

Polo JETSET&LIFESTYLE

Calcutta Polo Club — 150 YEARS



Army Chief V. K. Singh presenting the Ezra Cup to the winning team.

BFL CORP EZRA WORLD CUP 2011



FIP President Eduardo Huergo presenting the momento to Mr. Keshav Bangur, President, CP





The first polo club formed in India was started by Col R Stewart in 1862 at Silchar. In the same year, Major General G Stewart C.B. visited his brother Col. Stewart in Cachar and saw the game played there which was different from organized polo and a rough and tough game. Later that year he returned to Barrackpore and formed a club. He recorded the existence of a polo club set up by some Calcuttans. Lt Joe Shearer acknowledged universally as the 'Father of Polo' was instrumental in popularizing polo in India and the motivating force behind the formation of the Calcutta Polo Club. Modern day polo is played according to the rule book drafted by the Calcutta Polo Club. Later in 1892, Calcutta Polo Club played a pivotal role in the formation of the Indian Polo Association.

The first match between the Barrackpore Club and Calcutta Club was played in early 1863 and was organized by Joe Shearer. Members of the Barrackpore Club included Col Arthur Broome of 2nd Punjab Cavalry, a veterinary surgeon by the name of Farrell, the Hon. R Napier (later Lord Napier), Col Apperley of the 15th Bengal Cavalry and one Captain King. The Calcutta players were mainly merchants, one of whom was Bobby Hills.

In 1864, on invitation from Calcutta, the Silchar Polo Club raised a Manipuri polo team known as The Band of Brothers and John Shearer took them, with their ponies, to Calcutta by country boat. The team consisted of Toolsi Singh, Chowba Singh, Ammu Singh, Omah Singh, Tubal Singh, Aema Ba and Monga Pa. The Manipuri team easily defeated the Calcutta team.

A match was also staged between the Calcutta Polo Club and the Manipuri team on the occasion of a visit to Calcutta by the Prince of Wales in 1876. It ended in a draw. Tournaments organized up to the formation of the Indian Polo Association in 1882 were all restricted to military regiment teams and used to be played in Meerut and Lucknow. Calcutta Polo Club played a pivotal role in establishing the IPA. In keeping with its pioneer status, CPC was allowed to host the maiden IPA Championship in 1907 and this arrangement continued till 1996. Now the IPA championship is hosted by the state which makes the highest bid for it.

The club runs the oldest and first ever Polo Trophy, the Ezra Cup (1880), besides other old ones such as the Carmichael Cup (1910)



Mr. Keshav Bangur, President, Calcutta Polo Club presenting the memento to Nicholas Colquhoun-Denvers, Chairman, Hurlingham Polo Association.

and the Stewarts Cup (1932). The Ezra Cup is named after Sir David Ezra, a leading Jewish business tycoon in Calcutta, who sponsored the sport within the city.

The teams which dominated the 1900-1914 period prior to World War I were Patiala, Kishengarh, 17th Lancers, 11th Hussars, Jodhpur, Ratlam, the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, Alwar and the Golconda Lancers. Leading players of this era were Colonel Lockett, Col T.K.Melville, the Maharaja of Alwar, the Maharaja of Ratlam, the Maharaja of Kishengarh, Dhonkal Singh, Heerji Singh and Banney Singh all of Jodhpur, Shah Mirza Beg of Golconda Lancers, Hira Singh and Chanda Singh of Patiala and Brig.Gen. R.L.Ricketts (famous for the successes of the Alwar team). From a bunch of footballers, Colonel de Lisle of the Durham Light Infantry formed a polo team that won the Inter-Regimental tournament for three consecutive years.

The period 1920-1939 saw the rise of the Jaipur team which won the IPA championship eight years in a row. Other famous teams which shone during this period were Jodhpur, Patiala, Bhopal, Kashmir, Central India Horse, 15th Lancers and the Guides Cavalry. The leading players of this period were Rajkumar Prithi Singh, Rao Raja Hanut Singh, the Maharaja of Jaipur, Rao Raja Abhey Singh, Ram Singh of Jodhpur, the Maharaja of Bhopal, Capt. C.T.I. Rorke of Kashmir, Lt. Col. E.G. Atkinson of the 15th Lancers and Capt. Richard George of the Central India Horse. An outstanding player was Bob Skene. His father, Curtis Skene, stayed in Assam for many years and Bob learnt his polo in this north-eastern state of India.

Modern day polo is played according to the rule book nally in Calcutta. Later in 1892, Calcutta Polo Club played in the formation of the Indian Polo Association. The first onship was deservedly hosted by Calcutta in 1907. D world wars, polo came to a standstill. In the mid-fifti revived in Calcutta largely due to the joint efforts of Col Singh of Jodhpur and prominent Calcuttans like P. H. S.Jalan, the Maharaja of Burdwan, B M Khaitan and Ivon. to the selfless efforts of S S Jalan and Pat Williamson, CPC secure two polo grounds inside the race course- the practice ground and Pat Williamson ground where the matches were played every year in Christmas.

The 61st Cavalry regiment of the Indian Army dominated cutta and won championships regularly except in 1983. the growth of polo in Calcutta has been inextricably in patronage of the Indian Army and the rulers of princely s. However, today Indian corporate houses and enterpris have taken the responsibility of not only keeping the p alive but also to raise the standard of the game to matc the world.

CPC now has ambitious plans to reestablish its identity polo map. Leading from the front is its enterprising and president, Keshav Bangur, who took over the reins of 2005.

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Hon. Railway Minister, India, Mr. Dinesh Trivedi crowning the coveted Ezra World Cup.

