



FIP
MAGAZINE
by ClickPolo

EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP



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FORZA AZZURRI!

Italy had a great victory in the European Championship, defeating Austria 6-5 in the final to take their second title in a row, the third one overall

L&VÖLK

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September 2021

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A YEAR IN REVIEW

by Horacio Areco ”

I would like to thank the entire Executive Committee team for their invaluable experience, support and guidance. Thanks to their willingness, we have held many virtual meetings throughout the year that have been very productive and have allowed the proper functioning of FIP not to be affected.

I would also like to congratulate all of you for your tireless efforts to keep polo moving forward at this time.

As we all know, due to the Covid pandemic, we have had to reschedule most of our international events for the next year.

However, despite all the difficulties, many FIP tournaments were played and will be played during 2021.

The Rider Cup was very successfully held at Chantilly Polo Club during the month of June with the participation of 12 teams representing Polo Clubs from all over the World.

Last Sunday 12th of September, the FIP XIII European Championship commenced at Sotogrande thanks to the great work of the Real Federación Española de Polo and

Minuto 7. I want to extend my gratitude to Luis Benjumea Llorente and Manu Cereceda for their hard work in helping FIP to produce the tournament as well as the 6 teams representing Spain, Italy, Austria, Germany, Switzerland and the Netherlands. I would also like to congratulate the Italy team who are the new European champions.

On Wednesday 22st of September the FIP III Ladies European Championship started at La Mimosa Polo Club near Milan. This tournament also constitutes the playoff for the I Women's World Polo Championship. The winner will not only be the European champion but will also represent her country in this first female World Cup. Once again FISE and Alessandro Giachetti have come forward to organize the championship.

By December of this year, we will have the first high-goal Women's Tri Nations Cup (16 to 22 goals) to be held in Buenos Aires. National teams from the USA, UK and Argentina will compete for this trophy, which we expect to put into play every year. ►



HURRAH! ARECO

Fortunately, in 2022 we will have a busy year. As I mentioned before, we will have the first Women's World Championship in Argentina, playoffs in France, Mexico, Uruguay already confirmed and finally the World Polo Championship in the USA. I am very grateful to all the hosts for maintaining their commitment to carry them out.

In addition, our members have been able to produce Youth Polo Programs around the world during this pandemic year. These programs aim at the development and growth of polo among children and young people and were very successful.

During 2021, FIP has endorsed and financially supported programs in Malaysia, Australia, Uruguay, New Zealand, Argentina, Switzerland, Germany, Netherlands and Spain. We have received a positive mention from the IOC because of this, so everyone should

IOC because of this, so everyone should be very proud of this achievement. You will be able to read more about them in this issue of our magazine.

I want to make a special mention and thank our Sponsor USPA Global Licencing for their support and renewal of our association until December 2022.

We also keep working with FISE (the Italian Federation of Equestrian Sports) with regards to polo being part of the Cortina 2026 Winter Olympics.

Finally, FIP continues to work with our associations, improving communication with them, as well as with other members and supporters. The FIP Magazine has been an important step in that direction and we are very satisfied with the results obtained. ■

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The beautiful challenge of writing another FIP magazine

by Carlos Beer ”

CLICKPOLO is 9 years old. It is a very short time but, at the same time, it is a very long time. It all depends on your point of view.

Me, as CLICKPOLO's director, don't look at the amount of years as a measure of time, but rather, as an indicator of what happened during those years. And I think: 9 years is a short amount of time for everything we have done.

CLICKPOLO was born midway through 2012, as an Argentine polo magazine. Now, we have four more magazines for other countries (the US, the UK, Spain and Chile), and one encompassing a whole continent (Asia). We also air a weekly YouTube show which, with 316 issues, has 1,700,000 views, and we also have the most viewed social media in the sport. That is why we think that we are more than a polo multimedia: we are a community.

However, I haven't talked about one other product CLICKPOLO's staff works on. It is one of the most special products we make. Doing what we do carries a lot of responsibilities, but I think that making the magazine for an International Federation is much bigger.

Here we are, then, bringing a new issue of FIP Polo to the whole world of polo. It is the Federation's magazine which we have been making since August, 2019, and have had the same enthusiasm since that very same issue.

Even though the magazine doesn't have a proper release date, the first year took a lot of hard work and effort. So much so that there were a total of six magazines, all of which had great repercussions in the world of polo, especially in the Federations of countries where polo is played. That was the goal when this idea was born: being the media that represents National Associations and Federations.

The last magazine was released on August, 2020. It has been a little over a year. We have been through a lot of pandemic, lockdown, and they have been trying times for everyone.

However, it is the time to start, slowly, enjoying life as we did before. Maybe not quite in the same way, but progress has been made. And, with those step forwards, polo has returned. Polo is here! From CLICKPOLO, we are very happy to be writing another FIP magazine. It is a new challenge, like every issue we print. However, it is a beautiful challenge, informing about polo, especially when it is the magazine that carries along the biggest responsibilities.

