



# US POLO ASSOCIATION ANNUAL POLO CUP

By Karim Loza

Board Member of the Egyptian Polo Federation & Region  
Ambassador of the Federation of International Polo

*“A HIDDEN EQUESTRIAN SPORT IN EGYPT, AND A FEAST  
TO THE EYES”*





BENEATH THE LIGHTS OF A BEAUTIFUL ALEXANDRIAN OCTOBER AFTERNOON, KING'S RANCH EQUESTRIAN CLUB HOSTED THE EGYPTIAN POLO TEAM AND THE AMERICAN TINICUM POLO PARK TEAM WITH 8 RIDERS FROM BOTH TEAMS MOUNTING THEIR POLO PONIES FOR A FRIENDLY MATCH ON A VAST 300 YARD FIELD CONSTRUCTED TO INTERNATIONAL POLO FIELD STANDARDS. SPONSORED BY THE US POLO ASSOCIATION & THEIR AGENT QUATTRO TRADING & SERVICES, THE EGYPTIAN POLO FEDERATION HOSTED THE 11TH POLO EVENT IN EGYPT.

played in Alexandria at Semouha and Sporting clubs as well as the Army Cavalries. International teams have always particularly enjoyed visiting Egypt as it offers the benefit of 2 playing seasons: in Cairo during the winter and in Alexandria during the summer...a luxury rarely available in other parts of the world at that time.

The exuberant attacks of Ali El-Kashef led to 4 goals in the American team's net, yet at the final chucker coming to an end and the sun setting, the American team charged the field attempting to tie a very close score of 5-6; eventually the win went to the Egyptian team.

Polo is a sport with long tradition in Egypt. Starting in the 12th century, the game was played by the Mamluke cavalry as a form of military exercise. More recently, from about 1890 to the late 60's, the Gezira Sporting Club 3 large polo grounds were ranked as the best of their kind in the world. The game was also widely

Egypt produced a number of talented polo players who played and won a number of international tournaments: Seifalla Pasha Yousri in the 1920's, 8 goal handicap, was the Egyptian Ambassador to the USA, won a number of tournaments in the USA & Argentina, Victor Smeika in the 1940's, 4 goal handicap, won a number of tournaments in France & the UK, and Salah Foda in the 1950's played in Italy. Alex Ebeid in the 1970's, 80's & 90's, captained the 'Falcons Polo Team' and won 7 times the Coupe Do'r of Deauville France, and twice the Queen's Cup in the UK. Alex still is a great support for the game although retired from the

high goal tournaments and currently plays at his farm in Gloucestershire, UK. Farouk Younes, from the 1970's to date, reached 4 goal handicap, played in various parts of the world and won the Silver Cup in Deauville France, Gold Cup in Sotogrande Spain, and the General Monte Cup in Argentina. Farouk was Region Ambassador of the Federation of International Polo (FIP), Tournament Director of the zone playoffs in India and Pakistan, and Tournament Director for both World Cups of France & Mexico in 2004 & 2008. Farouk retired from the high goal tournaments and plays at his farm in Abou Seir, Egypt, but still remains Board Member of the FIP Executive Committee and Chairman of the Egyptian Polo Federation.

The Egyptian Polo Federation was established in 1930's, one of the oldest federations in Egypt, and it currently includes 4 active clubs; Gezira, Semouha, Sporting & the Police Sporting Union club, along with 2 associate member clubs; King's Ranch and Shams Jockey club. Part of the federation's various roles & activities is organising the local polo season that typically starts in October and ends in June. The federation organises events for the visiting teams from various parts of the world; during the last 3 years teams from the Netherlands, Brazil, Switzerland, India, Spain, Pakistan, Zambia, Germany, Italy and Jordan have played in Egypt. The federation also organises trips for the Egyptian teams to play abroad; 2 teams travelled during the 2008 summer; one to the USA and the second to the Netherlands.

▼ *Ali El-Kashef*



▲ *Danny Santana*

## FAROUK YOUNES, CHAIRMAN OF THE EGYPTIAN POLO FEDERATION:

"The game was very competitive and I think the Egyptian team played very well; they compliment one another in a beautiful way. The American team they play very well as individuals, but today as a team they were less coordinated, however they were riding horses they are not acquainted with. At the last chucker, they gathered-up as a team, along with having very good horses, which eventually made the match tight."

## ON THE SPORT DEVELOPING IN EGYPT:

"In the near future, we need younger players; we have been working on developing the sport for the past 4 years by brining in professional trainers and umpires. We have also been sending our players to participate at international events in order to gain mileage, as well as inviting international teams to participate locally as to enhance the experience of our players. The most efficient way to attract players and young

blood is to boost the culture of the game through the media and of course through sponsorship.

## ON POLO PONIES:

"Usually polo ponies are bought directly from the race track; I personally have a series of Argentinean horses that are imported along with my line of horses that are bred locally."

## HESHAM EL-GHARBY, FOUNDER OF THE TINICUM POLO PARK CLUB & TEAM MEMBER:

"We are here playing amongst friends and the match was extremely nice; we would like to come and play matches again and again.

The polo sport in Egypt is quite hidden, although there is much potential for the game to develop; the team performs well and are gaining experience due to travelling to compete in international competitions, as well as inviting international teams to participate here in Egypt." HT