo games that put the university polo players together in the first place?

The tournament was hosted by Harvard at the Harvard Polo & Equestrian Center, adjacent to the Myopia Hunt Club polo fields. The Cup involved seven four-chukka games in four days.

The Sunday finals on Myopia's Gibney Field attracted a crowd of several thousand to watch the two undefeated teams, Oxford and host Harvard. The visitors in blue prevailed 4-3, the seventh time Oxford has won the Atlantic Cup. (For small recompense, a Harvard alumni team topped the Oxford alums 5-4 the day before.)

The 11th Atlantic Cup is scheduled in Oxford and Cambridge in June 2019. Who knows what the players may have to turn their hands – or minds – to then?



Opposite: The participating teams. Above: Josh Lerner

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EYE ON THE PRIZE

As the USPA lowers the handicap level and introduces prize money, causing a renaissance of the game, Darlene Ricker explores how it will affect the sport



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Despite concerns that having two leagues may splinter participation and trigger the demise of high-goal polo in Wellington, the season spurred excitement that resulted in a renaissance of polo. It turned out to be the proverbial win-win situation, with more teams (25 in all), more jobs for players, more sponsors, more games and more prize money – a combined total of \$1.375 million.

'More polo is good for the sport; period,' says Dale Smicklas, commissioner of the World Polo League (WPL).

Nearby clubs shared Wellington's boon. Port Mayaca's 22-goal series attracted players such as Jesse Bray, a season standout who also competed at IPC and the WPL.

His games never overlapped, but spectators had some decisions to make. In Wellington, the Sunday afternoon games were 3pm at IPC and 4pm at WPL. But with both leagues' networks and ESPN Deportes live streaming and posting game videos online, it was easy to keep up-to-date on everything.

'I think the 22- and the 26-goal complement each other. They each have

their own niche,' says SD Farms patron Sayyu Dantata, who entered teams in both levels. For the first time ever, Dantata played 26 goals with Adolfo Cambiaso as a teammate and won the WPL All Star Challenge Draw. 'Playing in two leagues is fun, but it takes its toll on you,' says Dantata. After playing 18 chukkas in 24 hours (two games and a practice), he says, 'I slept 11 hours straight!'

Annabelle Gundlach, patron of Postage Stamp Farm, says the 22-goal at IPC had 'unbelievable competition,' noting that some players brought their top horses from

Argentina, including Argentine Open mounts. 'Having 16 teams this year instead of six last year – five of which were made up of two families – coupled with having \$1 million on the line, makes the level of play just that much more intense,' adds Gundlach.

David Cummings, president and CEO of Global Polo Entertainment, created the Gauntlet and its prize structure: \$125,000 for each of the winning teams in the CV Whitney Cup and the USPA Gold Cup®; \$250,000 for winning the US Open; and a potential additional \$500,000 bonus if one team won the Gauntlet (all three games).

The prize money structure was different in the 22- and 26-goal. The Gauntlet was winner-takes-all, while WPL distributed prize money among winners and runners-up: \$100,000 for the WPL Founders Cup (\$60,000

to the winning team; \$40,000 to the subsidiary winners); \$125,000 for the Palm Beach Open (\$75,000 winner; \$50,000 subsidiary); and \$150,000 for the Triple Crown of Polo (\$90,000 winner; \$60,000 subsidiary).

USPA chairman Chip Campbell was among several first-time high-goal patrons at IPC. He said the prize money was attractive, but it wasn't his primary motivation for fielding a team. 'I'm 54 years old, on the tail end of my career, and I wanted to participate in high-goal while I still could,' he says.

There were three female patrons – Gundlach, Maureen Brennan and Gillian Johnston – in the 22-goal. 'Even more fabulous,' says Gundlach, 'there were three female subs, two of whom were subs for men' (Mia Bray for Curtis Pilot and Mia Novillo Astrada for Jeff Hildebrand).

Both IPC and the WPL feel they accomplished their goals, which were similar in effect if not in approach. The WPL preserved 26-goal polo, the highest level outside Argentina, and made it accessible to patrons and players who had never been able to compete above 20 or 22 goals (see our article on the WPL, page 62).

The USPA took a different tack. After the 2018 US Open, the association asked Cummings to explore ways to re-energise high-goal polo. His answer: the creation of a new 22-goal series, the Gauntlet of Polo™. 'In previous years, the 20-goal was always flourishing, but the 22 was stagnant,' he says. 'The Gauntlet concept, with the additional \$1 million in prize money, gives us the opportunity to change the trajectory of high-goal polo for the future.'



Opposite from left: David Cummings, Chip Campbell and Mia Bray. This page, from left: Mare, Melissa, and Grant Ganzi, Roh, Louisa and Bob Jornayvaz



IN FULL SWING

Jade de Vere-Drummond explains her approach to marketing polo and how MHF Polo is growing the sport

For all of us at MHF and Silver Leys, polo really is a passion. We are, of course, also a business and strive to be financially robust, allowing us to have the ability to grow our staff and reinvest in us and the sport. Recently, we have been very honoured to be asked about some of our marketing and PR efforts as we've seen some success.

In my opinion, there are two very important elements that have helped us grow so quickly. One, most importantly,

is our team and support. We are a very small team, but all work extremely hard and seem to complement each other in terms of our skills and strengths. Without any of these people we would have achieved far less. So the right team really is everything.

The second thing is time. Between us we manage children, other work commitments and university studies. Alec Banner-Eve, who runs the club and owns the polo school, with the support

of his brother Edward, is very involved and always the key decision maker, but it is all a juggling act for them both.

We brainstorm a lot and there's rarely a day we don't debate or 'openly discuss' a new concept. I have always tried to break the mould in marketing.

In my opinion, there is no such thing as a bad idea, so there's a lot of trial and error. I came from a mainstream sports background with big budgets, but everything at MHF has

*Opposite page: Jade de Vere-Drummond and Alec Banner-Eve team up at Silver Leys Polo Club.
This page: Alec Banner-Eve teaching at his home arena, MHF Polo Club*

been done on a shoestring and with the added pressure of needing return.

The risk has been all Alec and Ed's and without this faith, there would have been no progression. None of it is rocket science. It's just knowing what you are, what you want to achieve and deciding the best way of doing it.

When I joined the team, we looked at all the avenues the club makes money from and how we could promote polo to a wider audience. There's a lot of frog-kissing in sports marketing in my experience, particularly when you're looking to obtain the most well suited commercial partners, which I feel are integral to the business.

We've really had to work hard at dealing with rejection and disappointment at times. Some key partners walked away when it felt like the perfect fit. Often, it's been a long road to get to that final hurdle and it can be a real blow when things don't go your way.

It's a challenge to always be determined and focus on the next target, but we've learned to be better at it. At grassroots level, we contacted every pony club, school and university within a 20-mile radius of the MHF venues – these are every polo club's bread and butter, in my opinion. To get partners, including sponsors, suppliers and cross-promotional organisations, we marched through towns and cities, visited offices, and emailed ridiculous amounts of data. Work with people who can grow your business while you help grow theirs – never underestimate how important constant contact is.

We also aim to get horsey people to try polo, ensure local people know we're here and come to our events, and let corporates know there's a better option than a round of golf for their next team-building exercise. We sold more than 300 lessons at one event last year!

Everyone is so big on getting fit and being healthy, so we try to make life easy for people. We contacted all our local councils to

offer assemblies for their schools and venue usage for their events, and we get involved with charities such as the Ebony Horse Club – a story that was picked up by the national press – welcoming them to play. There are hundreds of organisations out there who will help, and we also approached governing bodies such as the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and Sport England.

But it's not just about getting new people in. The service provided and the welcome newcomers experience is integral to retaining and integrating people and businesses into the sport. From guiding someone from their first lesson to their first tournament, to nurturing a sponsor and ensuring their expectations are not only met but exceeded, managing what you have from grassroots to brand partnerships, it's all a very big piece of the puzzle.

Looking to the future, we would like to grow to a stage where we have a full-time

marketing team and a polo business that's fully-booked for months in advance. However, most importantly, we would like to have reached and touched as many people as possible to give them the opportunity to witness and be part of our wonderful sport.

