

Polo – rescheduled Tournament proves a hit



Stewarton Polo Club 2012 Tournament

With the Scottish ‘Summer’ Polo season being virtually wiped out due to the weather, Stewarton Club owner, Karina Bowlby had everything crossed for the weekend’s tournament at the Queensferry-based club. Recently re-affiliated to the HPA (Hurlingham Polo Association, the sport’s governing body), after moving through from the West of Scotland, Karina and her team worked hard over the close season to get a full-sized pitch prepared for the 2012 season. Unfortunately, the weather Gods saw fit to, literally, rain on their parade and the first tournament, scheduled for the end of July had to be cancelled.

So, how did this weekend go? Quite well, it would appear. Saturday dawned bright and sunny, with no hint of rain and that’s how the day remained. Six teams of four players made the trip to the club and played in two groups of three in a round-robin format, with the teams in each group being fairly evenly matched. The range of skills on display varied from the ex-professional, Alistair Archibald, to second- and third-year, relative, novices. A fair number of both regular and casual spectators turned out to see some fairly well contested and skilful matches.

Sunday wasn’t to turn out quite so promising on the weather front, with a cloudy day turning to rain halfway through proceedings. Still, that didn’t prevent a slightly bigger turnout on the spectator (and photographer) front.

Probably not of primary concern to those involved, but the eventual winners of the two match, rolling round-robin, three-team, 24-chukka weekend were Burnfoot, in the higher handicap

match and Dalmahoy in the lower handicap.

Although unlikely to become a mainstream sport – they use the ‘wrong’ ball, for a start – it should be noted that Polo in Scotland is a fairly informal affair, not the elitist, glamour-riden, celebrity-stacked affair of down South, and the word ‘team’ is loosely applied as the players tend to be grouped to even things out rather than stick to a more normal ‘team’ format. Indeed, some players can, and do, play for more than one team at any tournament. The tournaments themselves are free to attend and all spectators are welcome to come along and, assuming suitable weather(!), set up a picnic for a pleasant day’s sport.

Currently struggling with planning permission for a dwelling, stables and an arena to be built on the Stewarton site - (notwithstanding that the doubling of the size of Winchburgh and the building of a new bridge (less than 1/2 mile West of the club) seemed to sail through) – Karina is looking forward and doing her best to build a strong, viable club which should be an asset to the local community.

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