

Pacific Coast Arena League Polo Series Kicks-Off in Southern California

Pacific Coast Arena League (PCAL) arena polo series had a successful opening weekend at Orange County Polo Club with more games to come in Southern California

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- The first leg of the Pacific Coast Arena League ([PCAL](#)) tournament concluded the first weekend of June at Orange County (OC) Polo Club in Silverado, California. The [arena polo](#) league has gained traction across the pacific coast and hosts several flights including C-flight, 0-3, 3-6, and high-goal play. The 2024 PCAL season will include 3 different weekends at host clubs OC, Lakeside and California Polo Club. With 19 teams, over 160 horses and 19 games in a two-and-a-half-day period, OC and PCAL were bursting at the seams with so much competition and fun.



Leigh Berteau, playing for OC Polo Club, defends against Rehan Kumble, playing for Lakeside Polo Club, as he reaches for the ball Photo by Tequila Sunset's Photography

"PCAL at OC was a great kickoff to our 2024 season! Games were very competitive, with many games being won in the closing seconds. Looking forward to the next leg in Lakeside!" Heather Perkins [OC Polo Club](#) manager and PCAL 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 mallets and attempt to move the ball into their respective goals to rack up points. Periods of play last for 7.5 minutes and are known as "chukkers". At the end of a game, consisting of four chukkers, the team that has the highest

number of goals wins.

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.

Upcoming PCAL 2024 Dates:

Sept 6-8: Lakeside Polo Club, 13800 El Monte Rd, Lakeside, CA (arena entrance gate)

Sept 27-29: California Polo Club, 11035 Osborne St, Sylmar, CA



Kylie Matthews (Christian Brothers polo team) and Garrett Bankhead (Sermus polo team) battle in the saddle during Pacific Coast Arena League at OC Polo Club photo by Tequila Sunset's Photography

The 2024 PCAL season plays over the course of three action-packed weekends with a new host site each time players hit the arena. Teams and players get points for win/loss/tie in their games and individuals receive additional PCAL points for winning daily awards which are given for each game - Casablanca MVP, Jackson Hole Horse Emporium

Best Playing Pony and USPA Pro Sportsmanship award. At the end of PCAL, the points are tallied, and an end of league awards party is planned for October in conjunction with the USPA Women's Arena Open at OC Polo Club.

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Robert J. DiRado

Started in the late 90's, PCAL is the original arena polo league, and 2024 competition has been nothing short of highly anticipated. This year's League will feature the second year of the high-goal flight. Games for this level will begin the final weekend of June at Lakeside Polo Club as

the league enters the second leg of its three-phase run. Not only will the high goal division feature some of the most powerful play the PCAL has ever seen, but will play key matches for the United States Polo Association (USPA) National Arena Chairman's Cup. The USPA National Arena Chairman's Cup is a national arena tournament that doubles as a qualifying tournament for all amateur players -1 through 3 goals to earn points towards the National Arena Amateur Cup (NAAC). It is through such qualifying USPA tournaments that players can expand upon their skills and unlock the next level of their potential.

“Round one of Pacific Coast Arena League at Orange County Polo Club was an incredible experience. The facility is truly immaculate with welcoming members and staff. PCAL was expertly managed with every provision provided including delicious catered food and drinks. I left the weekend having made several new friends from OC Polo and neighboring clubs. I am definitely looking forward to the next round and hope to see everyone there!” -Robert J. DiRado of Chuck-er Buttes B Flight team.

“I had the best time playing in PCAL at OC last weekend! We had an intense game against Lakeside on Friday! We’d score, they’d score, we’d score, they’d score and with less than 15 seconds left Lakeside scored and I thought it was over, but my teammate Heather pulled out a 2 pointer just before the buzzer! I felt like I was watching it all in slow motion, I couldn’t believe it! That’s the kind of competition and teamwork I absolutely love that you get when playing PCAL. Speaking of Lakeside, I very much look forward to visiting their club to play the second round of PCAL in just a couple weeks!” exclaimed Fawn Rinaduzzi of OC Polo Club B Flight team.

“It’s been incredible how much PCAL has grown since last year, so many great teams and great ponies all out to have a good time! It’s so well organized, fun, safe and great prizes like the limited-edition U.S. Polo Assn. PCAL hoodie all the players received as swag.”



Marissa Wells, the top female arena polo player in the US, gets a ball airborne during PCAL at OC Polo Club photo by Tequila Sunset's Photography



Fawn Rinaduzzi shoots on goal during Pacific Coast Arena League (PCAL) at OC Polo Club photo by Tequila Sunset's Photography

This year's B-flight, at the 0-3 goal handicap level, boasts the largest enrollment of all flights with a whopping 10 teams participating. Thanks to the number of teams enrolled, PCAL was able to include the USPA General S. Patton Military tournament in this year's lineup. The USPA General S. Patton military tournament is held to commemorate the athletic life and legacy of General George Smith Patton Jr OLY. General Patton had an incredible love for horses-so much so that he included polo as part of the training regimen for his officers. He used polo as a tool to teach situational awareness and quick-thinking, skills that are still honed in polo players to this very day. This tournament is generously sponsored by Patton Legacy Sports: an

organization committed to honoring the memory of General Patton by stewarding his legacy through athletic competition and commemoration of the late Olympian. Through good competition, the ideals of General Patton live on in the tournament bearing his namesake that has already taken off with thrilling plays and head-to-head matchups for the 2024 PCAL season.