We would like to thank the clubs and people we work with (Julia Luke and Phil Baker in particular), Silver Leys Polo Club owners Martin Roat, Nick Gerard and the chairman Andy Cork, the HPA, members and all our followers for their valued support, and we know we are one of many like-minded clubs and professionals in the sport, many of which are enjoying similar success, and hope there's future opportunity to work in a more collective manner.

It feels as if we are very much still scratching the surface of what's possible, so it's a very exciting time.



PLAYING FOR KEEPS

Founder of the Mallorca Polo Club, Daniel Crasemann, explains why the island could become an increasingly attractive polo destination for players and their families



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I started playing polo almost 30 years ago, and I just managed to get to a 1-goal handicap. I have always had great fun and polo has become an important part of my life, in which I have built two clubs; one in Hamburg with three fields and one in Mallorca with two full-size Tifton fields. Both pursue the same goal: light-hearted, competitive polo.

We started building our first field in Mallorca in 2005, and we also have three

exercise tracks, surrounded by a number of pastures and forest. Mallorca is not an official club, but a private initiative, we organise a number of weekends of polo between 8 and 12 goals among friends.

Copa de Pascua is held in April and May, Copa Mallorca is in July and August and Copa Otoño takes place in October. I've always been convinced that Mallorca could be a great location for polo in the centre of Europe. The two main reasons

being the perfect year-round climate and the large airport, but we also have an extremely high quality of life, security, a wonderful capital and many opportunities to keep non-playing members of the family happy, too.

Mallorca airport is served by every major city in Europe several times a day, almost all year round. Therefore, it's even possible to fly from Paris or London for a game and fly back in the evening.

The best polo for me is in the 10- to 16-goal range, played with competitive friends. It is part of polo's DNA to play with amateurs, and it is very important for the survival of the sport that the financiers have a great time – they only have that if they are part of the team and part of the success, and they will only become part of the team if the professionals back this up.

Of course, there are patrons for which winning is more important than playing, but I think those are the exceptions. Pros and patrons have to make each other understand what polo is all about. In the end, winning or losing is of no consequence

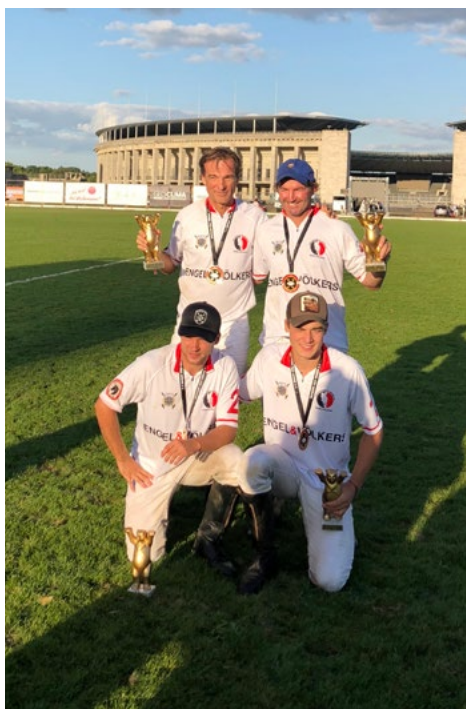
– the satisfying feeling of riding healthy and happy off the field, exhausted, to the ponylines after a good game, means I want to play again.

I've played a lot of good games, but the most emotional was probably the German high-goal championship in Berlin in 2018. There was something very special about playing on the historic Maifeld, the last Olympic polo stadium in the world, with my two sons Caspar and Caesar (3 goals each), and Juani González (5). It is a privilege to play alongside your children, and we won this great tournament in a very close final. Indeed, polo is one of the few sports you

can play with your family at a very high level. My sons were lucky to start polo very early, and watching them develop and now playing with them gives me the greatest satisfaction. Especially at the ages of 12 to 18, it is so important to be in conversation with your children, and a common sport is a perfect way to bring us together.

Of course, it is a special task to keep the children grounded despite their involvement in elite sports, and to educate them about modesty, but I believe I have succeeded and that my sons can appreciate the work and the values behind it.

Opposite: Caesar Crasemann on the field Below, from left: Daniel Crasemann, Juani Gonzales, Caspar Crasemann and Caesar Crasemann at the Maifeld Stadium. Right: Caesar Crasemann and Manuel Elizalde



MALLORCA COULD BE A GREAT LOCATION FOR POLO IN THE CENTRE OF EUROPE

IN THE EXTREME

Juan Zavalía explains how his experience working with F1 teams led him to establish an all-professional polo league

ILLUSTRATION: ORIANA FENWICK

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The idea of the EBI Extreme Polo League (XPL) came as a visceral reaction to my exposure to F1. This is circa 2012, when I was working for a private equity group who purchased an F1 team a few years before I joined. Hired to work for them in an investment banking capacity on their large industrial projects, I had no plans to do anything in F1 but as the story goes, the team hit some challenging times as a result of its main sponsor seeking bankruptcy protection and the uneven competitive field that F1 operates in.

As one of the independent teams in F1, one is slapped around on a daily basis with money from the leading teams who have unlimited budgets in order to compete in the same championship as you. We ended up living and dying with each team performance – points meant happy sponsors, better prospects and more money from F1, and no points meant less of everything and, worse, fewer prospects for the next year, so you can actually see the current and the projected budget holes widening in front of you.

In hindsight, the obsession with how this portfolio asset performed, ended up being counter-productive for the entire organisation: if the team does well, we will be OK, if it doesn't, we are doomed! As the

team's funding needs increased, I took a closer and closer look at the economic framework of the verticals (the teams) within the tentacular horizontal, which defines Formula One Management, and worked to help on various ad-hoc initiatives, usually involving fire drills and last-minute cash flow juggling.

But what turned out to be the most interesting aspect of my F1 experience was the legal and economic set up of the business. F1 triggered my curiosity to study as many leagues (successful and unsuccessful) as I could get my hands on. The first thing you learn is that the business is not intuitive and that it does take some processing power to fully grasp how professional sports leagues operate and make money. People talk about them with understanding, but they are a beast on their own and not what you would expect. To synchronise all the parts that need to be in place is not an easy task, particularly when starting from zero with a sport like polo that does not have, shall we say, 'attractive' metrics to entice broadcasters to jump in and invest in production.

