

The Villager
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Polo Classic fields better players

BY STEVEN WEISBERG

The 20th annual Denver Polo Classic delivered on its promise to provide a higher caliber of polo action than previously witnessed in Denver for the past 20 years. The boarded field at the posh Polo Reserve development in Littleton enjoyed perfectly sunny weather as some 1,500 attendees gathered underneath the tent overlooking the playing field.

Among the onlookers were regular attendees **Lisa Taylor** and **Edward Cooke**, who've attended since the fourth annual event when it was run by Pearkins-Shearer. Emerging socialite **Carrie Hawes** gathered friends such as **Amy Rubin** and others. Residents in the crowd included **Stephanie Odak**, **Artemis Khadiwala-Donian**, **Lorraine Salazar** and **Vicki Dow**.

Francis Salazar, long-time Cherry Hills Village resident and former polo player, provided some history and context of the event. The game used to be a dangerous sport involving serious injuries and even death for horses and players alike only 25 years ago when players were still allowed to force their steeds to block others in mid-run. Today, galloping only occurs at break-aways to pursue the ball across the field. The field in Littleton is literally boarded a few inches around the entire perimeter so the ball is retained



Stephanie Odak, Lorraine Salazar, Artemis Khadiwala-Donian and Vicki Dow

in the field to prevent play from stopping as happens on non-boarded fields.

Top polo players in the world today most often come from Argentina and Mexico where people still grow up with the sport as they do with golf and tennis. "Ten goalers" are the top ranked players with lower numbers denoting less expertise.

The original Polo Club grounds just south of Cherry Creek near the Denver Country Club were removed following World War II. He said this year's game demonstrated a discernable improvement due to the presence of very good "mercenaries" from abroad, as local talent was largely diminished until the very end.

Intermission activities featured

Jack Russell terrier dog races. Twelve frenetic little dogs competed in two rounds of two heats where they chased a piece of fur across a portion of the field before slamming through a loose padded barrier where their owners quickly gathered them up. The favored winner, "Biscuit," literally left his competition behind in both rounds. The dogs appeared ready to leap out of their own skins, and the owners universally laughed that these dogs required tremendous daily discipline. To watch the final race and see Biscuit, visit http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IN4_17DptGs.

For more information on the event, Denver Active 20-30, sponsors, restaurants and charity details, visit www.denverpolo.org.





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THE VILLAGER SOCIETY



Flat racing champion dog "Biscuit" with owners Gretchen and Randy Hale



Carrie Hawes, Amber Waits, Jenny Salimi and Amy Rubin

*Photos by
 Steven Weisberg*



Regular attendees
 Lisa Taylor and
 Edward Cooke

