

# HUBLLOT POLO GOLD CUP GSTAAD

16-19 AUGUST 2018  
POLOGSTAAD.CH

## PRESS KIT





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## *The Hublot Polo Gold Cup*

The Hublot Polo Gold Cup holds its head high alongside the major European clubs which feature multiple canchas (polo fields). It is rightly proud of its unique difference, offering a high-level tournament in one of the most unusual and prestigious locations in the world. The four teams that have been invited have confirmed their attendance with, notably, some well-known players and major captains, with one new addition this year: a team from Abu Dhabi.

The setting is quite simply majestic: a green valley, nestled in the hillside some 1,000m above sea level at Saanen, the only flat area in Gstaad which can accommodate an aerodrome... and a polo field. Setting aside the famous tribal polo tournament which takes place at Shandur Top in the Hindu Kush region in the north of Pakistan at an altitude of 3,719m, Gstaad is certainly home to the highest summer polo tournament in the world: the Hublot Polo Gold Cup marks its 23rd edition this year. It is the place to be between **16 to 19 August**. It is a tournament with a particular atmosphere where, between the comings and goings of the private jets, high-quality

matches take place on a field which is standard in length but slightly narrower than usual, giving rise to a faster game which is easier for the public to follow.

The magnificently decorated village, featuring prestigious exhibitors such as Ferrari, the sponsors of the four teams and many others, is well worth a visit between the matches. Lunch receptions and gala evenings take place in a magnificent VIP area combining luxury and sophistication.

Four teams will fight it out for the four Hublot watches offered to the players of the team which is victorious after three matches: the qualifying rounds on Thursday, the semi-finals on Saturday and the finals on Sunday. Last year, after several failed attempts at the title, the Swiss restaurant owner and company head Cedric Schweri finally won the coveted prize. He's back this year as the big favourite with just as intense a desire to keep hold of this prestigious title with the **Banque Eric Sturdza** team. To achieve this goal, he has taken on two Argentineans and Brazil's Joao Novaes (a five-goaler), a former winner



of the French Open in Chantilly. The danger comes in the form of another Swiss captain, Matteo Beffa, who is striving to take the colours of the title partner, **Hublot**, to the top of the podium. To do so, he has called upon a “big handicap”, Argentina’s Julio Novillo Astrada, who is a 7-goaler. His family is famous in Argentina: his cousins have notably won the most sought after professional tournament: the Argentinean Open.

The American Marco Maximilian Elser will sport the colours of the **Gstaad Palace**. He is counting notably on Argentina’s 5-goaler Pedro Fernandez Llorente.

For the first time in Gstaad, Faris Al Yabhouni’s Abu Dhabi team will sport the colours of the new team sponsor, the **Clinique La Prairie**. A high-performing team in Dubai, with as its cornerstone and polo manager, Argentina’s Hugo Barabucci. These last two teams have a slightly lower handicap than the others and will start their matches with a 1/2 goal head start which is the promise of a more open tournament.

### *The Hublot Polo Gold Cup in few numbers*

- \* **1995** : Creation of the Polo Club Gstaad
- \* **1996** : First tournament organised in Gstaad
- \* **2006** : Pierre Genecand becomes President of the Polo Club Gstaad
- \* **2008** : Hublot joins force as Title Sponsor. The Hublot Polo Gold Cup is born.
- \* **2015** : 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the tournament
- **1400** VIP lunches served in the VIP marquee
- **6000** spectators on site
- **120** polo horses stabled in Gstaad for the event
- **500** people attend the traditional Gala on Saturday Night each year
- A **15-members** Organising Committee
- **70** volunteers over the **4** days of competition

# *Welcome to Gstaad*



Gstaad is a small village located at 1,050 metres (3,445 feet) above sea level in the majestic Swiss Alps, more precisely in the Alemannic canton of Bern and the municipality of Saanen. It is a well-known ski resort and its beautiful location and wooden chalets attract high society and international jet set all year round.

