



PRESS RELEASE

Capital Victory: University of London Polo Club Defeat Oxford in the Grand Final of the Metropolitan IntersVarsity Polo 2015 - The London Challenge

Tianjin, China, 26 July 2015 – In a thrilling four chukkas of polo at the Tianjin Goldin Metropolitan Polo Club, the rampant London foursome of James Cooper, Arthur Cole-Fontayn, Kristina Karailieva and Harold Hodges smashed ten goals past an accomplished Oxford side of William Hsu, Chris de Kroning, Lawrence Wang and Louis Maddison, who managed six in return.

It is the second year in a row that The University of London have been crowned champions of the Metropolitan IntersVarsity Polo tournament, and they were the form team throughout, beating Cambridge, Stanford and Harvard on route to today's Grand Final.

The standout player of the tournament was London's two-goal star and MTP Harold Hodges, who scored more goals over the five days than any other player, including five goals in today's final. The University of London Polo Club, founded in 1988, is one of the largest university teams in the world, representing a number of institutions in the British capital including University College London (UCL), King's College London (KCL) and the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE). For Oxford, a team with a history dating back to the nineteenth century, this was their third appearance at the Metropolitan IntersVarsity Polo and the first year they had made it to the Grand Final.

Dragonflies buzzed in the humid air at the Tianjin Goldin Metropolitan Polo Club as the game got underway in front of an expectant international crowd. Oxford started the match with a four goal head start due to London's higher total handicap, but this was quickly eroded by Arthur Cole-Fontayn who applied the finishing touch to a Harold Hodges attack after a minute of play. Arthur Cole-Fontayn added a blitzkrieg second after the restart, staying one horse-length ahead of his defender as he galloped in to make it 4 – 2. Oxford, playing in white, had barely got a touch of the ball when Harold Hodges raced clear to score again, his shot bouncing in off the posts to the cheers of the crowd. The first chance for Oxford came from the penalty spot, Luis Maddison keeping his cool to score and give his side a bit of breathing room. But it was answered by a brilliant piece of team play by London; James Cooper clearing a path for team mate Harold Hodges to weave through and score, making it 5 – 4 to Oxford after the first chukka.

Oxford had a chance to stretch the lead early in the second chukka from the penalty spot, but Luis Maddison's shot crept wide. Hodges and Cooper linked up for London soon after, but Cooper went for raw power in his shot when placement might have served him better. Hodges came close with a low drive from sixty yards at the halfway point of the chukka, then scored soon after, tapping in teammate Cooper's backhand to make it all square at half time on five goals each.

TIANJIN GOLDIN METROPOLITAN POLO CLUB
天津环亚国际马球会

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It was the unstoppable combination of Hodges and Cooper that struck again immediately after the interval, London taking the lead for the first time. Oxford's Luis Maddison kicked away for his best charge of the match soon after, but was hooked out of it by the pursuing Hodges, who immediately turned defence into attack, wheeling around and spurring his pony half the length of the field to score. Another London goal with a minute and half left on the clock made it 8 – 5 to the red shirts; then it was nine, this time courtesy of Cooper. At the bell, the scores remained 9 – 5 to London; Oxford needing something approaching a miracle to subdue Hodges and Cooper and score five goals themselves in the final six minutes.

Oxford fought bravely in the fourth chukka, earning themselves a penalty after two and a half minutes which Luis Maddison coolly dispatched. Maddison found some space along the boards seconds later, cutting inside toward goal but the whistle went for an infringement before he could get his shot away. It would prove to be the last Oxford chance of the chukka, however. At the other end, Arthur Cole-Fontayn sealed it for London with a simple penalty goal, the final score 10 – 6, with University of London running out deserved champions of the Metropolitan Intersarsity Polo 2015 - The London Challenge.

Earlier in the day, Harvard Polo Club and University of Cambridge Polo Club had fought it out for third place. Former champions, Cambridge were victorious here in 2013, and finished third last year. Harvard came an admirable third in 2013 and fifth last year. Eager to snatch third place for Cambridge were Meike Van Vlaanderen, Evie Hampson, Lucy Jacobson, and Clifton Yeo. Harvard, determined to put their sapping 12 – 1.5 defeat against London yesterday behind them, comprised Amelia Phillips, Thomas Waite, J. Paul Meyer and Marion Dierickx. Cambridge began the game with a 3.5 goal cushion to reflect the difference in team handicaps.

The first chance of the game went to Harvard's J. Paul Meyer who broke free of the pack to gallop towards goal, but his shot was pulled wide of the far post. Meyer was back on the attack soon after, this time setting up teammate Marion Dierickx to run in the first score of the day halfway through the chukka. Meike Van Vlaanderen was full of running for Cambridge, but the team in light blue were unable to create any clear cut chances, the score at the end of the chukka 3.5 – 1 in favour of Cambridge.

Play was interrupted in the second chukka following an injury to Harvard number three J. Paul Meyer, who as a precautionary measure was taken to hospital. Substitute Caroline Cronin came on to replace the Harvard player, but in a period of scrappy and fractious polo neither side was able to add to their tallies before the half time bell.