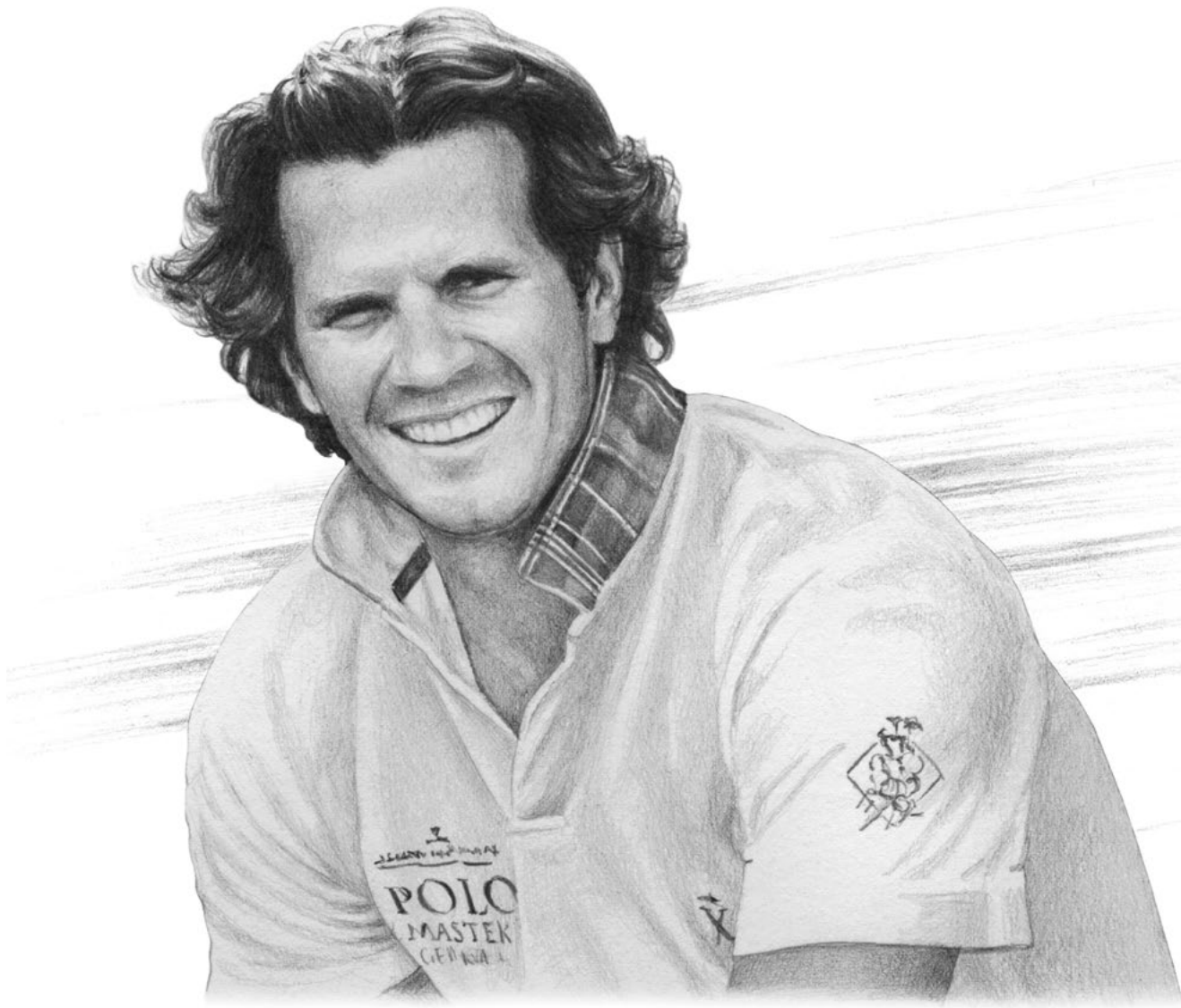
I also realised that all successful leagues, when digging into their history, had their share of growing pains and up and down cycles; we just see the success stories today

and are in awe of their size and numbers, but we forget that they all started somewhere.

In any event, it was not until many years later, when I found myself with some free time on my hands, that I started putting pen to paper on what the XPL could eventually look like. A year earlier, in July 2017, I had been introduced to the president of the AAP, Eduardo Novillo Astrada, through a mutual friend at an event at Les Lions and I pitched him my yet-undocumented and very green idea.

I told him I wanted to put together an all-professional league that is built bottom-up and is institutional quality. I also told him that I wanted to get the endorsement of the AAP before initiating any conversations with teams and players. We saw eye to eye and then nothing happened. We met again the following year in September and I presented a format for the XPL and a structure where the teams and players become true stakeholders in the league and therefore share in the upside, with a centralised decision-making organisation controlling and ensuring that all decisions add value to the league as a whole and not just benefit any one team or individual.

Things moved quickly from there, with an official presentation to the AAP in



I ALSO REALISED THAT ALL SUCCESSFUL
LEAGUES, WHEN DIGGING INTO THEIR HISTORY,
HAD THEIR SHARE OF GROWING PAINS



Previous page: Juan Zavalia. This page: Eduardo Novillo Astrada at Palermo 2018

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November, which resulted in getting the AAP's endorsement to put this together. It has been a busy time since then, talking to patrons and players, setting up the corporate and tax structure, creating all the marketing materials, image and branding, trademarks and legal documents. Initiating conversations with potential media partners and approaching initial league sponsors while bringing in media, sponsorship and logistics advisers on board.

That is where we are now. We have all the structure set up and we are inking a multi-year media agreement to carry the XPL to a global audience. We have contacted more than 20 potential franchises and all

of the top players in preparation for the first event of the XPL to take place in Buenos Aires from 21 September to 12 October, with the XPL Final being played on that date.

We are also organising a showcase at Ham Polo Club on 20 June, where we will present the format of the league and make some key announcements, such as the Money Pool for the 2019 event in Argentina and the event calendar for 2020, as well as a few surprises, which I'm really looking forward to sharing with the public.

I think the key element of the XPL is that we want to be all-inclusive and we are committed to building a sustainable ecosystem that will elevate everyone

involved. I'm not the first to try to get the sport to graduate into a fully professional league, but I'm convinced that the plug-in framework developed is correct for the sport. It's correct because it puts the power of change in the hands of the teams and players who are the most important element in the sport.

It gives them a stake in the league so that they participate in the upside; we've built in a tiered mechanism so that teams with different economic conditions can participate and have a chance to be part of the XPL. Obviously, the hard part has been to get people to look in the same direction, as this is a very polarised sport, but I'm confident that our message will get through.

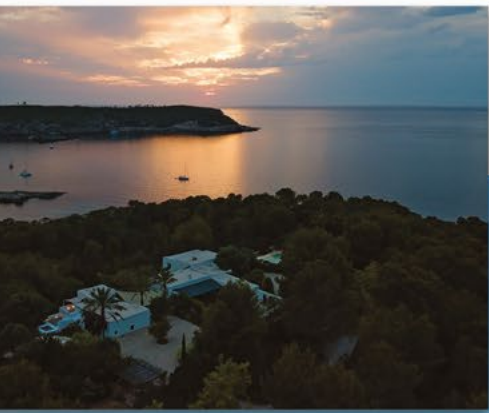
IMAGES OF POLO



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REPEAT PERFORMERS

As Crestview Genetics' new US lab looks set to decrease the cost of horse clones in the next year, Theresa Harold explores views for and against making cloning more accessible

Next time conversation lulls at a dinner party, mention animal cloning. It's not necessarily going to make you any friends, but you can guarantee everyone around the table will have an opinion on it. Even within polo – the sport doing so much to advance the science – cloning remains a divisive and sensitive topic.

One of the pioneering forces in the field is Crestview Genetics. Founded by polo enthusiast Alan Meeker, in partnership with Adolfo Cambiaso, the company has cloned hundreds of horses since its inception in 2009.

'It all began many years ago, when I decided that I wanted to have the best breeding herd of polo ponies on planet Earth,' recalls Meeker in his measured Texan accent. 'I did some math and realised that it would be rather expensive and take quite a long time. With my knowledge of genetics, which is rather deep, I immediately thought, "Well, why can't I clone horses?" So I started my diligence, and I found out that I could. To make a long story less long, what we wound up with were these very robust laboratories – one in Argentina and one in South Carolina.

'With the new lab in the United States, the company's volume capacity is much greater,' explains Meeker. 'So now, we're able to not just serve Argentina and the US through the Argentine lab, we can serve the world through the US lab, because it is USDA-approved for shipment worldwide. We are moving the cloning processes to the US lab. Simply put, we have better access to high-quality media, drugs, equipment and other items that increase efficiencies. If an Argentine

OUR SUCCESS RATE IS HOVERING AROUND 85 PER CENT NOW

breeder wants a clone, we will collect the tissue in Argentina (or any part of the world), stabilize the cells and ship them to the US. Thereafter, the client will have the option to implant the embryo into a surrogate in the US or we can vitrify the embryo and send it to Argentina (or other country) for implantation.'

Does that mean we'll soon see a decrease from the current US \$100,000 base rate per horse? 'That's our goal,' replies Meeker. 'We believe we will be bringing the price down anywhere from 10 to 25 per cent over the next year, and we hope to get it down even further as efficiencies improve.'

With access to Cambiaso's best horses from which to clone, Crestview has (in the parlance of all successful start-ups) disrupted the polo world. But understandably, not everyone is thrilled. One Palm Beach polo club patron argues, 'I don't deny the benefits of cloning, but I think it changes the rules of breeding too much and affects the small organisations. I think that the excitement of breeding and crossing different lines is much more fun than cloning. 'Besides, you can breed a horse that is even better than any clone. Cloning is the end of the road. You accept that horse and you renounce the search for a better one.'