The history of Gstaad is deeply rooted in the region and its authenticity is one of its hallmarks. The local population is very proud to maintain its traditions, including the harsh living conditions in the mountains as well as traditional trades and customs. During the holidays, the village becomes the home of celebrities looking for a quiet place; they enjoy the fabulous alpine ski resort and the magnificent panorama.

Long known for its walking and hiking trails of varying degrees of difficulty, Gstaad is also known for its ski and cross-country slopes and winter hiking trails. Situated in the Berner Oberland, Gstaad is quite an important ski area in the Alps (220 km of slopes).

The village centre features a picturesque promenade bounded by numerous shops, restaurants, art galleries, and hotels. Designer labels including Louis Vuitton, Hermes, Chopard, Brunello Cucinelli, Prada, Moncler, Ralph Lauren, all have stores in Gstaad, while many smaller boutiques stock labels such as Chloe, Dolce & Gabbana, Tod's, Burberry, Dior, Oscar de la Renta, and Marc Jacobs.



## Pierre Genecand



The President of the Polo Club Gstaad is a real horseman. For more than ten years, this former entrepreneur was the President of the International Horse Show of Geneva that he raised to the highest level. Now, he breeds polo horses in Argentina. Pierre Genecand is passionate about all equestrian sports and is actively involved in their development.

**Why did you transition from jumping to polo? What do you like about this discipline that you practice at home in Argentina?**

I have been involved in showjumping for more than forty years, and I think I got a little tired in the end. When my daughter started being better than me in the competition rankings, I thought maybe it was time to change the discipline! In polo, I like the speed of the play and the technicality of actions.

**This is the 23<sup>rd</sup> edition of the Hublot Polo Gold Cup Gstaad, and your 13<sup>th</sup> edition as president. Why is this tournament different from others?**

The Hublot Polo Gold Cup Gstaad is the highest-level of grass tournament in Switzerland. The location of the tournament in Gstaad makes it all special, not only are we in the mountains but also in the middle of an airport! We can see people arriving with their private jet, they just

have to cross the airport, and they are on the field.

**What is new in the 2018 edition?**

The program will be the same as the previous edition: four teams, six games. We have new sponsors, including a team sponsor: Clinique La Prairie. We will also (again) discover some new players like the Argentinean handicap 7 Julio Novillo Astrada who was part of my team when I played at Gstaad. He comes from a great polo family, since his cousins are regularly semi-finalists of the Open of Argentina that they won fifteen years ago.

**What are your goals for the Hublot Polo Gold Cup Gstaad in the years to come?**

First of all, to keep it at this game level. We have a huge competition with the other European tournament organizers at this time of the year, and we do not want to make a smaller tournament.

**Does a true businessman and horseman like you still have the time to ride regularly?**

I am lucky to be able to spend seven months of the year in Argentina, with the horses I have bred. During the European winter months, I can ride and play polo every day over there.

## The Teams



Four days of great sport and beautiful festivities, four highly competitive teams. From August 16<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup>, the 23<sup>rd</sup> edition of the Hublot Polo Gold Cup will be held on the grounds of the airfield of Gstaad-Saenen. The alpine 14-goal tournament, the highest level played on grass in Switzerland, promises to be thrilling. This year, three new teams will join the party.

The first will be the one of Faris Al Yabhouni, owner and patron of the Abu Dhabi Polo Team. In Gstaad, he will wear the colours of team **Clinique La Prairie**, new sponsor of the event. The Emirati has been playing at high level for more than 10 years and had a very good 2017/2018 season: finalist of the Dubai Gold Cup (18-goal tournament) he had previously won the Emirates Polo Cup and the HH President Of UAE Polo Cup. These victories already position Faris Al Yabhouni as a serious candidate in this tournament he will discover for the first time this summer.

