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POLO150 - 1869-2019 - Press Release - Number 1

2019 marks a special year for the sport of polo. This release is the announcement of the UK's part in the global celebrations.

What: Polo150 is the 150th Anniversary celebration of the beginning of Polo in the modern era and the formation of rules that have evolved to form the game of today.

When: The first acknowledged game from whence it all began was in 1869. "Hockey on horseback" as it was referred to then was organised by officers stationed at Aldershot, one of whom had read about a form of the game in India, in The Field magazine. Etiquette, followed by rules developed very quickly afterwards, as did the emergence of polo being played at many Clubs, Hurlingham being amongst the first (1874).

Why: Polo is one of the oldest surviving sports and its competitions pre-date the FA Cup, Ashes and modern Olympics and so the 150th is considered a significant milestone and worthy of celebration. Polo150 presents a positive PR opportunity for the sport.

HRH The Prince of Wales is Patron of UK Armed Forces Polo Association Charity and supports the Polo150 initiative.

"As Patron of the U.K. Armed Forces Polo Association, I am delighted to support their 'Polo150' initiative to celebrate this significant landmark in the sport's history."

I do congratulate the U.K.A.F.P.A. for taking on this initiative, and for using it to bring the world of polo together to celebrate a most remarkable sport – from which I still bear the scars! – and send my very best wishes to everyone in the polo world as we celebrate its one hundred and fiftieth birthday."

The key Polo150 messages:

1. Strong connection and affiliation with the Military to this day in UK and many other countries.
2. Men and women compete equally – only major contact sport where this happens at the highest level. Women have played in International teams with men.
3. Polo is a significant employer across the world.
4. Polo is philanthropic.
5. The incredible and unique Polo Pony.

Polo150 will be inclusive, acknowledging the military origins but incorporating all elements and players (past and present) of today's 'Global' game.

There will be much activity organised outside the auspices of UKAFPA but UKAFPA hopes to keep a common thread through all such activity and unite it through social media.

The Polo150 logo is designed to promote the key messages of Polo150 and establish a consistent, unifying and coherent thread through all the events, projects and celebrations.

Principal UK Activation:

- **Polo150 Golden Balls:** a special 'gold' polo ball will be distributed to influencers of polo today, this will include top polo clubs, players, sponsors and governing bodies around the world in each polo playing nation. Recipients are asked to include the ball in a Polo event during 2019 in order to recognise the 150th Anniversary of the modern game and raise a toast to polo. In so doing they will endorse and publicise the 5 messages of polo to the wider public in this special year and post the activity on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. These events will be as diverse as Internal Club tournaments, home matches, social events as well as major International fixtures during 2019.
- **HPA 1875** is producing a 150 clothing line in May 2019 in support of Polo150.
- **Chapple Cup Series Matches:** games at Sandhurst, Tidworth PC and Guards PC against Polo150 Invitational team competing for Chapple Cup Series against UKAFPA.
- **International Matches:** toasting Polo150 at International Matches especially in UK, Asia, USA and RSA. Agreements in principle already with UK (HPA International), RSA (Inanda International) and USA (Westchester Cup).
- **150 years of polo photographic exhibition:** hosted by Hackett London on 22nd May.
- **Polo Auction of Polo items:** online with Graham Budd Auctions 29th June – 15th July. A unique auction and the first to exclusively deal with polo alone. Some very rare items will be on sale in this definitive auction.
- **Poloafrica Tour to UK hosted by UKAFPA 17th- 25th June:** This is in conjunction with the "Poloafrica" Charity. The tour will run for two weeks in June, culminating in a weekend of games at Cirencester Polo Club on Saturday 22 June, Warwickshire Cup Day and Guards Polo Club on Sunday 23 June, the Finals Day of the Royal Windsor Cup traditionally attended by Her Majesty the Queen and a large number of celebrities and VIPs. The concept of this tour, *a team of young players that come from the very poorest and most educationally and economically deprived levels of South African society as guests of the organisation that invented the modern game*, is already attracting widespread interest. The Basotho are natural horsemen and this is evident in the polo skill shown by the youngsters who will be a joy to watch on the green fields of England. The tour will be an interesting cultural experience for all those involved and will further demonstrate the philanthropic power of polo.

Mark Cann, a Trustee of the UKAFPA Charity, is the principal coordinator of Polo150 activity. Please contact Mark on the details above to discuss any interest you have in Polo150 and for use of the Polo150 logo. Other images are available on request.

During the year we are raising money for Polo related charities all over the world. Donations can be made through Just Giving or direct via the information on www.UKAFPA.org.uk.

Conclusion: It is our sincere wish that Polo150 presents a special opportunity to celebrate our unique sport and in so doing pull the world of polo together.