The "end of the road" comment elicited a response from Meeker: 'Quite the contrary is actually the case. Whereas before, a stallion could cover 20-100 mares a year and proliferate his genes, with cloning we can have multiple clones of a champion mare. Such is the case with our Cuartetera clones. Now, rather than one or two Cuartetera babies each year, we are able to have upwards of 30 each year. The road continues and in a direction never trod before; the mare's genes are now being proliferated, not the stallion's.'

Actually, it's important to note that Crestview has never sold any of its own clones, nor does it sell the eggs of its clones. 'I think it's more accurate to say we sell the babies of our clones,' says Meeker.

'We're not here to flood the world's polo fields with clones,' he continues. 'We're here to find the very best horses and clone that DNA to make more mothers, so that we can have more opportunity for that DNA to proliferate. And, therefore, have many more high-quality horses available all through the sport worldwide. Ten years ago, the idea that there could be a hundred or more babies of Cuartetera on the ground would have been insane. But that actually is the case now.'

Cuartetera is, of course, one of Cambiaso's legendary mares. In 2017, the ninth clone of Cuartetera (known as B09) made history when she won BPP at the US Open in Florida and then became the first clone to be presented an award by the Argentine Polo Association and the Argentine Polo Pony Breeders Association. Her winning streak shows no sign of stopping as last December, B09 was awarded both Best Playing Pony honours in the Argentine



Opposite: Adolfo Cambiaso on Cuartetera Boi in the 2018 Argentine Open Final. This page: Alan Meeker in Dubai



This page: Juan Martin Nero on Cuartetera B07 between Hilario Ulloa (left) and Adolfo Cambiasso (right). Opposite: Alan Kent with his son John

Open final and the Breeders Association trophy. The latter was made all the more significant because the group comprises all the traditional breeders.

Speaking of breeders, the former England player and breeder Alan Kent is forthright about being anti-cloning. 'I'm not even 100 per cent in favour of embryos,' he says over the phone from his base in West Sussex. He's referring to the widespread practice of artificially inseminating mares and transferring their fertilised embryos into a surrogate. 'I'm just concerned that you're taking the very best and then it becomes a very small gene pool. It really won't help the smaller people in the sport as it becomes very elitist.'

Although Kent admits that, from a selfish point of view, he'd be very happy to clone his best horse, he doesn't feel comfortable with the perceived welfare risks or long-term effects. He cites the fact that clones and embryos are banned in thoroughbred racing before adding, 'It's totally not natural.'

Interestingly in 2012, the International Federation for Equestrian Sports (FEI) changed its rules to allow clones and

offspring of clones to compete. It had previously stated that cloning went 'against its objective, to enable FEI athletes to compete in international events under fair and even conditions'.

However, even the FEI changing its mind isn't enough to convince some sceptics. One polo insider weighed in with the moral argument that, considering so many medical procedures in the human world started off in the veterinary world, equine cloning could pave the way for a new form of eugenics.

'Let's not dispense with how much science fiction has become science fact over the years,' says the source, who wished to remain anonymous. 'In addition to the moral issue there is the medical argument. There are doctors, people who understand genealogy saying, "Yes, we can do all these amazing things, but we have just got no idea what the effect is going to be later on down the line".'

A quick explainer, for those imagining sci-fi scenes of horses rolling off conveyor belts fully formed. Crestview's cloning process involves taking a skin sample from a horse

and then growing the cells in the laboratory, and storing those cells until it's time to clone.

'We then take an egg from a donor mare, and we take out all the genetic material that's inside of that donor egg – so it's a blank, if you will,' says Meeker. 'We go over to the cell of that which we want to clone and we insert that inside the egg. Then we fuse it shut and use our special processes to jumpstart it to life, and after that we incubate it. After 10 days, if it's a viable embryo, we will implant it into a surrogate mare.'

From that point, the process is much the same as any other embryo transfer. 'Our success rate is hovering around 85 per cent now,' says Meeker.

As it stands, there are some in the veterinary world who suspect that clones won't make strong animals and that they don't live for very long. To that, Meeker says, 'An incorrect assumption is that the clones are born old. In other words, you take a cell that's from an older animal and you put it into an egg, and the DNA would have short telomeres [which is associated with ageing]. When in reality, what happens is that when the egg decides to become a living organism, it resets everything. So the horse is born just

like a regular baby horse. There's no difference between it and another brand-new baby horse.'

Except, maybe there is. Meeker believes in something called 'cellular memory', which hypothesises that an animal's experiences can be stored in individual cells. In polo terms, this could mean that clones are easier to train for the sport.

'We see evidence of it every day,' says Meeker. 'The clones of the same original all have the same personality and the same idiosyncrasies. They all respond to the same training aids.'

Still, it does require training. The former 10-goaler Owen Rinehart, who trained Bo9, says, 'In horses, my experience is that although they have the same abilities, they are still all individuals that have their own personalities. They're not robots that do everything exactly the same'.

Meeker agrees, 'Had I given that same horse to the manager of my cattle ranch, here in Texas, I doubt, seriously, that it would have been a very good polo pony,' he says of Bo9. 'But if you give the high-quality DNA to a decent trainer, such as Owen, his training will allow the horse to express its natural ability. As a matter of fact, I believe Owen said: "Alan, my job was to not mess this horse up. She already knew what she was doing".'

THEY ARE NOT ROBOTS THAT DO EVERYTHING EXACTLY THE SAME





BACK TO THE WILD

Knepp Estate's journey from a struggling arable and dairy farm to a wild and vibrant Sussex savannah incites equal parts awe and inspiration, says Carolina Beresford



Knepp's transformation over the past two decades is nothing short of surreal. Many will be familiar with the estate through the active Knepp Castle Polo Club – home to some of the most competitive low-goal polo in England – which Sir Charles Burrell (left) formed with Jo and Kim Richardson back in 1996. Indeed, it was Kim, says Burrell, who persuaded him of the marvels of the sport.

'Kim Richardson forced me onto a polo pony that then nearly killed me and several other people on the polo ground, but I never looked back – it was the thrill of the chase,' he recalls. 'It was truly a wonderful 25 years before I retired from it all. Jo and Kim ran the whole thing with such flare and style and we created a wonderful low-goal club with a couple of high-goal teams in the mix. Now, Sarah Wiseman runs the club with a new outlook and a new future.'

Polo will always have a place at Knepp, but today we turn our gaze towards the metamorphosis of the rest of the estate, and wonder at how Burrell and his wife, award-winning author and travel writer, Isabella Tree, took 3,500 acres of unforgiving land and then turned it into a thriving business responsible for restoring our ecosystems.

When Burrell inherited the estate from his grandparents in 1987, Knepp was a conventional

**WE HAVE FORGOTTEN WHAT
OUR LANDSCAPE LOOKED LIKE
BEFORE HUMAN INTERVENTION**



Previous page, from left: An aerial view of Hammer Pond; Charles Burrell playing polo at Knepp. This page, clockwise from top left: Polo on the estate; a fallow deer stag in the Knepp woodland; cows and pigs are free to roam





farm making a steady loss. 'I took over running the estate aged 21, and we started to commercialise our farming operations using sprays, chemicals and fertilisers, just like everyone else,' he explains. 'But the difficulty with the land here, is that it's 320 metres of Weald clay, and this clay cap sits over a bedrock of limestone, so it's difficult farming land.'

However, investments in bigger and better machinery, the amalgamation of dairies, and diversification into ice cream and yogurt were not enough to stop Knepp sinking. 'Seventeen years later, we had an overdraft of one and a half million and our backs were absolutely against the wall, even with subsidies,' says Tree.

The turning point came in 2000 when Burrell, who had always cultivated an interest in conservation, learned of the work of Dutch ecologist Frans Vera, after his

book, *Grazing Ecology and Forest History*, was translated into English. Vera decried the dangers of intensive farming, urging against the 'millions of small rectangular pieces, each fashioned by the plough and the spade, like the ones that scar Britain's topography. Temperate zone Europe, he argues, would not have been a closed canopy forest, but would have looked a lot more like Africa – a complex habitat of savannahs, tree groves, and wood pastures inhabited by huge herds of roaming animals.

