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The Ancient Sport of Polo

Uniting Athletes around the World

June 27, 2005, DENVER—Perhaps one of the world's oldest team sports, polo has been in competition for over 2,000 years. First played by nomadic warriors, Polo has undergone an unprecedented and remarkable expansion—especially in the US over the last 20 years.

For 18 years, the Denver Polo Classic has brought polo athletes to Denver for this exciting weekend event. As a professional for over 22 years, Bryan Middleton has traveled the world playing polo—Argentina, England, New Zealand, Mexico, and all over the United States.

In his third year playing the Denver Polo Classic, Middleton expresses, "Polo is a very dangerous, yet thrilling sport. From the adrenaline rush I feel when galloping down the field on horseback and the friendships that fabricate through this worldwide sport, to the excitement I taste from the Denver Polo Classic spectators, the sport of Polo combined with community giveback in the Denver Polo Classic makes what I do such a joy."

Polo 101

Polo isn't all glitz and glamour—sports agility and physical strength are paramount in the game, and an unbridled commitment, from both the player and pony, earn its designation "King of Sports."

To most Denver Polo Classic spectators, the rules of polo are unknown but curiosity and interest is very apparent. Here's a quick glimpse of the rules of polo:

The Game. Six Chukkers (periods) are played, and are seven minutes each. Between chukkers there is a two-minute break for players to change ponies. After three chukkers there is a five-minute half time.

The field is **300 yards long and 160 yards wide** (equivalent to 9 football fields!). At each end of the field are goal posts, eighteen feet apart. Each time a goal is scored the teams change direction of play.

Right-of-way. The most important rule in polo, "right-of-way" states that no player may cross the line of the ball in front of an ongoing player.

The Players. Polo is played by two teams of four; each player on a team is numbered 1 - 4, which corresponds to their role, with number 1 being the most forward, offensive player, to number 4,

18th Annual Denver Polo Classic
Presented by Avanade
At the Columbine Polo Club
July 15 Black Tie Ball
6:30pm to 11:30pm
July 16 Family Day and Polo Semifinals
1:00pm to 5:00pm
July 17 Championship Polo Matches
10:30am to 3:30pm
www.denverpolo.com

also called the back, as the most defensive player. Each team consists of two patrons (amateurs) and two professionals.

Ranking/ Handicap. Players are rated on a scale of -2 to 10. In handicap matches, each team adds up the ratings of its players to arrive at a team rating. The difference of the two teams' ratings is awarded as points to the lesser skilled team as the beginning score of a handicap match.

Mallet. A solid bamboo cane with a hard wood head, about 4 ½ feet long, is used to hit the ball down the field. All players must hold the mallet in the right hand and hit the ball off of the right side of the pony.

The Ball. Today's polo ball is solid plastic, weighing ¼ lb and sized slightly larger than a baseball.

The Horse. Polo horses, termed ponies, must be thoroughly trained and possess exceptional ability. The tail is braided to stay out of the way of the mallet, and the pony's mane is clipped so the player can clearly see the ball. Most players have two to six ponies that are rotated between chukkers.

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Charity: All 2005 proceeds will assist the numerous beneficiaries of Denver Active 20-30 Children's Foundation, WB2 Gives and the Denver Nuggets Community Fund, funds of the McCormick Tribune Foundation.

More Info: Friday Black Tie Ball \$150, Saturday Family Day Semifinals \$30, Sunday Championship Games \$150, or \$275 for a Weekend Pass. Buy tickets at www.ticketmaster.com, or call 303-830-TIXS. For more information, visit www.denverpolo.com. Columbine Polo Club is located at 4401 W. Mineral Ave.