HURLINGHAM

POLO



THE AUTUMN ISSUE 2021

AVAILABLE ON OCTOBER 15TH!

📷 @poloneilegerton

ITALY WON THE XIII EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP IN SOTOGRANDE

The best teams of Europe met in Sotogrande for the XIII edition of the European Championship. After a week of action, Italy and Austria faced off in the final match of the competition in Los Pinos Field at Santa Maria Polo Club. In a match that went down to the wire, Italy secured a 6-5 victory to crown themselves as the best team of the continent and repeat the title they won in 2018.

Italy (Stefano Giansanti, Therance Cusmano, Francisco Mac Loughlin, Miguel Lagos Marmol) entered the final match after defeating the Netherlands 5-3 in the semifinals. Austria (Diego Braun, Martin Bleier, Walter Scherb, Jakob Von Plessen) surprised everyone as they beat the local team Spain 6-5 in the other semifinal. After a close first chukker, Italy and Austria were tied 1-all. Italy managed to pull a two goal difference in the second and went into halftime leading 3-1. While Austria fought back, Italy was able to keep the lead with a strong defense and won by 6-5.



XIII
EUROPEAN
CHAMPIONSHIP
2021



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GIANSA DI MUZIO

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S C A E R



Francisco Mac Loughlin was the top scorer of the match with 4 goals. Miguel Lagos Marmol received the MVP award and the BPP honors went to Picara, played by Jakob Von Plessen. In the game for third place, Spain defeated the Netherlands by 10-4 and in the match for fifth place, Germany defeated Switzerland 8-5.

The first tournament was played in Saint Moritz, in Switzerland, back in 1993. England is the team that has won it the most and currently holds six titles. With the 2021 title, Italy now has three titles and past France who is third with two titles.

The European Polo Championship is the most important International tournament of the continent and takes place every two years. The European

Championship is a 6-8 goal tournament for every European FIP country to participate in. The European Championship provides an opportunity for European players and patrons to participate in an official FIP event and represent their nation.







This event has grown more popular every year and it helps the sport grow and brings in more players. The European Championship is unique in the world thanks to how close the nations of the continent are, which makes it easier for the Federations to send their horses and players to the venue, making sure that the Championship has exceptional

quality and is a unique show of competition. It is the most important Nations' tournament after the World Championship, due to its history, participants and the players involved.

Six teams played this year in the competition: Italy, Austria, Spain, Netherlands, Switzerland and Germany.

The Federation of International Polo would like to thank the Real Federación Española de Polo, Ayala Polo Club and Minuto 7 for organizing the European Championship during the pandemic after Azerbaijan's impossibility in hosting this event.



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THE III FIP LADIES EUROPEAN POLO CHAMPIONSHIP 2021 KICKS OFF IN ITALY



Great Britain, Ireland, Germany and Italy are the four nations that will be competing in the third edition of the "U.S. Polo Assn. – III Ladies European Championship 2021" hosted from September 21st to 26th at the beautiful Polo Club La Mimosa in Pogliano Milanese, a very British styled corner of Italy just a few minutes from the center of Milan.

For the past years, the Ladies European Polo Championship has been the most important event in the ladies' polo calendar on the Old Continent. Italy is honored to be hosting the competition for the second time after winning the gold medal in 2017 and the silver medal in 2018.

The first edition of the Ladies European Championship took place at Polo Club du Domaine de Chantilly in France in 2017 and Italy was crowned champions while France finished second. Villa a Sesta Polo & Equestrian Club hosted the competition in 2018. Germany lifted the coveted trophy while Italy finished second. The event returns this year to crown a new champion.

La Mimosa Polo Club is preparing to welcome the delegations from the four nations competing with the arrival of more than 80 horses for the 16 players who as always will fight to the bitter end for title and medals.

The FIP Ladies Polo Championship is being organized by La Mimosa Polo Club, one of the most active in Italy, in cooperation with the Italian Equestrian Sports Federation (FISE) and under the aegis of the International Polo Federation (FIP), Comune di Milano and Regione Lombardia.

TEAMS



GERMAN POLO ASSOCIATION

Eva Brühl (6)
Hana Grill (5)
Marie Haupt (3)
Steffi von Pock (2)

Mona Scharf (3)
Christina Strasser (1)



ITALY

Constanza Marchiorello (3)
Camila Rosi (5)
Ginevra Visconti (1)
Alice Coria (3)



IRELAND

Caroline Keeling (1)
Siobhan Herbst (4)
April Kent (4)
Ina Lalor (6)

Luca Moore (1)



ENGLAND

Fran Townsend (1)
Milly Hughes (3)
Heloise Wilson-Smith (6)
Emma Tomlinson (6)

Jess Andrews (5)
Tilly Bruce (1)
Natasha Tisminlesky (4)



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MARCOS URANGA, *A POLO GENTLEMAN*

It has been a year since the last FIP magazine. Besides the pandemic, one of the saddest news was the passing of beloved Marcos Uranga, a great polo player and the first president of the Federation of International Polo. As a tribute to Marcos, we decided to publish our obituary, Marcos' interview for the first FIP magazine and some of his fondest memories with polo.