Herbivores such as aurochs, tarpan, bison, elk, wild boar, beavers, roe deer and red deer would have governed our ecology, so in order to recover biodiversity, Vera suggests animals similar to these (as most of the originals are now extinct) can be reintroduced into the landscape. This, and the notion that 'natural processes' should dictate the lay of the land, is the idea

behind rewilding. Burrell was convinced by Vera saying, 'we have forgotten what our landscape looked like before human intervention,' and thought this was something they could rectify at Knepp.

Almost 20 years on, Knepp is now an open terrain, home to hundreds of free-roaming herbivores, and it is bringing in more revenue than anything Burrell and Tree could have hoped to make under intensive farming. They have waved goodbye to farm machinery, dairy cows and 250 miles of fences, and welcomed proxies for the animals that would have roamed before us: English Longhorn cattle, Exmoor ponies, Tamworth pigs, as well as red deer, roe deer and fallow deer. These animals drive habitat regeneration, and, as a result, Knepp has become a hotspot for all sorts of weird and wonderful species including nesting Peregrine falcons, nightingales,

rare bats, all five species of UK owl, a plethora of purple Emperor butterflies, and most impressive of all, turtle doves.

The decline in turtle doves over the past few decades in Britain has been catastrophic. According to the RSPB, they are the most likely bird to become extinct within our shores by 2020. The fact that turtle dove numbers are actually climbing in Knepp – an estate located 45 miles south of London, underneath the Gatwick stacking system in the most populated area of southeast England – is astounding.

Of course, an ecosystem must be finely tuned and well balanced if it is to thrive. Too many grazing animals and the land turns to grassland, too few and it reverts to species-poor closed-canopy woods. At Knepp this is regulated by taking animals

off the land to process into free-roaming, pasture-fed, organic meat, which is then sold locally and generates an important income stream for the estate. 'With the Wildland Project, we're still raising cattle and livestock, only now it is extensive rather than intensive farming, it's more like ranching, really and the animals are driving great positives such as biodiversity, habitat and soil restoration,' says Burrell.

These herbivores have given Knepp a new lease of life – quite literally – and have also paved the way for another business to thrive. 'We love what we are doing, it has been a complete revelation, but it has to make financial sense,' says Tree. 'And one of the ways in which we can bring another income stream into the estate is through tourism.' Using the African

model as inspiration, Knepp has built a blossoming safari business, running morning and afternoon wildlife tours, as well as a glamping enterprise, with cosy shepherd's huts and yurts in the middle of the project.

Rewilding, it would seem, has not only dragged Knepp out of muddy financial turmoil (that haunting overdraft has been cleared), it has transformed the land into a haven for rare species of all shapes and sizes, thrusting the estate into the conversation about the future of British ecology and conservation. Why then, you may ask, are we not doing more of it? The answer, Tree suggests, may lie with aesthetics. 'We are control freaks,' she says. 'We have grown up in a landscape that is highly managed and we panic at the

WE COULD HAVE ONE CONTINUOUS AREA OF REWILDING FROM KNEPP TO THE SEA





Opposite: Glamping is now offered on the Knepp Estate. Above: Longhorn cattle enjoy the grasses and open terrain

thought of letting go. This is what we need to do if we allow these systems to happen.'

It is difficult to predict what the next 10, or even five, years will bring to Knepp in terms of wildlife, as the project prides itself in taking an 'open-ended, non-goal-orientated, "hands-off"' approach. But there is the hope that more neighbours will join forces – one has already added 300 acres to the boundaries of the rewilding scheme – and that Burrell and Tree's project will grow to reach the shores of the English Channel. 'We have a pipe dream that, one day, if we can attract funding for land bridges over the major roads, we could have one continuous area of rewilding from Knepp to the sea,' says Tree. 'So our Longhorns could be browsing on sallow at Knepp one week, and grazing on seaweed on Shoreham beach the next.'

Burrell and Tree know what work needs to be done, and they have clear

objectives in place for the year ahead, including applying for a licence to release beavers at Knepp, and continuing to insist that regulation changes be made so free-roaming animals can be managed more liberally. 'We know the government will be revamping farming subsidies and this is long overdue,' states Tree. 'Landowners and managers shouldn't be paid for either simply owning land, or just producing food from it at the expense of everything else. We have to start thinking holistically and sustainably.'

But with Brexit on the horizon, the aim is to build a business that is no longer dependent on the disappearing subsidy regime. And thanks to Knepp's eco-tourism, meat production, and the conversion of old farm buildings into office space, storage, and light industrial use (businesses in these buildings have brought over 200 jobs back into the rural community), the

estate is likely to be financially sustainable, even if subsidies grind to a halt.

Five years ago, scientists warned that due to intensive over-farming, the UK only had 100 harvests left. The fact that we are facing an agricultural crisis can no longer be denied, and it is high time that a different approach to land management be adopted. Rewilding could be farming's greatest ally, but there is another aspect of the debate, which is often overlooked. 'Perhaps what has been most interesting for me in this journey into rewilding is what it has done to me and my husband psychologically,' says Tree. 'We are just beginning to realise how important wild places like these are to our psyche, to our soul. Severing ourselves from nature is very risky and it has huge mental and physical impacts. It is time to work our way back to the wilderness, and Knepp's rewilding project could have the momentum to guide us.' The future, we hope, will be wild.



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FRASERS



FLANNELS





TOP OF THE CLASS

Theresa Harold talks to Nathaniel McCullagh about the valuable lessons a private tutor can teach your children both in and out of the classroom

PAUL MACNEIL PHOTOGRAPHY

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If there's one thing that polo and private tuition have in common, it's that they're both assumed to be the preserve of the elite. Or so says Nathaniel McCullagh, director of the documentary *The Polo Kid* and founder of tutor agency Simply Learning Tuition. 'I think private tuition is for everyone. It's the oldest form of teaching – way before school, people had tutors.'

Which, when put like that, has an appealing logic. McCullagh himself wasn't raised with tutors and spent most of his academic life in state schools. He didn't rate any of them very highly and instead credits his achievements to a good family network.

'If I ever needed help, someone would sit down and explain,' says McCullagh. Understanding that for the cash-rich and time-poor, this often isn't an option, McCullagh became a tutor in 2000 and founded his agency nine years later. Now, he has built up an impressive network, counting Saudi royalty and Hollywood actors among his clients.

McCullagh's next goal is courting the professional polo families, who travel the world circuit and often bring their children along with them.

'What's really essential about academics is continuity,' says McCullagh. 'Professional polo players travel through maybe

four or five different countries a year. They might put the children into the local school for a term, or a couple of weeks even. They might hire a local tutor, or they might not. The problem is, that child is growing up in a nomadic environment where life is not as glamorous as it is for the parents.'

He points out the advantage of having one tutor, which means the child can stick to their home curriculum. 'You're getting the continuity,' he says. 'So they're being taught in the right way, and that means when they go back to, say, Argentina, the child will slot straight back in.'

While nearly all the tutors on McCullagh's books are British, there are fluent Spanish speakers, if needed. Of course, one of the advantages of hiring a British tutor is that the child's English would be much improved. But McCullagh is keen to stress that his tutors provide more than just academic rigour. 'It's a full spectrum. It's not just the academics, it's pastoral support as well. I think "role model" is a good way to put it.'

England player Max Charlton agrees. He attended junior level schools but by the time he reached the age of 13, he and his parents decided that home tutoring would be the best way for him to keep up

Previous page: Nathaniel McCullagh playing polo.
This page: Luke Wiles plays at Guard's Polo Club *Opposite, from top:* Max Charlton at St Moritz Snow Polo World Cup 2019; Nathaniel McCullagh





TONY RAMIREZ/IMAGES OF POLO

his studies while improving his riding on a daily basis. 'I received tutoring in several subjects, including maths and English, but in addition to this my tutor helped me to understand the importance of my education, and also took a practical approach to my learning,' he says. 'As a result, I feel I have become adept at managing the logistical side of my polo career.'

Charlton explains that his tutor instilled in him the invaluable qualities of commitment to his education alongside commitment to his chosen career, self-belief and the importance of good and effective communication skills. 'First, my tutor was a super person and enjoyable for me to work with, and secondly, by starting very early in the morning, I was able to ride and practise every day even in winter,' he explains.