After the restart, an infringement by Cambridge gifted Harvard a penalty from thirty yards. Thomas Waite made no mistake, putting his side within two goals of taking the lead, the score 3.5 to 2 in favour of Cambridge. Waite had another penalty chance soon after, this time from sixty yards, the resulting play winning his side a penalty two from the spot, dutifully converted by Waite to make it 3.5 – 3. It looked like Marion Dierickx had snatched the lead for Harvard with less than two minutes in the

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chukka, but her shot struck the outside of the post. It was then Cambridge's turn to apply the pressure, Clifton Yeo and Lucy Jacobson linking up well at speed but unable to get the shot off. Harvard's Marion Dierickx lofted in a splendid strike at the bell, but it didn't quite have the accuracy, the score with one chukka remaining: Cambridge 3.5, Harvard 3.

Determined to add to their narrow lead, Cambridge started brightly in the final chukka, Clifton Yeo and Meike Van Vlaanderen linking up well but lacking accuracy in the finish. Another searching forehand by Clifton Yeo put Evie Hampson through on goal, but again the final shot veered agonisingly wide. Cambridge pressure did eventually pay off, however. The light blue shirts were awarded a penalty with two minutes left on the clock, which Clifton Yeo stroked confidently between the posts to make it 4.5 to 3. Needing two goals to retake the lead as the seconds ticked away, Harvard pressed and probed but the Cambridge defence held firm to claim a well-earned third place at the Metropolitan IntersVarsity Polo 2015 - The London Challenge.

At the post-match awards ceremony, Thomas Waite from Harvard scooped the Most Improved Player award. As is traditional in the sport of polo, the ponies got their moment in the limelight, the Best Pony award going to Impacto ridden by London. As the teams lined up to receive their honours, the biggest cheer of the evening was reserved for the courageous J. Paul Meyer, returning from hospital in the nick of time to claim his fourth place medal, his arm in a sling but a big smile on his face.

MTP Harold Hodges was suitably thrilled with London's championship victory. "It's great to be back here," he told reporters at the post-match press conference. "We are ecstatic, over the moon, we couldn't be happier," he enthused. The London team thanked the organisers for their hard work in staging the tournament, and reserved special praise for their inspirational coach Mariano Facundo. London's James Cooper, actively involved with some of the young Chinese polo recruits taking part in the Junior Equestrian and Polo Programme (JEPP), praised the programme and had high hopes for the next generation of polo stars in China. "It was inspirational to be involved with these youngsters; I have a younger brother and I know how important it is to get involved with polo an early age."

Over the past five days, a group of 27 local children taking part in the Junior Equestrian and Polo Programme (JEPP), a polo summer camp at the Metropolitan Polo Club, have played a hands-on role in many aspects of the tournament. In its third year, the innovative programme teaches the basics of riding, polo, stable management and equine care, as part of its aim to inspire a new generation of polo players in China. Cooper also had kind words about the playing surface at the new South Field of the Tianjin Goldin Metropolitan Polo Club. "It's amazing, immaculate," he said, "probably the finest field I have ever played on."

So concludes another action-packed summer season at the Tianjin Goldin Metropolitan Polo Club. Stay tuned for more exciting polo as the tournament schedule resumes in autumn.

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Metropolitan IntersVarsity Polo 2015 – The London Challenge

Result

First	London
The Second Place	Oxford
The Third Place	Cambridge
The Fourth Place	Harvard
The Fifth Place	Stanford
The Six Place	Yale
Best Pony	Impacto
Most Improved Player	Thomas Waite (Harvard)
Most Talented Player	Harold Hodges (London)

Day 1 July 21, 2015

Yale vs Oxford	3-10
Cambridge vs Stanford	11-4.5

Day 2 July 22, 2015

London vs Cambridge	10-3.5
Harvard vs Oxford	3-8

Day 3 July 23, 2015

Harvard vs Yale	8-5
London vs Stanford	10-4.5

Day 4 July 25, 2015

Yale vs Stanford	1.5-7
Oxford vs Cambridge	5-3.5
London vs Harvard	12-1.5

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Day 5 July 25, 2015

Harvard vs Cambridge 3-4.5

Oxford vs London 6-10

Partners of Metropolitan Intersarsity Polo 2015 - The London Challenge

Organisers: Tianjin Polo Association
Hong Kong Polo Development and Promotion Federation
Tianjin Goldin Metropolitan Polo Club

Official Jersey Supplier: La Martina

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About Tianjin Goldin Metropolitan Polo Club

Tianjin Goldin Metropolitan Polo Club currently features three standard-sized polo fields, stables for over 260 horses, all-weather training facilities, a riding school and a luxurious Club House and 167-room resort-style hotel. The state-of-the-art equestrian facilities are used and maintained by professionals from all over the world.

Apart from being the host venue of the FIP Snow Polo World Cup, major international fixtures on the Club's annual calendar include various spring and autumn tournaments and matches for different levels of play from youth to professional.

Tianjin Goldin Metropolitan Polo Club was opened in November 2010 as the sporting and social flagship of "Goldin Metropolitan", a mega-development by Hong Kong-listed developer Goldin Properties Holdings Limited, which will comprise three zones: a Central Business District, home to the 117-storey Goldin Finance Tower; the 898,000 square metres (222-acre) Tianjin Goldin Metropolitan Polo Club and a low-density luxury residential belt to be launched in the near future.

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