Marcos Uranga was, no doubts, one of the best directors in the history of polo. He's had a hand in several important events in the sport's history. The most important one being the founder and first president of the Federation of International Polo, between 1982 and 1997. He was also the President of the AAP between 1983 and 1987.

He was a promoter of polo, especially in creating new tournaments. As president of the FIP, in 1985 he created the World Polo Championship (up to 14 goals). Among other tournaments he created, there was the Youth World Cup, played at the Jockey Club for many years, the Ambassador's Cup, and the Bodegueros Cup, the last two played under the FIP's supervision.

Son of Susana Rey and Carlos (who was a notable player and director, the first player to score a goal at Palermo when it was inaugurated in 1928), he was born in 1936. Marcos married Silvia Rueda and his family inherited his polo legacy. He had seven children: Valeria, Marcos Jr., Delfin, Paula, Diego, Juan, and Mariano, and had over 20 grandchildren.

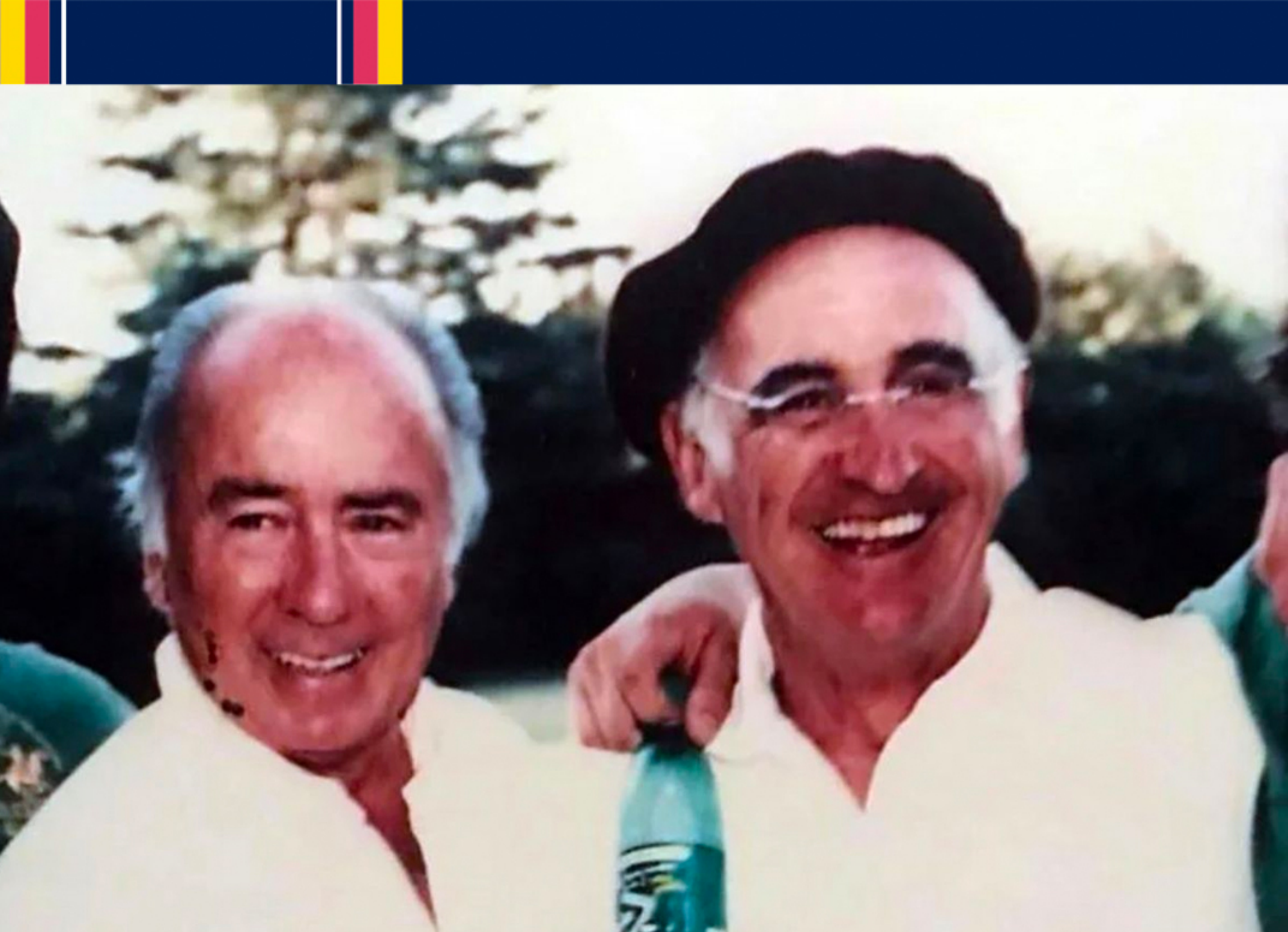
"His family and friends will dearly miss him. Everyone who knew him recognized his kindness, simplicity and true hospitality. He was a true gentleman of our sport."