"My first games of PCAL at OC Polo Club were the best experience I could have asked for. The sense of community that PCAL brings is unlike any other league. Everyone was so welcoming and supportive! I had a blast playing with my C flight teammates Ava Abboud and Ellie Waller, and B flight teammates Luca Abboud and Danielle Travis. I learned so much from each of them. Special thanks to Jared Sheldon for putting the teams together and providing exceptional coaching. It was a goal of mine this year to play in PCAL, and having such a successful weekend was amazing."-Lisa Gonzalez

The USPA General Patton tournament is not the only military tournament to rear its head during the 2024 PCAL season though. The A Flight 3-6 goal handicap level will host the USPA General Lewis B. "Chesty" Puller tournament over the course of its run. This tournament is named after famed Marine General, Lt-Gen Lewis B "Chesty" Puller who lived and worked as one of the most highly decorated marines in recent history. General Puller was honored with multiple awards during his time in the service including, but not limited to, a staggering five Navy Crosses. Similar to the ideals of General Patton, Puller also felt polo could be used to instill rapid reaction-time in others that could be the difference between life and death. Today's polo players continue to hone their reaction times in the hopes of clinching a win even in the last seconds of a chukker.



Ellie Waller and Ava Abboud celebrate Ellie's goal during Pacific Coast Arena League (PCAL) C Flight game sponsored by POlo Training Foundation (PTF) photo by Tequila Sunset's Photography

This type of rapid-fire play is obvious at the 3-6 goal level which will persist throughout the three weekends of play. PCAL's A flight saw three teams take to the arena in the first weekend, but will add an additional fourth team in the next stage of its run starting at Lakeside Polo Club.

In addition to the other higher-level flights, the 2024 PCAL season also hosts a C-flight level for players at the -3 to -2 goal handicap level sponsored by Polo Training Foundation (PTF). This division of play allows PCAL to provide participants with a safe environment in which to advance their skills in line with PTF's mission. With six teams making up the C-flight at the OC Polo location, polo school's from around southern California have an opportunity for new players to compete in a safe and friendly environment.

"I enjoyed participating in the PCAL at Orange County Polo Club quite a bit. One thing that stood out for me was the chance to meet other players from the different clubs. I also really appreciated the chance to watch the more experienced players in the A and B flights- very exciting to watch and lots to learn from their play.

I was excited to be recognized for MVP for C flight on Sunday, and I look forward to continuing to improve and be more competitive." -Ava Hilinski Three Poway Girls C Flight team

Ava's sister and teammate Olivia added, "I enjoyed participating in the PCAL at Orange County Polo Club because it was FUN!!! Getting an MVP award for C flight on Saturday was surprising but great. If I had to say one thing that stands out for me, I do especially like having women athletes to look up to, and there are lots of fantastic female polo athletes to watch at PCAL. Can't wait for the next one!"

Lisa Gonzalez added, "The cherry on top of the weekend was Enzo winning a BBP award, a cherished honor because my daughter Sierrah and I put so much work into our ponies. It truly takes a village. Special thanks to our polo manager Hannah Taylor, our amazing pros Gonzalo Novillo, Sherry Sheldon, and Eden Ormerod, the best grooms, and my supportive family and friends. And, of course, our ponies!"

Casablanca MVP's

Leigh Berteau

Bob Dirado

Casey Koehler

Garrett Bankhead

Heather Perkins

Luca Abboud

Spencer Hurtt

Zoey Tornillo

Jordyn Griffith

Jacob Lutz

Olivia Hilinski

Matt Messens

Luca Abboud
Marissa Wells
Danielle Travis
Jessica Newman
Marc Schnoebelen
Ava Hilinski
Ellie Waller

USPA Pro Sportsmanship Award Winners

Zoey Tornillo
Ava Abboud
Bonnie Magill
Brynna Pilon
Ethan Bankhead
Bob Dirado
Marc Schnoebelen
Dave Myrick
Ajay Clark
Kelsey Galarza
Melia Huntoon
Ava Abboud
Shelby Kokjohn
Spencer Hurtt
Nicole Bankhead
Jordyn Griffin
Kim Foy
Allie Bushong
Murray Lutz
Bethel Lutz

Jackson Hole Horse Emporium Best Playing Ponies

Gia – Nicole Bankhead
Noche - Ethan Bankhead
Olivia – Penny Steffens (owned by Heather Perkins)
Karma – Sarah Stevenson (owned by OC Polo)
Tota – Erica Chapman
Georgia – Fawn Rinalduzzi (owned by OC Polo)
Canela – Danielle Travis (owned by Central Coast Polo Club)
Hilo – Kim Foy
Tex – Tom Schuerman
Fifi – Jenny Alexy
Zoom – Bri Pilon (owned by Gillian Young)
LeBron – Tessa McCready (owned by Sherry Sheldon Gibson)

Sylvie – Whitney Messens
Fish Creek – Garrett Bankhead (owned by George Dill)
Noche – Shira Engel (owned by Bankhead Family)
Cameron – Tom Schuerman
Snowflake – Mila Slutzky (owned by George Dill)
Manchita – Jacob Lutz (owned by Sherry Sheldon Gibson)
Enzo – Lisa Gonzalez

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