The other new personality will be Marco Elser, president of the Arquedotto Romano Polo Club. The Italian will also

quickly find his marks on the field of Gstaad, since he has already played in all corners of the world: France and Spain, but also Shanghai, Singapore, the United States and many more. In Gstaad, Marco Elser will play for team **Gstaad Palace**.

The Argentineans Julio Novillo Astrada and Santiago Schweizer will play under the colours of the watchmaker **Hublot**, title sponsor of the event. The Swiss player, now subscribed to this tournament is none other than the titleholder, Cédric Schweri, who will once again play for team **Banque Eric Sturdza**, which had brought him luck last year. After five inconclusive attempts, he had finally won the coveted trophy and this year he will certainly do anything to keep it.

**The tournament will once again be very competitive. It will start on Thursday, August 16<sup>th</sup> with the qualifying matches and will continue Saturday, August 18<sup>th</sup> with the semi-finals and finish on Sunday, August 19<sup>th</sup> with the big final (and the subsidiary final).**



<b>Matteo Beffa</b>	CH	Hcp	0	Team captain
<b>Gerardo Cosentino</b>	LIE	Hcp	0	
<b>Julio Novillo Astrada</b>	ARG	Hcp	7	
<b>Santiago Schweizer</b>	ARG	Hcp	5	
<b>Total</b>		Hcp	12	



TEAM GSTAAD PALACE



<b>Marco Maximilian Elser</b>	USA	Hcp	0	Team captain
<b>Marcos Antinori</b>	IT/ARG	Hcp	3	
<b>Nicolas Antinori</b>	IT/ARG	Hcp	4	
<b>Pedro Fernandez Llorente</b>	ARG	Hcp	5	
<b>Total</b>		Hcp	12	



TEAM  
BANQUE ERIC STURDZA



<b>Cedric Schweri</b>	CH	Hcp	0	Team captain
<b>Marcos Riglos</b>	ARG	Hcp	5	
<b>Nico Lopez Fuentes</b>	ARG	Hcp	4	
<b>Joao Novaes</b>	BRA	Hcp	5	
<b>Total</b>		Hcp	14	

CLINIQUE  
LA PRAIRIE  
SWITZERLAND

TEAM Clinique la Prairie



<b>Faris Al-Yabhouni</b>	UAE	Hcp	0	Team captain
<b>Augustin Canale</b>	ARG	Hcp	6	
<b>Hugo Barabucci</b>	ARG	Hcp	5	
<b>Gonzalo Bernal</b>	ARG	Hcp	3	
<b>Total</b>		Hcp	14	



# Program

## THURSDAY, AUGUST 16<sup>TH</sup>

11:00 : The polo village opens

13:30 : 1<sup>st</sup> Qualifying match

15:00 : 2<sup>nd</sup> Qualifying match

## FRIDAY, AUGUST 17<sup>TH</sup>

16:00 : Players Parade through Gstaad

## SATURDAY, AUGUST 18<sup>TH</sup>

11:00 : The polo village opens

11:30 : The VIP tent opens for Lunch

13:30 : 1<sup>st</sup> Semi-final match

15:00 : 2<sup>nd</sup> Semi-final match

20:00 : Gala night in the VIP tent

## SUNDAY, AUGUST 19<sup>TH</sup>

11:00 : The polo village opens

11:30 : The VIP tent opens for Lunch

13:30 : Match for 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> place

15:00 : Final

16:30 : Prize giving ceremony



# *The Rules of Polo*

**T**he earliest official rules of polo originate from England, where they were first established by the Hurlingham Polo Club, founded in 1876. Three years later, the Americans, who had actually discovered the sport of polo for themselves, and had founded the Westchester Polo Club in Newport, Rhode Island, asked the British to write a definitive version of the Hurlingham Rules and to draw up corresponding club rules. These are still valid to this day. The Americans themselves devised the handicap system, which was also adopted by Britain and India in 1910.