These last words were written by Horacio Areco in the obituary posted on the Federation of International Polo website. It is the best way to describe him: a polo gentleman.

MARCOS
URANGA







POLO, IN MARCOS' WORDS: his fondest memories through the years



The FIP's invincible duo, Marcos Uranga and Glen Holden travelled the world on their polo mission and over the years did more for polo worldwide than any other two people. That was just the start of many, many happy memories and anecdotes, cherished, not just by the FIP founders but also by those involved with the FIP, three decades on.

The pair went on many trips together, one of them with Australian Bob Skene to Singapore. "At one stage we went past a place and he shed a tear, he told me that it was where he had spent three years in a Japanese concentration camp.

He was a thin man, 75-80 kilos and he told me when he left it he weighed 45 kilos and suffered real hunger. Whilst he was captive he had a square piece of paper and he moved four pieces as if they were players. That was how he practised polo. Whenever we went to Asian countries with him we got to see everyone; Bob was like God. Playing with him was a pleasure and amazing things happened. Once I was about to go out and play and I saw that Bob's groom had gone crazy and was incomprehensibly rolling around the floor. I later found out it was a Ghurkha soldier and he was paying homage to his superior officer, who was Bob," says Uranga.

Uranga also recalls the early days when he first became interested in polo: "I worked on a farm and played a lot of polo in the interior of Argentina, and on one of my trips I met Dr. Jorge Marín Moreno, Cacho to his friends (important in polo at the time), and he suggested I went and played in England and he would help me. One day I got a telegram which said "Queen Awaits" and in spite of the fact that I was only a two goal player, off I went.

On my second day there one of the other players was injured and I was asked to play in the final. The Queen was going to be there and I had no idea about protocol and wasn't prepared. My team lost. When we went to get our cup I was last in the box as I had the lowest handicap and the Queen stood right next to me. As I'm a bit of a chatterbox, I started chatting to the Queen! It went on for about five minutes and I delayed the cup presentation.

Afterwards, the captain of the winning team, who was a Second World War hero and had never spoken to the Queen, was furious with me. That's when I learnt the protocol you have to abide by when the Queen is present. These situations shape you and make you appreciate international friendship," he believes. ►

"One of our obstacles was the Malvinas war," explains Uranga. "I was the FIP president, the secretary was Carlos Palacios from Perú, the vice president was Luis Valencia y Carbajal from Spain and the treasurer was a Frenchman, a completely international group. Historically the Hurlingham Polo Association in Great Britain regulated polo, but because of the conflict they had declared a boycott against the FIP, them as well as the other Commonwealth countries (Australia, New Zealand, Canada, South Africa and Hong Kong). For five years until peace was agreed, Argentines could not play in Great Britain.

"Whilst organising the Second World Cup in Berlin at the Maifeld Olympic stadium, which was within the British military zone, I went to Germany for preliminary meetings. One night I went to a formal dinner. At the main table were British officers who declared me 'persona non grata' and wouldn't let me sit at their table. Instead of leaving the party I decided to hang around in a reconciliatory mood. Fortunately a peace agreement between Britain and Argentina was signed in the year between the dinner party and the Polo World Cup. When I got to Berlin the chief of the British military zone invited me to his residence. We had three gin and tonics and he told me he had been in charge of the British Parachute Regiment in the Malvinas conflict. He then told me he had heard about what happened at the pre-world cup dinner party and the gesture I had made. And for that reason he had decided that the official British band would play the

Argentine National Anthem at the opening ceremony. After the tournament – which the Argentine team lost against the British – in the 'third period' (the post-match party, check if need clarify?) we decided to get the British drunk, with the Argentine wine we had brought. They were so drunk that the German police were called and the Argentine team hid them in their rooms at the hotel," laughs Uranga.



Animals are an important part of polo, without horses there would be no polo and the industry around them moves large sums of money. In Switzerland whilst organising the third World Cup Uranga ran into a problem with his strict hosts who refused to remove a bush from beside the field in St Moritz. Uranga tried his best to convince them and told them the horses wouldn't know how to react when they saw it, and they

could get scared and even have a heart attack. It seemed the ploy worked, because of their love of animals the Swiss officials agreed to remove the bush as long as Uranga had five trees planted in the town square. "Today there is more awareness of animal's sensitivity than there is about humans," believes Uranga.



MARCOS
URANGA



"I'M MORE OF A PLAYER THAN A DIRECTIVE. I'M A FAN"

This interview with Marcos Uranga was held in July, 2019, and published in August of that year in the first FIP magazine.

The Federation of International Polo is Marcos Uranga's brainchild. He founded this new entity that contributed strongly, promoting polo around the world during his term as President at the Argentine Association of Polo.

