



TO THE DELIGHT OF PLAYERS AND ATTENDEES AS WELL – NOT TO MENTION THE PONIES - HOT WEATHER IN EARLY MAY CEDED THREE SUNNY, MILD AND PLEASANT DAYS FOR THE RUNNING OF THE 5TH ANNUAL SALAH FODA CUP ON THE FIELDS OF THE GRACIOUS ABU SIR FARM, BELONGING TO FAROUK YOUNES, THE ESTEEMED PRESIDENT OF THE EGYPTIAN POLO FEDERATION. THIS IMPORTANT 9-GOAL FIXTURE ON THE EGYPTIAN POLO CALENDAR IS PLAYED IN HONOUR OF SALAH FODA, ONE OF EGYPT'S PREMIERE POLO PLAYERS FROM THE PAST.

As Karim Loza, Board Member of the Egyptian Polo Federation and Council Member of the Federation of International Polo, described in Horse Times in 2008 by way of background, said:

“Polo was introduced in Egypt in the 13th century by the Abbassid empire who were very strongly influenced by the Persian polo; it was then called Chaugan. The Mamluks picked it up as a form of cavalry exercise during periods of lull when not fighting and it was played at the foot of the Cairo Citadel with the other cavalry exercises. Salah el Din was a keen polo player as well as Sultan Beibars and others.

When the Gezira Sporting Club was founded in 1882, it was the first polo club in Africa and the tenth polo club in the world. Our top player was Sifallah Yusri Pacha who reached an 8 handicap in 1920 followed by Victor Smeika and Salah Foda from the 30's through the 50's with a 4 handicap.”

“The Salah Foda Cup is held to honour a great Egyptian horseman and polo player of the 1940's through the 1950's”, explains Farouk Younes. “He was an accomplished rider. He excelled in jumping and dressage, but polo was his forte. He was the pillar of the Golden Falcons which was at the time the top team in Egypt, captained by Wahid Pasha Yousry, which won many tournaments including King Fouad Golden Cup many times. He also played internationally in Italy and was considered at that time the best player in the Middle East. In his later years he bred horses for racing and continued riding and training horses with great knowledge until the last moment.”

Before an enthusiastic crowd of family, friends, and esteemed members of the diplomatic and business spheres, three teams participated in the Cup: Kings, Abu Sir, and Monte. After the tussle of the qualifying matches two teams emerged to battle for the Cup on the day of reckoning, Kings and Monte. The first period saw Monte power its way to a commanding position ending the chukka 4 goals to Kings 1, but Kings with a half-goal handicap difference fought back in the second and third chukkas narrowing the spread to 6 goals to 3. The final chukka was a battle royal seeing Kings pick up 4 goals to Monte's 2, but that 11th hour effort was simply not enough and the match ended 8 goals to 7.5 and Monte captured the Cup.

This year marked the first time in the tournament's history to feature not one, but two, lady polo players, Jeanine Hugo and Zeina Hosny on the teams. Perhaps at next year's Salah Foda Cup up-and-coming junior lady player Hana Hazem will join this exclusive club.

This is the fifth year that 6 handicap Argentine polo professionals Eduardo and Francisco Menendez have graced the Abu Sir fields for the Salah Foda Cup tournament which really drives up the excitement and level of play at these events. And the excitement was tangible for the spectators, but especially for the players who represented all five polo clubs in Egypt.

Photos by Ashraf El Mahrouky

#### Salah Foda Cup Teams

##### Kings:

- Mohannad Mostafa (0)
- Marwan Mostafa (2)
- Mohamed El Sewedy (2)
- Silvester Fanelli (4)

##### Abu Sir:

- Ibrahim Awadalla (0)
- Mohy El Kateb (0)
- Karim Loza (0)
- Mohamed Bassiouni (2)
- Frankie Menendez (6)

##### Monte:

- Zeina Hosny (-1)
- Omar El Sewedy (0)
- Jeanine Hugo (1)
- Aly Kashef (2)
- Edu Menendez (6)

## THE SALAH FODA CUP 2016

# HONOURING ONE OF EGYPT'S POLO LEGENDS

By Bridget McArdle McKinney