

Arena Polo Competition Captivates Austin Audience for Finals

Texas Arena League competition finals wrapped up with a thrilling conclusion of the USPA National Arena Bronze Cup at Dripping Springs Ranch Park

AUSTIN, TEXAS, UNITED STATES, May 7, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Played during the biggest [arena polo](#) league in the world - [Texas Arena League](#) (TAL) - the United States Polo Association (USPA) National Arena Bronze Cup tournament concluded at the Dripping Springs Ranch Park & Event Center (DSRP). The competition began in late January and welcomed a deep field of 10 teams. After four weeks of play across the Lone Star state, [Elite Motion & Performance](#) (Amanda Massey, Mark Osburn, Tiamo Hudspeth) and Polo InterActive (Jose Velez, Ariel Mancebo, Javier Insua) emerged as finalists for a battle between the boards. Meeting for the second time in the series, Elite Motion delivered another impressive performance, defeating wildcard Polo InterActive 20-15.



Mark Osburn reaches to hook Ariel Mancebo during National Arena Bronze Cup photo- Murrell Photography

“

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Tiamo Hudspeth, Galvin Agency Most Valuable Player

Arena polo, sometimes referred to as hockey on horseback, is a ball and mallet sport played on horseback. Arena polo is played in an enclosed arena with two goal mouths set into either end of the 300 by 150-foot dirt or sand arena. The game is played with teams of three players all mounted on horseback. All players are equipped with bamboo cane mallets and attempt to move the ball into their respective goals to rack up points.

Arena polo is a unique sport because men and women and players of all ages compete on the same teams and on the same field of play. With highly trained, athletic horses as the most important teammates, the

action is fast and reaction times are quick. The arena aspect brings the action up close to spectators who can feel the thunder of hooves and hear the players communicate with their teammates.

Texas Arena League began in 2018 and played for the second year at DSRP with finals of several USPA tournaments including the National Arena Bronze Cup, National Arena Delegates Cup and General Patton military tournament. Dripping Springs Ranch Park is located near Austin, TX with all the amenities for both spectators and competitors.

“Winning this tournament means a lot because Mark and I are amateur players who are also small business owners, so it takes a lot of time and financial input to get ourselves ready to play this caliber of polo competitively. Our team has been fit, our horses have been top of the line and we have worked hard for two years to get to this place in order to win this tournament.” – Elite Motion & Performance's Amanda Massey.

Facing off again, Elite Motion & Performance knew what to expect for the rematch. “We had played this team earlier in the league and squeaked a win in a very close game,” said Hudspeth. “I knew they were going to be hungry and not wanting to lose to us twice—equally, we knew it is difficult to beat the same team twice!” The Elite Motion trio had time on their side; the three competed together in the Texas Arena League during the 2023 season to win the 6-goal division. This year, they aimed to build on that synergy and arrive to the arena with a dynamic defensive strategy in tow.

Entering the arena, Polo InterActive picked up one goal on handicap to effortlessly take the lead. Evenly matched, the teams traded goals throughout the first period to tie the score 4-all. Hudspeth kicked it into gear in a second chukker two-point extravaganza, quickly scoring the first of five total from both teams, including two from Hudspeth, one from Massey and back-to-back



Elite Motion and Performance - Tiamo Hudspeth, Mark Osburn, Amanda Massey photo - Murrell Photography



Amanda Massey in pursuit of Javier Insua photo- Murrell Photography

two-pointers from Mancebo. Outscoring their opponents by double, Elite Motion & Performance held a four-goal lead at the break.

“We had played this team before and it was a very close game, so we wanted to go into the final marking our men tighter and being defensive against two-point shots. We supported each other well with short passes and a lot of fast pickups defensively.” – Elite Motion & Performance's Amanda Massey

Returning to the arena determined to maintain the lead, Elite Motion & Performance made calculated horse list decisions. “Mark came out on BPP J-Lo and I came out in my best horse, Varro, who was awarded BPP the last three weekends,” said Hudspeth. “Amanda was also confidently mounted on Izzy, a horse lent to her by Mark.”

The threesome dominated the second half, scoring five more goals in chukker three courtesy of Hudspeth and Osburn. Osburn intentionally marked Mancebo while Massey focused on covering Insua, disabling Polo InterActive’s strongest scoring powers. “The strategy was for me to mark their 4-goaler and Amanda to go to their second pro and get help from Tiamo when one of them gave us the slip,” said Osburn. “No watching, have a man at all times!” he continued.

Elite Motion & Performance also shifted their defensive tactics in the second half. “We started sending Amanda deeper on defense to block their two-pointers, counting on Tiamo and myself to stay with the pros.”



Tiamo Hudspeth scores for Elite Motion and Performance. photo - Murrell Photography



Tiamo Hudspeth the Galvin Agency Most Valuable Player for USPA National Arena Bronze Cup

In their best chukker yet, Mancebo and Insua kept Polo InterActive in the running with six total goals, but Elite Motion & Performance barreled ahead with three combined goals from Hudspeth and Osburn to seal the deal. In the end, Elite Motion & Performance emerged the victor, all three team members contributing to the final score 20-15 over Polo Interactive.

Tiamo Hudspeth was named Galvin Agency Most Valuable Player as the game's top scorer with 12 goals on the day. "Winning MVP was special for me—I have worked really hard to organize my team and my string of horses, and I feel like mentally my game has come a long way," said Hudspeth. "I am always trying to improve and feel one of my biggest strengths is leading and organizing my team. Amanda and Mark make it easy. They work so hard for the team and make me a better player."

Massey commended Hudspeth's leadership abilities, saying "Tiamo is an excellent captain of our team and always has a plan A and a plan B."

Mark Osburn was awarded the Polo Interactive Sportsmanship Award for his optimistic attitude and showing support to his peers and teammates in and out of the arena. Nutrena Best Playing Pony honors were presented to J-Lo, played and owned by Osburn. The mare was played by Osburn throughout the third chukker. The 10-year-old mare joined Osburn's ranks several years ago when the Texan began assembling a string. "J-Lo is a beast," said Osburn. "She's a thick girl with all the power in the world but quick feet like all the best polo ponies. She is the ultimate combination of size and heart."

Mark Osburn was also awarded the Catena sportsmanship award for the tournament while Princess, played by Ariel Mancebo, won The Jockey Club Thoroughbred Incentive Program's Best Playing Thoroughbred award.

"This team has so much chemistry and trust in each other. I have so enjoyed getting to play together a second season," Hudspeth gushed. "We left it all in the arena, there wasn't much energy left for celebrating!" Osburn recounted.

Photos by David Murrell, Murrell Photography

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