

USA Takes the Title in the International Arena Polo Championship in Hyderabad, India

USA vs India for the finals at Hyderabad Polo and Riding Club

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- Men's and women's [arena polo](#) teams traveled from around the globe to the [Hyderabad Polo & Riding Club](#) (HPRC) in Hyderabad, India

The original plan was for the teams to compete, simultaneously in a Women's tournament and a mixed tournament. With the French and Spanish women's teams having to bow out, it was decided to conduct one tournament, including all the players. As a result, India and USA entered two teams each, competing against teams from Spain and Luxembourg.



Team India and Team USA face off in the finals of the International Arena Polo Championship at Hyderabad Polo and Riding Club

During the tournament, a women's exhibition match was also played in commemoration of International Women's Day, celebrated in India coincidentally, during the US's Women's History month. US players joined with Indian players for a fun and competitive match.

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Caroline Vissers

Played in a six-team knock-out format, USA-1 (Jake Klentner, Sloane Stefanakis, Megan Flynn, Luke Klentner) made their way into the semifinals and final after beating India-1 and Spain. India 2 earned their spot in the final by besting Luxembourg and USA-2 (Caroline Vissers, Elizabeth "Lizzie" Peck, Dorn Cox) during the semifinals.

The finals turned out to be a spirited fight for victory, in front of a record crowd. Dignitaries from India, IPS Commissioner of Police, Hyderabad K. Sreenivasa Reddy and US Consul General

Jennifer Larson were in attendance to cheer on their home teams. Both were enthusiastic fans who thoroughly enjoyed the game.

In the championship final, USA-1 secured a 3-2 lead in the first chukker and increased the lead to 12-6 by the end of the second, adding three more goals in the final chukker for a decisive 15-8 victory. Stefanakis and Klentner scored seven goals each while Flynn finished with one goal. Luke Klentner also played in the final splitting a position with his older brother. "I feel lucky to have been part of such an amazing experience," said Flynn. "The warm welcome from the polo club and the size of the support they had blew me away."

Ed Armstrong of [American International Polo Foundation](#) (AIPF) and HPRC President Chaitania Kumar, the event organizers recruited United States Polo Association (USPA) Professional Umpire, Robin Sanchez to maintain impartiality and elevate the quality of the game. Plans are in the works to continue the practice of employing professional umpires and to conduct clinics at the club to train HPRC members as umpires.

"What a stand-out event for arena polo! The footing was some of the best I've ever experienced, and the promotion and publicity was unparalleled. It was truly a gold-standard event at Hyderabad Polo and Riding Club." - Robin Sanchez, professional arena umpire and chairman of USPA arena committee.

The level of sportsmanship and the value of the international sport experience made the trip a memorable experience for all involved. Some of the thoughts and comments of USA players:

"What an incredible team and trip this was! What Chaitania has created and continues to grow is



Luke Klentner with the ball at Hyderabad Polo and Riding Club during 2024 International Arena Polo Championship - photo by David Dawson



Team USA on the trophy stage for the International Arena Polo Championship at Hyderabad Polo and Riding Club photo-David Dawson

an absolute landmark of polo and equestrian sport in the East." - Dr Elizabeth (Lizzy) Peck

"It was an honor and privilege to join such a great delegation of players from around the world to both compete and create lasting friendships. Hats off to the HRPC, USPA and organizers and all who made the event possible and enabled us all to promote the sport we love in a world class facility in the country where modern polo was born."
- Dorn Cox, Massachusetts

"This tournament was a fantastically unique blend of pride in representing my own country and appreciation of foreign cultures. Beyond the rich foods and beautiful textiles of India, I especially enjoyed seeing the similarities and differences in how polo is played abroad. The pride taken in the horses was shown with unique tail haircuts and the touching ears of Indian blooded horses emphasize the long history of horses in Indian culture. This experience opened my eyes to the depth of polo culture around the world and will forever be a cherished memory." - Caroline Vissers, California

"This was an incredible experience that I got to share with great people. There is nothing better than traveling to new places, competing, and making friends with people on the other side of the globe." - Jake Klentner, California

"It was an unforgettable unimaginable trip, thank you to Ed Armstrong for facilitating everything. It truly was the trip of a lifetime and getting to know all of the players better was an absolute pleasure." - Luke Klentner, California

"I feel so blessed to have been a part of a tournament and event surrounded by such wonderful people. From the people who organized to the people who participated, I could not feel anymore



Megan Flynn rides to the ball during the International Arena Polo Championship at Hyderabad Polo and Riding Club. photo by David Dawson



USA players celebrate winning the International Arena Polo Championship at Hyderabad Polo and Riding Club in Hyderabad, India. photo-David Dawson

grateful than I am reflecting on Hyderabad. Polo is so beautiful because it's such a center of gravity for so many people across the planet and being able to participate in a tournament that I feel perpetuates such grace and generosity within the sport and outside of it makes me happy beyond words. Thank you, Hyderabad Polo and Riding Center, for such a fantastic time." - Sloane Stefanakis, Texas

Ed Armstrong of AIPF, who was central to the organization of the event, commented, "Thank you to the USPA International Committee for their continued support of these important events and USPA Global Licensing for supplying game shirts and prizes and for believing in the value of international polo at all levels.

Special thanks to Robin Sanchez, USPA Arena Chair, Governor at Large, USPA Professional Umpire and long-time friend and colleague, for her contribution to the quality of polo and the tournament."

"I particularly thank HPRC, Chaitania and his staff and members. This year, I worked with HPRC President Chaitania and I have been organizing these tournaments together for many years and I believe this was the best adventure yet!

One of Chaitania's goals is to continually improve the quality and level of polo played at his club. He looks forward to hosting international tournaments and would like to see the FIP World Arena Championship held here," Armstrong added.

Match 1 USA-2 vs Spain - Spain won 12 goals to 8.

Match 2 India-2 vs Luxembourg - India 2 won 15 goals to 5.

Match 3 USA-1 vs HPRC India-1 - USA-1 won 10 goals to 6.

Match 4 USA-1 vs Spain - USA-1 won 13 goals to 9

Match 5 Luxembourg vs HPRC India 1 - India 1 won 12 goals to 4

Match 6 USA-2 vs India 2 - India 2 won 12 goals to 7

Match 7 Finals India 2 vs USA 1 - USA 1 won 15 Goals to 8

Megan Flynn of USA was named Most Valuable Player of the finals.

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