McCullagh became a tutor straight out of university and, in his first year, got two boys into Eton. The irony, he admits with a laugh, is that he now runs an agency so discerning that he wouldn't have taken his younger self on as a tutor.

'This is the really important thing that a lot of people don't get about tutors,' says McCullagh. 'They're not teachers. They don't have formal qualifications. About a quarter of the tutors that we work with are qualified teachers, and it actually doesn't make them better tutors. It's just a sort of tick box for some parents. Because if you're living with a family, travelling with them, or even just going to see



Left A tutor introduced by SLT helps a student with her A-levels.

Below: SLT team members supporting one of their charities.
Opposite: Nathaniel playing polo



the child a couple of hours a week after school, I'd say at least 50 per cent of your job is empathy. It's understanding why that child isn't accessing the curriculum or why they're not doing their homework. Why they're not succeeding in their academic goals. You can't just go in there and be like everyone else in their lives, like the teacher or the parent. You've got to have a bit of an older brother or sister relationship. They've got to look up to you, and they've got to think you're quite cool.'

In that spirit, a tutor wouldn't necessarily silo the child's learning into maths, then English, then French, explains McCullagh. 'You could have a lesson about horses during which you learn all about physics, all about history, all about English, but it's built on this project of a horse.'

'The tutors are very creative educators, they don't have to follow the rules of a classroom. They create their own rules. And they can create a classroom by the polo field, in the apartment, by the swimming pool. There's ultimate flexibility.'

Nick Wiles employed a tutor for his son Luke, so that Luke could progress his polo in Argentina: 'The support of a well-organised tutor has allowed Luke to go to Argentina during the second half of the fall term, while keeping up with his school work. A combination of this tutor support with some hard work from Luke has provided the opportunity to play some good tournaments during the important Argentine season.'

Finding the right tutor is no mean feat, however, even at the enquiry stage, McCullagh's agency is, in his own words, 'a pretty bespoke process.' He continues, 'Some parents will be very happy with a phone call, but quite often we fly out to meet them. A more complicated version might be that the parents are in London, we have a couple of meetings, we meet the children, and we do a full assessment of the child.'

'We bring in an academic consultant who works out exactly what makes the child tick, where they're weak, where they're strong. We might bring in other professionals such as an education psychologist, possibly a behavioural specialist.'

So, regardless of whether the families are in the polo world or not, what would be his one piece of advice for parents?

'Get a tutor,' jokes McCullagh. 'No, my one piece of advice would be "Do not be afraid of robustly challenging a child's teacher". Don't harass them, because they're doing their best, but don't be afraid of pushing a little bit. Say, "I think my child needs a bit of extra help here or here, what can I do to help them?" Not what can the teacher do, what can the parent do. Ask, "Can you give me some homework, can you give me some advice? What can I do to help?" The key thing, I would say, is to ask for help and to listen to your child.'

After all, a polo handicap might be a passport to the world, but education is the passport to the future.

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Gonzalito Pieres, left, on the ball in the final of the Gold Cup

DAVID LOMINSKA / POLOGRAPHICS

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THE ACTION

56_TRIPLE CROWN

Héctor Martelli reports on the Tortugas Open, the Hurlingham Open and, the world's most important tournament, the Argentine Open, which saw Adolfo Cambiaso's La Dolfina storm to victory

58_TOWNSEND CUP

At the latest iteration of the Townsend International Cup Challenge, the USA retained its spot at the top of the leader board with its seventh victory, beating the English team with a score of 15-10

59_IPC 20-GOAL

Timmy Dutta's team Dutta Corp secured all three titles at the International Polo Club in Wellington, Florida, beating both Patagones and Pilot

60_THE GAUNTLET OF POLO™

The inaugural Gauntlet of Polo™ series introduced lower handicaps and prize money to the game, with great success as Pilot won all three tournaments to secure the \$1 million victory

62_WPL 26-GOAL

Darlene Ricker reports on an exciting series of tournaments that saw team owners and players voting on the rules and WPL founding families Ganzi and Jornayvaz in the same team

64_WESTCHESTER CUP

The oldest rivalry in polo returned – this time hosted at the International Polo Club, Palm Beach, Florida – to see a young USA team take victory over the England team in overtime

TRIPLE CROWN

La Dolfina stormed to victory in the Argentine Open, with an outstanding performance by Adolfo Cambiaso, reports Héctor Martelli



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Held through late September and mid-December, the Triple Crown in Argentina comprises the Tortugas Open, the Hurlingham Open and the Argentine Open respectively.

With the score of the best eight, the Tortugas Open was played, the only one with variants compared to 2017. In 2018, they played in two zones by double knockout, with a quarter-final, semifinal and final of the Open and subsidiary.

Three of the first four games were not particularly exhilarating, due to the high

scoring difference. La Dolfina (40), Ellerstina (40) and Las Monjitas (38) all defeated 32-goal lineups by no less than an impressive gap of 11 goals. Only La Dolfina II and La Aguada played an interesting match.

In the two semifinals there was not much attraction either. The final match between the two dominating teams of Argentine polo was very balanced. However, La Dolfina was much stronger than Ellerstina in attack and, as a result, Cambiaso and his team emerged as the champions once again.

The Hurlingham Open came next, featuring a line-up of ten teams; the eight squads who played the Tortugas Open were joined by teams La Ensenada and La Cañada, who both qualified rated at 28.

The highlight was undoubtedly the young players of La Ensenada, who came out of the qualification. With an average age of 23 among team members, La Ensenada was the youngest squad of the last 60 years to compete in the Triple Crown, and their performance was brilliant – they

Opposite page: La Ensenada, from left: Juan Martín Zubía, Facundo Fernández Llorente, Juan Britos and Jero del Carril. This page: Adolfo Cambiaso after winning in Palermo

managed to defeat more experienced and higher rated rivals.

The final of the Hurlingham Open was the 42nd derby between Ellerstina and La Dolfina. Both teams played a fast, impressive game, displaying high quality teamwork as well as individual skills. The first half belonged to La Dolfina, renowned for their mental speed, but included several unnecessary fouls by the Pieres. However, a determined Ellerstina foursome regrouped in the fifth chukka, scoring seven unanswered goals, which allowed them to win 12-11, and retain the title for the third consecutive year.

Last in the series is the Argentine Polo Open Championship, the most important polo tournament in the world. It is played on the same terms as the Hurlingham Open, and in a way there are two disguised competitions. There are three teams rated between 37 to 40 goals, which aim to lift polo's most coveted trophy, and seven lineups between 28-32 goals, who play in order to earn the points and a place in the ranking to enter directly in next year's Triple Crown, and avoid the qualification.

As a result, the games between the lower rated teams were more riveting as they displayed good polo, with an average of four goals for the winners. The highlight goes to La Dolfina II – their second place within their league took them to a fourth place in the general ranking, which earned them a spot to play the complete Triple Crown in 2019.



With regards to League B, Las Monjitas and Ellerstina played to advance to the final. As a result, it ended up being the best match of the tournament, displaying high quality polo, speed and, most importantly, the players put heart and soul into the game. Las Monjitas emerged as the biggest surprise of all, with an impressive 18-16 win over Ellerstina, meaning the latter missed the championship game they have been playing for.

There was a lot of expectation for the final of the 125th Argentine Open, and nobody

knew how the reigning champions would play against a debutant rival, hungry for glory. La Dolfina played brilliantly and Las Monjitas was only present in the first two chukkas, where a good level of polo was observed.

Cambiaso played one of the best games of his career and was very well supported by his team mates, Stirling being the best of them.

The combination of all this made the result, 17-12, one of the highest scoring games in the history of the Argentine Open.

THE TOWNSEND CUP

The USA beat England to retain the cup with a 15-10 win, reports Alex Webbe



From left: Dan Coleman, Tommy Biddle Jr, Pelon Escapite, Steve Krueger and Bob Puetz

58

American 9-goaler Tommy Biddle made a strong case for reclaiming his 10-goal arena rating, as he supplied nine of his team's 15 goals as the United States recorded their seventh Townsend International Challenge Cup over England at the International Polo Club in the eighth edition of the competition.