"FIP is born from the necessity of seeing polo grow worldwide, since Argentina has always had a strong lead in the number of players and their handicaps. Thus, in 1982, I gathered directives from different countries and we created the Federation of International Polo," said the 83 year old Uranga during a lunch interview with CLICKPOLO at his home in Recoleta.

-Was it difficult?

"Everything is easier when you are working on something you love and are passionate about. It's not work, you do

traveling with a polo player passport, you'll find personalities from all around the world who are happy to open their doors. I just expanded and boosted this camaraderie by gathering people who were on board with the idea of creating an International Federation of Polo."

-Was the response better than you expected?

"It was very good, because it was like jumping blindly into a pool. However, we started hosting a World Cup in Palermo, a stamp in the Argentine post on its honor, with art by Moy... when you have an idea and people agree, things just snowball."

-What is your best memory?

"Probably the final of the best World Cup in Palermo, between Argentina and Mexico, was very exciting. President Menem came with me. During that Cup, which I thought no one would want to host, I got the President of the Country to attend a polo match."

-When you look back at all you've made happen, what do you feel?

"I am proud, and happy. I'm happy to be able to play the sport, and I'm happy to be able to promote it to others."

The legacy of Marcos Uranga still bears fruit. He regrets only one thing when talking about his career: "Not having been able to play better," as he jokes with CLICKPOLO. "I'm more of a player than a directive. I'm a fan, I have fun playing."

-What was your career like?

"I was a 4-goaler who tried as hard as possible to play around the world at the 20-goal level, always as #1. I had good horses, so I played in every tournament I could get into in Argentina. I later became the president of the AAP and worked on promoting polo as much as I could."

-What was the most exotic place you played polo at?

"I went to India and became friends with the Maharaja. His son stayed home for a month and learned how to play. I also visited Jamaica, an amazing island. I was invited to play on a ranch right by the beach. When you are done playing, you can go bathe in an amazing sea."

-What does polo mean to you?

"It's the legacy of something my father started. Jack Nelson, Enrique Padilla, the Reynals and him were the first Argentines to travel 25 days, by boat, to play in the US and Europe, and put Argentina at the world stage and making polo an Olympic sport. That is a very important moment when I was able to live with my father. I very much enjoy bringing things together. I love family matches and, at work, I'm always trying to put teams together as well. It's a modus vivendi." ■

MARCOS
URANGA



POLO PARK ZURICH, A VERY STRONG CHAMPION

LA RIDER CUP: A SUCCESS BOTH ON AND OFF THE FIELD, ALL WITH THE FIP'S SUPPORT

When 2021 ends and we look at the balance of the year for polo, the Rider Cup will, no doubts, be one of the most notable events to highlight, for several reasons, going from its original concept to the success it had.

The first edition of the Rider Cup had a Swiss champion: Polo Park Zurich. With Min Podestá as their star player, they defeated Deauville International Polo Club 10-4 in the final played at the Polo Club du Domaine de Chantilly, in France.

That is the final result when it comes to the sport. However, the most important part of the event was what happened off the field. The Chantilly Polo Club's organization was excellent, well supported by the Federation of International Polo and the French Federation. Their first goal was to have a total of 8 teams, but, in the end, they had 12 teams from different countries, representing clubs from all

over the world. That, on itself, was a success even before the ball started rolling. "Being part of a tournament like this one, with such international presence, and with the same goal we have, promoting polo, is a huge honor and of incredible importance to the FIP," said Alex Taylor from the Federation.

Another win for the tournament was the promotion and reach it had outside of the traditional media that are commonplace in our sport, which is something every Federation has been trying to achieve: having polo transcend its limits, something that is often quite difficult. ►

"Being part of a tournament like this one, with such international presence, and with the same goal we have, promoting polo, is a huge honor and of incredible importance to the FIP"

📷 Guadalupe Aizaga

"We are very happy with the tournament, and are thinking about things to improve for 2022," said Taylor. The most interesting part is that the changes start at the broadcaster's request, who are not originally from the polo community, with the goal of making the event more attractive on their screen. There are some ideas that are likely going to be put into play, taken from Women's Polo and the Xtreme Polo League. The tournament was played in 5-chukker matches, without changing sides after each goal. That resulted in three chukkers having a team playing on a bad throw-in against two opponents. As we also mentioned, the TV broadcasters, who aren't very familiar with the sport, also said that the horse changes caused too much dead time.

The solution will be to play six chukkers of 4 minutes plus 30 seconds, as women's polo has often done for a couple years now, and without any horse changes. Another detail to speed up the game will be that teams that receive a goal will put the game back in play from their own 60 yard line, an idea that was born in the Xtreme Polo League played in Buenos Aires, in 2019, which was an event that also had the support of the FIP.