**B**all  
The size of a polo ball shall not exceed 3.5 inches (80mm) in diameter, and the weight shall be within 4.25 to 4.75 ounces (120-125g). Usually made of wood, painted in white, although occasionally it is painted orange. A cricket ball painted in white was the initial ball, which was soon replaced by one manufactured with hard rubber. Eventually, willow wood was used and it became the gold standard. Improvements in plastic technologies are now challenging the willow's supremacy, as they are cheaper and less prone to breakage.

**C**hukka/Chukkers  
Depending on the organization of the tournament, a polo match consists of four, five or six time units known as chukkas. In Europe, a match normally consists of four chukkas, each lasting 7.5 minutes. The last chukka of the game lasts exactly seven minutes. A pony can be played in no more than two chukkas in any one match, and not in consecutive chukkas. This means that ponies are changed between chukkas. At half-time (generally after two chukkas), there is a five-minute break, during which the public are asked to walk on to the field and «tread in» the divots of turf carved up by the ponies' hooves.

**D**irection of play  
The game has one curious tradition, which always confuses newcomers to polo. Whenever a goal is scored, the direction of play switches. The rule traces its origin to the hotter climes of the empire on which the sun never set. Playing against a low and dazzling sun put one team at a decisive disadvantage. The rule also prevents excessive damage to the turf at the weaker team's goal mouth due to one-way play.

**E**quipment and tack  
Each player carries a mallet around 150 cm long (lengths and weights vary according to pony height and player preference, and mallets of any elasticity – or 'whippiness' – and hence striking power are allowed). The mallet handle is bamboo cane, with a tapered 'cigar' head, commonly of Argentine tipuana blanca wood. The handle is fitted with a fabric sling, which is wrapped round the hand for stability during tapping. All players must wear a helmet, preferably with face guard. Leather knee guards are also required. The legs of the ponies themselves are protected from blows and flying balls by soft bandages. Their tails are tied to prevent entanglement with the mallet. Light saddles without knee rolls are used; tack consists of a double

rein preventing loss of control if a rein snaps, and helping the pony maintain balance. The breast girth and standing martingale prevent the saddle from slipping and guarantee support for the rider during sudden changes in direction or abrupt stopping.

**F**ield  
Polo can be played on practically any level field of sufficient size. The ground must be firm and constantly maintained (not too moist, too deep or too hard and hence, once again, too slippery). The official international dimensions of a polo field marked out with lines and distance markers (30, 40 and 60 yards to the goal) are 160 meters wide by 200 meters long. However, match organizers are increasingly allowing play on smaller fields. The advantage is that it is easier for spectators to watch. The drawback is slower play, with shorter passes. Polo on snow is always played on smaller fields, as the physical strain of playing winter polo, mostly at higher altitudes, is even greater for the ponies than in summer polo on grass. The goal has uprights but no crossbar, and is 7.3 meters wide.

**H**andicap  
Depending on aptitude, each polo player plays with a handicap ranging from -2 to +10.

While the entry level of -2 denotes a beginner, very few players in the world hold the highest possible handicap of +10, and most of these are Argentinians. Around 90 per cent of all polo players have handicaps in the range 0 to +2. The national polo associations review and assign individual players' handicaps annually, according to success in the tournaments. When a team is put together, the handicaps of the four individual players are added up to give the team handicap. Tournaments are advertised in various classes of play (low-, medium- or highgoal), and the team handicaps of the registering teams must correspond to these. If teams of different team handicaps play against each other, the difference is made up by allocating the appropriate number of goals to one team.

### **L**ine of the ball

The fundamental and most important rule of the sport of polo is known as «Right of Way» (ROW). Whenever the ball is in play, a right of way exists and is always deemed to be held by the player who is established on, or at the closest angle to, the Line of the Ball (LOB = the extended path along which the ball has travelled, or is travelling). No other player may enter or cross this ROW. Players may not position or check their ponies over the line if this poses the slightest risk of collision with the player who currently has ROW.

