

EGYPTIAN POLO PLAYERS IN THE NEWS

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE EGYPTIAN POLO SCENE

By Bridget McArdle McKinney

DESPITE THE FACT THAT THE PAST FOUR YEARS HAVE BEEN DIFFICULT FOR THE COUNTRY, THE EGYPTIAN POLO FEDERATION AND THE EGYPTIAN PLAYERS HAVE REDOUBLED THEIR EFFORTS TO INCREASE THE AWARENESS OF THE GAME BOTH LOCALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY. THE NUMBER OF YOUNG PLAYERS HAS INCREASED, THE NUMBER OF THE TRAINED POLO HORSES HAS DOUBLED AND THE FEDERATION HAS ENCOURAGED THE PLAYERS TO PARTICIPATE IN INTERNATIONAL TOURNAMENTS TO GAIN EXPERIENCE IN COMPETITIVE POLO. HERE ARE A FEW HIGHLIGHTS OF THIS OFF-SEASON'S INTERNATIONAL PLAY.

18th Annual Mashomack International Polo Challenge, Pine Plains, New York

First up, in June the respected and long-serving president of the Egyptian Polo Federation, Federation of International Polo delegate and unflinching advocate of the sport, Farouk Younes accepted the invitation to take part in the 18th Annual Mashomack International Polo Challenge in Pine Plains, New York just 90 minutes from New York City. Playing for Team Egypt was Farouk Younes (Captain), Hisham Al Gharby, Omar Younes, Aly El Kashef and Mostafa Idris. Unfortunately, injuries side-lined Al Gharby and Farouk Younes and the final team line-up was Omar Younes, Aly El Kashef, Mostafa Idris and Davis (Daoud) Colley.

Located on a 1,900-acre preserve, the Mashomack Polo Club is a full service club for polo players of all levels. Mashomack Polo offers league polo from 4 goal to 12 goal, and various tournaments such as the prestigious USPA Eduardo

Moore Invitational, the USPA Tracey Mactaggart Challenge Cup, the USPA Governors Cup, the USPA Officer's Cup and the USPA Constitution Cup.

The 2015 Mashomack International Polo Challenge was played on Saturday June 27. Three local teams – Estancia Villa Maria, Beretta and Quest – competed for the trophy against the visiting Egypt Team. In the preliminary matches, Estancia Villa Maria (Craig Callen, Guy Merison, Don Langlois, and Agucho Zavaletta) defeated Beretta (John Klopp, Oak Thorne, Nick Beanstock and Julio Ezcurra) 3 - 2. Team Egypt defeated Quest (Bruce Colley, Joe Meyer, Davis Colley, and Henry Zavaletta) 2 - 1. In a cliff-hanging, crowd-pleasing, well-played final match Estancia Villa Maria just tweaked Egypt 2 - 1, thanks to a goal by Craig Callen with only 35 seconds left on the clock. Win or lose, this annual friendly match is a chance once again to proudly display our local talent and flag in

a welcoming crowd of enthusiasts.

Burningfold 6-Goal Cup, Surrey, England

Next up is Egyptian player Mohamed Hamada who took part in the much-anticipated Burningfold 6-Goal Cup, in which nine teams competed from 16 – 26 July. His team included himself, Boyd Allen from UK, Guy Fox-Andrews alternating with Harry Revell from UK, and Brad Mallet from South Africa.

Burningfold is a country estate on the Surrey - Sussex border offering equestrian facilities, holiday accommodation and venue hire for special events. The 300 acre private estate was once the hunting grounds for Henry VIII. 500 hundred years later Burningfold still retains its equestrian links with over 100 stables and extensive paddocks.

Established in 2007 Burningfold Polo Club is fully affiliated to the Hurlingham Polo Association. Facilities include a 500 metre all

weather exercise track, large sand schooling arena, well maintained and irrigated stick and ball, practice and match grounds, available for our regular instructional groups, chukkas and matches.

A regular player at Kings Polo Club in Alexandria this was Hamada's first international polo tournament and he was thrilled to reach the finals competing against established UK teams. There were three groups and Hamada's team came in first in their group after defeating Highden 7 - 6 in rain and then two days later defeating Seabreeze 7 - 5. They then met Team Maize Dulce in the semifinals, where they took the loss, playing for third against Dubliner Irish Whiskey team and finishing a very tough match 4 - 4, where their opponent laid hands on the match on penalties 3 - 2.

20th Hublot Polo Gold Cup, Gstaad, Switzerland

The next Egyptian polo player on the roster abroad is Mohammed El Sewedy, captain of the Team E.I.

Sturdza Investment Funds playing in the 20th Hublot Polo Gold Cup in Gstaad, where, after winning last year's Gold Cup, they exceptionally co-won the tournament with Team SIR this year due to the weather.

Following much deliberation from the tournament officials the decision was made to change the format of the final of the Hublot Polo Gold Cup Gstaad. Taking into consideration the safety of the players and ponies, the waterlogged pitch was deemed too dangerous to play a competitive match.

This unusual decision followed a drenched semi-final which in the end had to be determined by penalty shots. About the semi, Team E.I. Sturdza Investment Funds captain, Egypt's own Mohammed El Sewedy said, "It is great to win but of course we are a bit disappointed that we could not have played a regular match for the semi-final. The other team was also strong and in the end it all comes down to a bit of

luck. It was a wise decision to play a penalty shootout as the ground has already suffered from the rain." In the final, however, the crowds were not left unsatisfied, the announcement was made the final would be replaced by a 4-chukka exhibition match. The four team-patrons and the four best players of the tournament were split into two teams to play in a non-competitive manner.

The teams remained head-to-head throughout each chukka until the final whistle blew with a finishing score of 7 - 7. The best play of the match was undoubtedly the impressive teamwork between Hublot Polo Gold Cup favourite, Eduardo Menendez (ARG) - who is competing in the tournament for the 16th time - and home favourite Michael Brüggler (SUI); an aerial shot from Menendez opened up the field for Brüggler to accelerate down the pitch, and strike a powerful shot cleanly through the posts. Gasps echoed among the crowds at the unbelievable display of talent from both players. 🏆



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