That is the summary of the Rider Cup regarding its organizations, and its potential changes for the future. When it comes to the final match, after two very

close chukkers, where Polo Park Zurich led by 3-2, the team from Switzerland managed to shut their opponents down in the next two periods. The undefeated champions outscored their rivals by 4-1 and 3-0 and entered the final chukker leading 10-3. By then, the match was already over. A single goal from the French team had Polo Park Zurich winning 10-4 and claiming the first ever Rider Cup. ►







Previously, in the semifinals, Polo Park Zurich had defeated the American team Empire Polo Club 6-5, while Deauville won 7-5 against Hong Kong.

Elena Venot was the Most Valuable Player of the tournament, and Best Playing Pony honors went to Irenita Piromana, owned by Min Podesta.

In the third-place match that took place before the final, Hong Kong defeated Empire 6-5. Fifth place went to Dos

Lunas, after they defeated Chantilly 7-6, and Hamburg finished 7th after winning 9-8 against Evviva. Dusseldorf came in 9th after taking a 7-6 victory over La Aguada 7-6, and in the match for 11th place, Moscow and Las Brisas tied 7-7.

Polo Park will go down in history as the first champion of the Rider Cup. A great champion for a great tournament, which is only taking its first step and has great potential for the future. ■

THE RIDER CUP

Summary of the final

POLO PARK ZÜRICH	10	DEAUVILLE INT. POLO CLUB	4
Richard Harris	0	Ulysse Eisenchteter	0
Elena Venot	1	Patrick Eisenchteter	1
Min Podesta	7	Pierre-Henri N'Goumou	6
Carlos Solari	4	Juan José Storni	5
Total	12	Total	12

Score. Polo Park 2-1, 3-2, 7-3, 10-3 and 10-4.

Goals - Polo Park Zürich: Min Podesta 6 and Carlos Solari 4.

Goals - Deauville Int. Polo Club: Ulysse Eisenchteter 2 and Pierre-Henri N'Goumou 2.

Umpires: Juan José Diaz Alberdi and Rafael Silva.

MVP: Elena Venot.

BPP: Irenita Piromana, played by Min Podestá.

Date: June 20th, 2021.

Venue: Chantilly Polo Club

Third-place match summary

HONG KONG ASSOCIATION	6	EMPIRE POLO CLUB	5
Edouard Costes	0	Clément Smith	0
Thierry Vetois	3	Marcos Harriot	4
Adrien Le Gallo	3	Tito Ruiz Guiñazu	7
Brieuc Rigaux	4	Derek Smith	1
Total HC	10	Total	12

Score. Hong Kong 1-2, 3-2, 4-4, 5-5 and 6-5.

Goals - Hong Kong Polo: Edouard Costes 2, Thierry Vetois 1, Adrien Le Gallo 1 and Brieuc Rigaux 2.

Goals - Empire Polo Club of Coachella Valley: Marcos Harriot 3 and Tito Ruiz Guiñazu 2.

Umpires: Juan José Araya and Alejandro Pascual.

Date: June 20th, 2021.

Venue: Chantilly Polo Club.

THE 2022 POLO RIDER CUP WILL BE HELD FROM 8 TO 18 JUNE 2022

Following the recent success of the first edition of the POLO RIDER CUP, Game Polo, the organizer and promoter of the event, is pleased to announce the dates of the second edition that will be held from 8 to 18 June 2022 at the Polo Club de Chantilly, north of Paris.

After a debriefing with the Federation of International Polo (FIP), the French Polo Federation, the Polo Club de Chantilly and the Founding clubs/teams, some changes were agreed for next year's event.

The main changes are that the Final will be held on Saturday 18 June 2022 and a Subsidiary Cup will be held during the tournament.

Concerning the format, it was approved that the number of teams participating in the event will remain the same, 12 international clubs/teams with a maximum of 2 clubs/teams per country.

Olivier Godallier, President & Co-Founder of GAME Polo, comments: "We are really looking forward to the second edition of the POLO RIDER CUP. This new polo club competition found great acceptance at the international level and we received positive feedback from all the clubs, players, federations, partners and media, so we are excited to be working on next year's edition to improve it and make it even more challenging."





FIP STRENGTHENS ITS BONDS

Following the meeting in July between Delfin Uranga, the Presidente of the Argentine Polo Association, and Muhammad Khalid Ejaz, the Ambassador from Pakistan to Argentina, Chile, Ecuador, Perú, Paraguay and Uruguay, the diplomat continued building up the relationship between his country and polo.

The Ambassador hosted an event in his residence in Buenos Aires where he invited Horacio Areco, President of the Federation of International Polo, Delfin Uranga and Carlos Menendez Behety from the AAP, senior officials from the Ministry of International Affairs from Argentina and polo media like CLICKPOLO.



WITH PAKISTAN

During the lunch, where the guests tried typical food from Pakistan, the Ambassador stressed the importance of polo in his country where more than ten thousand people are involved directly or indirectly with polo.