Created in 1923 and donated for international play by New Yorker John R Townsend, the Townsend International Challenge Cup has been played eight times, with the United States holding a one-sided 7-1 advantage.

This year a 21-goal English team (Ed Banner-Eve, Jonny Good and Sebastian

Dawney) received two goals by handicap as they faced the 23-goal US team of Biddle, Pelon Escapite and Steve Krueger.

England received two goals by handicap and quickly ran it up to 3-0 with Jonny Good scoring the first goal of the match in the opening minute of play. Pelon Escapite responded with the first two-point goal of the game, and Steve Krueger leveled the score at 3-3 less than a minute later. Ed Banner-Eve scored his first goal of the day for a 4-2 English lead, but that was where it ended. Back-to-back two-goalers from Biddle ended the chukka with the United States on top of a 7-4 score.

Hard riding and booming shots from Biddle set the tone for the balance of the game as the United States rode on for the 15-10 victory. Justifiably, Biddle was named MVP with Escapite's Ruby earning Best Playing Pony honours.

'It's always an honour to represent your country,' said Biddle. 'We're good friends with the English guys, and love the competition,' he added.

Biddle ended with a game-high 9-goals (eight of them on two-pointers). Good led the English attack, scoring twice from the field, twice on penalty shots and adding a two-pointer.



All eyes on the ball (from left): Timmy Dutta, Curtis Pilot and Matias Gonzalez

IPC 20-GOAL

Securing all three titles at the International Polo Club in Wellington, USA, Dutta Corp dominated this year's 20-goal season, reports Carolina Beresford

After Dutta Corp's first win claiming the Herbie Pennell Cup, the team came out ready to prove that they were focused and worthy of being named champions from the get-go. Timmy Dutta, Gringo Colombres, Kris Kampsen, and Lucas Diaz Alberdi kept their focus throughout the series to secure all three titles at International Polo Club in Wellington: the Herbie Pennell, the Joe Barry, and the Ylvisaker Cup.

On 30 December, 2018, they defeated Patagones 11-10 to take the first crown of the season. With a title tucked away, Dutta Corp entered January's Joe Barry Cup with confidence. This time a total of four teams

were playing for the trophy. Dutta Corp steadily worked their way to the final, where they faced Gonzalo Avendaño's organisation once again. Patagones pushed harder than before to keep their opponents at bay, but their efforts fell short; the ruthless Dutta Corp secured their second title of the season.

'We have a system that we try to stay with and it's getting control of the ball using all four players,' shared Kampsen. 'Our idea is that it doesn't matter who scores, let's just win the game. No egos – let's go out, play polo and enjoy the game.'

By the time the Ylvisaker Cup rolled around, the 20-goal Triple Crown was in play.

With eight teams determined to win the title, the tournament was set to be the most competitive of the season. Timmy Dutta and his team stayed strong and made the final, as did Pilot, led by 10-goal superstar Facundo Pieres. Dutta Corp worked hard as a team, concentrating on their defence, and thwarted Pilot's attempts to take the advantage.

Dutta Corp's efforts earned them the win and their third title of the season. 'They wanted to win the three tournaments, and I think we have proved that this is the team to beat,' said Timmy's father, patron Tim Dutta. 'I hope we can come back and give it a shot at the U.S. Open Polo Championship next year.'



Opposite: Facundo Pieres scores while Matt Coppola looks on in the final of the US Open

22-GOAL GAUNTLET OF POLO

The new series was a million-dollar success, writes Alex Webbe

In the spring of 2018 the United States Polo Association decided to lower the handicap levels of the top three tournaments (CV Whitney Cup, USPA Gold Cup and the US Open Championship) from a 26-goal limit to 22-goals. The USPA labelled the series the Gauntlet of Polo™ and offered prize money of \$125,000 to the winner of the CV Whitney Cup and another \$125,000 to the USPA Gold Cup winner. The winner of the US Open will be awarded \$250,000, with a \$500,000 bonus going to any team that can win all three of them in a season for a total of \$1 million.

The Gauntlet of Polo received a record 16 teams signing up to compete. Four members of the USPA executive committee (Chip Campbell, Stewart Armstrong, Maureen Brennan and Stephen Orthwein) sponsored teams. International patrons ranged from Russian Andrey Borodin (Park Place) and Nigerian Sayyu Dantata (SD Farms) to Colombian Camilo Bautista (Las Monjitas) and England's Henry Porter. Two additional women, Gillian Johnston and Annabelle Gundlach, sponsored teams. Last year's winner of the US Open, Jared Zenni captained a team. Luis Escobar played with his son 3-goaler Nico. In contrast to the 22-goal in England, where the highest handicapped patron is 1-goal in the Gauntlet of Polo™, 10

patrons were 2-goals and above. The best amateur on their handicap was former 7-goaler Stuart Armstrong, who played above his current 3-goal handicap!

The Gauntlet of Polo™ fielded a number of 10-goalers in Facundo Pieres, Sapo Caset, Hilario Ulloa, Polito Pieres and 9-goalers Gonzalito Pieres, Nico Pieres, Sebastian Merlos and Miguel Astrada. There were some new players who had strong performances in 6-goaler Felipe Marquez, 7-goaler Ezequiel Martinez Ferrario and 3-goal American Matias Gonzalez.

The absence of Cambiaso and the Valiente organisation promptly recognised Facundo Pieres and his Pilot teammates (Curtis Pilot, Matias Gonzalez and his brother Gonzalito Pieres) as the early favourites, and they didn't disappoint.

The play of the Pieres brothers was seamless, with Pilot leading the attack down the field. Gonzalez (3 goals) complemented the brothers, blocking and passing as he tormented the opposing team's top players.

Pilot got off to a slow start in the single-elimination CV Whitney Cup, recording three straight wins before scoring a 13-6 win over Las Monjitas in the final of the first leg of the Gauntlet. Competition tightened up as the USPA Gold Cup commenced, but the

teamwork between Facundo and Gonzalito was only surpassed by their horses.

Fifteen teams had been eliminated from a shot at the \$500,000 bonus and all eyes were on Pilot. The team then continued to stay ahead as the pressure increased.

Five straight Gold Cup wins sent Pilot to the finals, where they needed a penalty goal in overtime from Facundo Pieres for the 12-11 victory over Aspen.

A confident Pilot team scored a 15/6 win over Henry Porter's Stable Door team before peeling off four more wins and earning a spot in the finals against Las Monjitas again.

The horses and teamwork of the Pilot team proved to be too much for Las Monjitas, once again, winning 12 to 7 and riding off with the million-dollar prize money in the USPA's first Gauntlet of Polo. Curtis Pilot will donate the prize money to cancer research, in memory of his daughter, Nikki.

The first year of the competition was a roaring success, with as many as seven games decided in overtime in the Open alone.

Gonzales received MVP honours in both the CV Whitney Cup and the US Open while Facundo racked up Best Playing Pony honours in all three tournaments (Open Pensilvania – the Whitney; One Magnifica – the Gold Cup; and Mega Chistosa – US Open).

26-GOAL WORLD POLO LEAGUE

Allowing team owners and players to vote on unique and democratic rules of play made for a successful season, reports Darlene Ricker



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Who would have thought we would ever see Grant Ganzi and Adolfo Cambiaso playing on the same team? That's what happened in the first tournament of the new 26-goal World Polo League, the All Star Challenge Draw, this winter in Wellington. The Cambiaso-Ganzi pairing, the result of a draw, was emblematic of the new alliance between the Ganzi and Jornayvaz families, who founded the WPL. They own longstanding rival organizations Grand Champions and Valiente, respectively.

The season ran from 6 February to 14 April and attracted nine teams. Six were rated at 26 goals (Alegria, Audi,

Grand Champions, Colorado, SD Farms and Valiente). The three others were Blackwatch (24 goals); Flexjet (22); and Patagones (21). Other than the Palm Beach Open, which was played on the flat, WPL tournaments were played on handicap. For example, 22-goal teams started the game with four goals on handicap and a bonus goal.