The player with ROW can only lose ROW by being «ridden off» or «hooked». «Hooking» means using the stick to prevent the other player from retrieving or striking the ball. This is done by blocking the opponent's stick during a swing or while the other player is tapping or dribbling the ball. It is forbidden to hook over the body of the opponent's pony. «Riding off» means trying to force an

opponent, who is riding parallel, off course by a kind of body check, so that the player can no longer hit the ball. Riding off is allowed, provided it takes place parallel, and not at an angle, to the player who has ROW.

### **P**etisero

The Petisero is to the polo horse what the groom is to the sport horse: his trainer, his everyday companion, his physical trainer.

### **P**layers

The number of players on each team has changed through the years of evolution of modern polo. In the first visit (1863) to Calcutta by a Manipuri team, the matches were 5-a-side. In the first game in England, there were 8 players on each side. This was not deemed practical; therefore, the players were reduced to 5, one being goal keeper. This position was abolished in 1882. The Hurlingham Champions Cup was played by four players on each team as of 1883. In Argentina, the game's code was not implemented until 1892, so all matches were 4-a-side with a few exceptions in the 1870's. In the United States, there were tournaments in the 1890's for teams sometimes formed by three, sometimes two, players. Nowadays, almost every match is played with 4 players on each side of the field.

### **P**olo pony

The present-day polo pony (height 14.5-16 hands, or 155-160 cm) far exceeds pony height. It traces its pedigree back to the crossing of the original Himalayan mountain ponies (13 hands or less - 125-135 cm), the Manipuris of Assam, with English or American thoroughbreds, Arabians and others, especially South American stud horses. The Argentinian polo breed still dominates. These tough little horses are masters of the

sudden burst of speed. Brave and pugnacious, they are second to none in agility and alertness.

### **T**apping techniques

In principle, the ball is tapped on the right side of the pony, known as the «offside». Tapping takes place in a forward (offside forehand) or backward (offside backhand) direction. For a «nearside» play, which takes place on the pony's left side, the player has to twist in the saddle and, holding the stick in his right hand, bring it to the other side of the pony. Nearside forehand and nearside backhand are the corresponding forward and backward plays. «Under the neck» refers to strokes performed in front of, or under the neck of, the pony. Among the trickiest manoeuvres are «round-the-tail» strokes, performed to the rear of the horse.

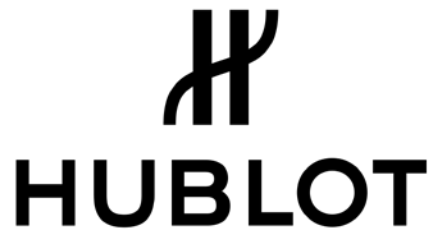
### **T**eams

Each team consists of four players. Number 3 is the captain, who organizes the match. Number 4, also known as 'back', is responsible for defense, while the other two are attackers. If a team is fielded with more than four players and billed as 'sharing', two players (usually with the same handicap) alternate in one position.

### **Y**ards

Polo reference unit. The penalties, depending on the location and the severity of the fault committed, is at 60, 40 or 30 yards. A corner (field side) is shot as a penalty, 60 yards in front of where the ball came out. At a throw-in, the first striker must stand at least 30 yards from the opponent's back.

## Partners



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# Practical Informations

## WEBSITE – PRESS SECTION

[www.polo-gstaad.ch](http://www.polo-gstaad.ch)

Online: press releases, press kits, photos, campaign visuals, credential application forms...

## PRESS SERVICE

The entire Press Service team will welcome you to the event in the press room.

This space will be arranged to allow you to work in the best conditions:  
wifi, programs, press kits, match results, photos ... will be at your disposal.

## WEB & SOCIAL MEDIA

Website : [www.polo-gstaad.ch](http://www.polo-gstaad.ch)



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Download some photos of the 2017 edition of the Hublot Polo Gold Cup Gstaad : <https://we.tl/YbbnyRdBbB>

Press informations and all the results are online on [www.polo-gstaad.ch](http://www.polo-gstaad.ch)