To show how far the relationship between polo and Pakistan goes, the Ambassador

told the story of king Qutb-ud-din Aibak, who died in Lahore in 1210 after falling from a horse while playing polo. Closer in time, Pakistan built the beautiful Argentina Park in the heart of Islamabad and is open for everyone to visit.



"POLO HAS BEEN GROWING AMAZINGLY FAST IN PAKISTAN. I THINK ENGAGEMENT WITH AAP, FIP AND PAKISTAN POLO ASSOCIATION WILL HELP PLAYERS IMPROVE THEIR SKILLS"

It is commonly said that the millenary sport of polo was played for the first time in Central Asia. As the rules slowly developed into the game, we know today new places started playing it during this expansion. One of the first countries that played polo during this growth was Pakistan. Argentina, on the other hand, started playing polo hundreds of years later. Nevertheless, the country grew into the first power in the world. Two countries strongly linked by polo, Pakistan and Argentina established diplomatic relations 70 years ago.

Pakistan has a strong polo community, with nineteen clubs hosting up to forty tournaments of different levels, and more than 10,000 people living directly or indirectly from the sport. To know more about polo in Pakistan, CLICKPOLO spoke to S.E. Dr. Muhammad Khalid Ejaz, Pakistan's Ambassador to Argentina.

S.E. DR. MUHAMMAD
KHALID EJAZ

-Mr. Ambassador, you recently received a visit from the Argentine Polo Association President Mr. Delfin Uranga. What kind of agreement will Pakistan and the AAP have?

"It was a great honor for me to receive Mr. Delfin Uranga, the President of Argentine Polo Association. We discussed the exchange of various polo teams between Pakistan and Argentina. The meeting is also important regarding the purchase of horses and equine related equipment from Argentina. Conversation was also held to look into the possibility of a ceremonial match between Pakistani and Argentine players to mark the 70 years of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Pakistan and Argentina. Pakistan and Argentina had signed an MOU regarding cooperation in the field of sports in October 2007, wherein it was agreed that both countries shall encourage and promote exchange of programs, experience, skills, information, and knowledge in sports. The meeting with AAP is a step forward to formalize the above-mentioned action in Polo." ►





-How important do you think is the relationship between Argentina and Pakistan with these kinds of engagements?

"Polo has been growing amazingly fast in Pakistan. I think engagement with AAP and Pakistan Polo Association will help players improve their skills. In addition, the sport will further strengthen bilateral relations between Pakistan and Argentina by increasing people to people contacts."

-It is said that Pakistan is one of the places where Polo has been played for centuries. What can you say about the history of polo in your country?

"History of polo or Chogan (its original name) in Pakistan can be traced to the

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thirteenth century. The Aibak Polo Ground at Lahore stands witness to the death of Sultan Qutb-ud-din Aibak in 1210, who died playing polo. In 1947 when the Pakistan Polo Association was formed, the game as part of grand military tradition made its way to all parts of Pakistan. Presently, polo is played all over the country. The Shandur Annual Tournament is held at the highest Polo ground in the world. Last year, this Shandur Polo game (played in original format) attracted around 40,000/- tourists. We had local horse breeding areas in Punjab province along with the Army breeding depots which helped sustain superior quality polo ponies. Lahore Polo Club was the only civilian club in Lahore with excellent facilities which helped develop players for decades till two new clubs were formed in Lahore. Many head of states and governments and other dignitaries had visited Lahore Polo Club to witness high quality polo matches, the prominent being: HM Queen Elizabeth and late Prince Philip (who actually played at the Lahore Polo Club), Sultan Azlan Shah King of Malaysia, Queen Sirikit of Thailand, HM Raza Shah Pahlavi King of Iran, HH Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan, First Lady Jackie Kennedy of USA, Governor General of Australia, HRH Prince Hassan Bin Talal of Jordan (also played at Lahore Polo Club), President of Turkey, President of Djibouti and many others." ►

-How is polo organized in Pakistan?

"The polo season in Pakistan is from September to April. Presently, nineteen clubs are registered with Pakistan Polo Association with a total of twenty-seven polo grounds. Strength of Players is around 380 with one six goal handicap player. Pakistan Polo Team participates in the FIP World Cup Polo. Forty Prestigious Polo tournaments are played every year at different stations (which comprise of low goal (0-4), medium goal (2-6, 4-8,6-10) and high goal (8-12,10-14) tournaments. Highlights of such are at Lahore where six fourteen goal tournaments are contested with a combination of local and foreigner players. These tournaments are professionally umpired. The local horse flesh is Thoroughbred horses. A large number of Argentine Mares can also be seen proving their metal at each level. Currently Pakistani patrons import more than one hundred horses annually from Argentina and other countries. Presently Lahore hosts over 1,000 playing Argentine horses of superior quality. The people of Lahore follow polo enthusiastically. Initially it was Lahore Polo Club, now we have two new Army polo clubs with excellent facilities as well.