Three tournaments put money on the line for all finalists: \$100,000 in the Founders Cup (\$60,000 to victors Grand Champions and \$40,000 to subsidiary winners Valiente); \$125,000 in the Palm Beach Open (\$75,000 to SD Farms; \$50,000 to Audi); and \$150,000 in the Triple Crown of Polo (\$90,000 to Colorado; \$60,000 to Audi).

The series culminated on 14 April with the Triple Crown of Polo. Finalists Colorado and Audi hung in during ferocious downpours, and play was suspended only twice, a testament to the meticulously maintained fields at Grand Champions. Colorado took the trophy in overtime, 9-8 over Audi. Audi was also a finalist in the Palm Beach Open, which SD Farms won 11-6. None of the other tournaments were decided on more than a one-goal spread. In an upset win over Valiente in the Founders Cup, Grand Champions took the trophy 12-11.

A warm up tournament, the All Star Challenge Draw, gave patrons (many new to 26-goal polo) the opportunity to make



a heck of a splash in their debuts. Each was guaranteed one of the top players in the world as a teammate. David Paradise of Australia drew Juan Martin Nero; Sayyu Dantata of Nigeria got Adolfo Cambiaso. Teams drew the name of a 9- or 10-goal player (including all four members of Argentine Open winner La Dolfina) from a hat. Grand Champions drew Cambiaso; Scone (Nero); Audi (Pelon Stirling); Colorado (Rodrigo Andrade); Flexjet (Diego Cavanagh), and Valiente (Pablo MacDonough, who rarely plays in North America). Valiente defeated Colorado 10-9 in the final in overtime.

Team owners and players voted on the rules of play for all tournaments. Of 14 rules, most passed unanimously says WPL commissioner Dale Smicklas. Three had the greatest effect on the game: not calling

every foul there is a rule for; not calling a foul out of the throw-in except for dangerous use of the mallet; and not having a yellow-card system.

'People call this a new concept, but to me it's really a resurrection of an old concept,' says Smicklas. He said the WPL rules replicate the way polo was played 30 years ago, when there were 30-goal tournaments in the US. 'Polo was a much simpler sport then,' he said, noting that most WPL games concluded within 90 minutes.

As for 2020, the WPL anticipates having 10 teams or more. The goal level will be 26, perhaps even higher. 'If someone wants to bring a 28-goal team, we'll try to accommodate that,' he says. 'We don't want to tell anyone that they can't do what they want to do.'

Opposite, from left: Rob Jornayvaz, Juan Martin Zubía, Jero del Carril and Adolfo Cambiaso with WPL co-founder Bob Jornayvaz of J5 Equestrian.
Above: David Paradise



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WESTCHESTER CUP

The trophy made a victorious return to American soil
for the first time in more than 25 years



This page, from left: The two captains; Mike Azzaro and Jack Richardson. Opposite: Team USA, from left, Jared Zenni, Mike Azzaro, Peke Gonzalez, Geronimo Obregon; the Tiffany & Co.-designed Westchester Cup

In 2009, England travelled to Wellington, Florida's International Polo Club, for a 10-9 victory, followed by a 12-11 overtime win in 2013 and a fourth straight Westchester Cup victory in 2018, 12-6, before the English finally returned to America the following year in an effort to extend their winning streak.

For the 2019 match, the United States Polo Association opted to turn to a more youthful line up. Bypassing 8-goaler Nic

Roldan and 7-goaler Jeff Hall, the selection committee picked Azzaro and three of the country's most promising young players, and the gamble paid off.

Jack Richardson scored the opening goal in the first 30 seconds of the game before a pair of goals from Gonzalez ended the first chukka with a 2-1 US lead. Play was fast and furious in the second period of play. Goals from Cudmore and Richardson gave England

a 3-2 lead. A goal by Azzaro in the final 30 seconds of the chukka levelled the score. Penalties were costly for the English, with both teams struggling to break through defences. Gonzalez converted from the 30 and 40-yard lines for a 5-3 halftime lead.

The two teams battled evenly through the fourth with Azzaro and Gonzalez scoring from the field, while England picked up a goal on a Penalty 1 and goal from the field by

Richardson as the intensity of play continued. With two chukkas left to play it was the US on top, 7-5. Both defences tightened in the fifth with Beresford scoring on a well-executed shot from the field, cutting the American lead to a single goal, 8-6. Another English foul allowed Gonzalez to restore the team's two-goal lead, 8-6, to end the period.

The English dug in during the final period of regulation play, combining oppressive defence with desperate drives toward the American goal. Cudmore brought England to within a goal, with his second score of the day. A high hook was whistled on Zenni with under two minutes on the clock, and Cudmore drove the 30-yard penalty goal through the posts to knot the score at 8-8. Cudmore took control of the following

throw-in and raced toward the American goal. In what appeared to be the winning goal, Azzaro appeared out of nowhere to backhand the ball out of the goalmouth inches before crossing the goal line as time ran out in regulation play to force an overtime chukka.

Both sides had opportunities to win the game early in the seventh chukka, with shots being blocked or going wide. Midway through the period, Obregon found himself on the end of a long pass that he carried through the goal for the 9-8 win. 'I kept saying to myself, don't miss', he said, and with 3:37 left in overtime, the United States stopped a four-game losing streak and improved their record to 11-7.

When asked what he told his charges, former 9-goaler Julio Arellano said: 'We practiced well and worked on knock-in plays.

I stressed for them to take a man and stick with him. The boys played well and Mike (Azzaro) did everything that was asked of him. Obregon was named MVP for his disciplined play, with the Best Thoroughbred honours going to Peke Gonzalez's mare, Geisha.

A post-game autopsy by former English 9-goaler Julian Hipwood had him questioning the second-half strategy of trying to hold the ball. 'I thought they were much more effective when they were playing hit and run,' he said. 'I don't know why they changed strategies.' Beresford and Obregon played pooled horses with little if any negative effect. Could playing on pooled strings be a wave of the future? We'll have to wait and see. The Westchester Cup has returned to the US and a crop of new, young players successfully debuted.

BOTH SIDES HAD OPPORTUNITIES TO WIN THE GAME EARLY IN THE SEVENTH CHUKKA





From left: William Atkinson, Hugo Dalmar Jr., Charles Smith, Jorie Butler, Allan Scherer, Bobby Beveridge, Clarence Starks

FOURSOME OF FRIENDS

The last time the US Open handicap was played at 22 goals in 1971, it was won by an all amateur team, reflects Brad Scherer

The USPA's decision to lower the handicap levels of the 2019 US Open (and its associated high-goal tournaments) to 22 goals has, among other impacts, generated an impressive increase in the number of teams competing for this year's 'USPA Gauntlet of Polo'. Not since the early 1970s has the US Open been limited to 22 goals. And, because today's polo is so dominated by professionals, a noteworthy pause is deserved to reflect back to when the US Open was last 22 goals, and, perhaps one of the very few times it was ever won by an all-amateur team.

In 1971, at the heralded Oak Brook Sports Core and Polo complex, the 22-goal Oak Brook team – consisting of the

all-amateur foursome of Hugo Dalmar Jr, (4 goals), Charles Smith (6 goals), Allan Scherer (6 goals) and Robert "Bobby" Beveridge (6 goals) – defeated other professionally staffed and organised squads to take the US Open Championship. The Oak Brook four were business professionals, not professional athletes. Dalmar Jr headed a major Chicago insurance concern, Smith was an aerospace engineer from Texas, Scherer was a real estate broker from California and Beveridge was a rancher from Texas. All were great polo players who loved the game, for the game.

Polo has many enduring lures: the love of and for horses, the intense desire to compete and win, and the camaraderie

that can, on rare occasions, magically synchronise to yield a sum much greater than the individual parts. The 1971 Oak Brook had all of this rare and unique chemistry. It did not have professional athletes, it certainly did not have as many horses or the resources of the other professionally staffed teams, but they had the will to win and the desire to play hard for the love of the game and for each other. When I recently asked Charles what he recalled as the most important aspect of this team's success, he simply said: 'It was their close friendship that banded them together'.

Here's to how things were when the US Open was last 22 goals, and to hoping it can be that way many times again.

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