



ABOVE: Celebrations for Sydney after beating Brisbane
BELOW: NSW TRT's Scott Brodie is delighted to accept a donation from Potentia³ CEO, Peter Hislop

REHAB PROGRAM'S NEW POLO ALLIANCE



MANY EX-RACEHORSES CAN BE SEEN ON POLO FIELDS AND NOW A COMPANY FROM WITHIN THE POLO COMMUNITY HAS LENT ITS SUPPORT TO NSW THOROUGHBRED REHABILITATION TRUST WORDS & PICTURES: SHARON LENTON

If horse racing is known as the 'Sport of Kings' then it is polo that is truly the 'Game of Kings'.

Looking back through history it appears polo was recorded as the oldest organised team sport known, however, there is no precise or accurate record of origin.

It is believed polo was first played in Persia over 2,500 years ago and was created by tribes of Central Asia for training of the King's elite cavalry. Some believe that the Chinese (the Mongols) were the first to play the game.

Wherever originated, it soon was played by Kings, Emperors, Sultans, Shahs and Khans as their noble pastime.

The game was reinvented in 1862 by the British officers after seeing an exhibition in Manipur, India and was introduced to England in 1869.

After 1886, English and American teams met for the International Polo Challenge Cup. It is known that British cattlemen introduced the game to Argentina.

Mention here must be made that a young British cavalry officer by the name of Winston Churchill begged his mother for money to buy polo ponies.

A year later, while stationed in India, he set up a polo club in a bid to win India's prestigious inter-regional tournament. A year later his team did just that winning the 1899 tournament.

By around 1930 polo had become an Olympic sport and was extremely popular throughout America with crowds in excess of 30,000 attending international matches.

In Australia it is recorded that the first known polo game was played in 1874 at Moore Park in Sydney.

From 1890 to 1909 polo was played at Rosehill Racecourse and by 1910 polo was played at the Kensington Racecourse which is now the site of the University of NSW.

The last Test match played at Warwick Farm was in 2001 with tests now played at Windsor Polo Club. It is now one of the fastest growing spectator's sport in the world!

POLO IN THE CITY

Janek Gazecki and Ruki Baillieu came up with a concept to bring polo to the people and showcase the event in such a way to make it high profile and more accessible to a wider audience.

In 2006 in Sydney, Paspaley Polo in the City was born. It has since grown to showcase in five States – Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Perth and Adelaide – capitalising on premium level of luxurious hospitality opportunities, the likes of Paspaley, Veuve Cliquot, Land Rover, Coopers and Commonwealth Bank to name a few.



NSW THOROUGHBRED REHABILITATION TRUST

With polo and its players and participants possessing such a passion for the ex-racehorse, there was an opportunity where the racing industry could be involved with the game.

Following contact with Polo in the City, NSW Thoroughbred Rehabilitation Trust (NSW TRT) was given the honour to be the recipient of the sponsorship for the Best Pony Award.

"All of us at Potentia³ are delighted to be able to make this donation to the NSW Rehabilitation Trust as part of our sponsorship of the Potentia³ Best Pony at Polo in the City 2012. We hope it will allow the organisation to continue the invaluable work they undertake and look forward to the organisations enduring success," said Peter Hislop CEO/Executive Director of Potentia³.

It was with pride I was involved in this prestigious event and later in the day Scott Brodie, Thoroughbred Retraining Manager of NSW TRT, made an outstanding speech when accepting the cheque from Peter Hislop.

The day was also a great opportunity to meet the "very handsome" polo players and enquire as to how they obtain their ponies.

Ed Matthies and Katie Edmeades of JM Polo (Ed is an outstanding polo player) were only too happy to say they have an ex-racehorse as a polo pony on the day, 'Mermaid'. We were invited to meet her and learn more about the "perfect" polo pony.

In fact, Ed and Katie have visited NSW TRT at Canterbury Park and purchased two ex-racehorses through the rehabilitation program – 'Anita's Angel' and 'Dodge Ally'.

This may be just the beginning of a wonderful friendship and collaboration of two exciting sports both fit for 'Kings'. **RNSW**

Ed Matthies in action on the polo field