Lahore now has eight states of the art polo fields surpassing any other major city in the world with such facilities in the downtown. Our fourteen goal

tournaments field ten teams and each team employ foreign players, local players, foreign and local grooms plus coaching staff. Moreover, Lahore Polo Club has hosted a Federation of International World Cup playoff in 2003 along with two Ambassador Cups (one as recent as 2019)."



-From the economic point of view, can you estimate how many people live from the polo industry in Pakistan?

"Currently, we estimate that around 10,000 people are directly or indirectly employed in polo related activities. There are more than one thousand polo ponies



in Lahore alone. Similarly, in other cities of Pakistan like Karachi, Islamabad & Rawalpindi thousands of people are affiliated with polo related work. Each year many foreign polo professionals, players and umpires are invited to Pakistan to help organize the medium and high goal polo. There are a minimum of ten teams with a high goal which generates good financial activity in form of sponsorships and advertising as well as jobs. In addition to two Army depots with a combined area of 1000 acres, the local breeding areas produce a local half thoroughbred."

-Do you have any personal experience with polo? If so, please tell us.

"I never got a chance to play polo myself. However, my son who is studying at high school in Buenos Aires is interested in getting polo training." ■

POLO 101 for kids in Australia

Polo might have been restricted last year due to the pandemic however many countries managed to pull off different events on their own. This was the case of Australia. Hosted by the Australian Polo Federation and the Western Australia Polo Association and supported by FIP, the introduction to polo and the POLO 101 concept to young kids and parents took place. Polo 101 is a modified version of the traditional game and rules of polo to allow as an entry level into the sport with cheaper fees and a minimum of one horse required per player. The game takes place in an arena style or soft ball and will be played on a field that is 130m x 60m in size (about half of a full size field).

To date, the contribution has allowed Western Australia polo to conduct several introductory events where more than 100 people attended. The Junior annual Coaching Clinic for over 40 people took place too as well as the ongoing Pony Club Coaching where over 300 people already attended.



Serpentine Pony Club and Kojonup Pony Club were two of the clubs where the events took place and the good news is this will continue to increase every year. The participants will increase and also the amount of Pony Clubs we visit.

"WA Polo would like to thank the IOC and FIP for believing in the vision and backing this initiative. We will continue the above initiatives every year.

Growing the pony club circuit, growing future Polo players and Creating future Polo superstars. For 2021 we already have Pony Clubs booked and our WA junior annual Coaching clinic Camp. Polo is not only a sport to stay active it is also a sport that promotes well being and mental health. We would like to promote this as part of Polo 101 also.

Polo is about meeting new people, having fun, challenging oneself and creating passion and drive. A motto we will promote."



THE BALL KEPT ROLLING DESPITE COVID

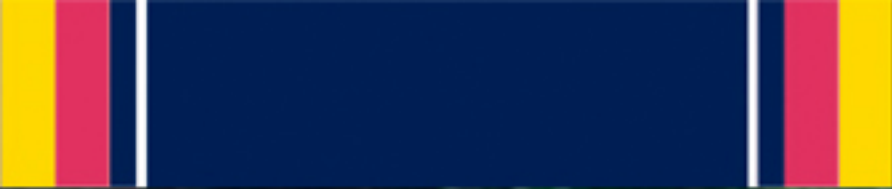
While polo was suspended in many parts of the world due to the pandemic, different events were able to take place as the safety measures relaxed.

The Polo Club Midden-Nederland in Netherlands hosted the "Back to the Future" event which focused on enhancing growth of players back to former numbers in the country. For that, they invited an expert professional referee and polo coach from England to update all players on the rules and work on better strategy. He performed 4 rules seminars for different levels in which 80% of all Dutch players participated. In addition the club provided training in practice by playing instructional chukka's with the coach and the best player of the Netherlands to learn by doing. In total, 22 participants played 110 chukka's by the end of the event.

The impact is that all Dutch players were refreshed on the rules, learned some new insights and are motivated again to develop. For newer players this provides access to coaches the country doesn't usually have. This programme has been crucial in the development of our sport in The Netherlands for the past years. ►







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The Win Polo Club in Hamburg carried out the 14th Youth Camp where 26 children, 4 international coaches, 36 helpers and 65 horses gathered to help and develop beginners and intermediate players. The participants came from nine cities from Germany and Luxembourg and were between 7 and 21 years old.

The course of the program was created for four levels of ability which enabled the coaches to work in small groups. In addition to basic knowledge about horses, polo rules, riding and punching techniques, the schedule also included many practical units.



The Waireka Polo Farm in New Zealand carried out their Open Day where they encouraged new school students to come along and experience polo. On this day, all potential students get to witness tacking up ponies and learn about animal husbandry. After this, they all got to ride a pony with the help from coaches and staff.



This activity is very important for the Waireka Polo Farm and the South Island of New Zealand as it helps recruit new school polo players every season which keeps between 80 to 100 players per year. With the aid and funding from FIP, three tournaments were able to take place which were the highlights of the season. ■



See you
on the next issue

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