

2017 HAWAII INVITATIONAL *of Polo*

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Chris Dawson, Founder of the Hawaii International Polo Association

TEAM 'KEA' WINS
2017 KAHALA HOTEL & RESORT HAWAII INVITATIONAL OF POLO
Presented by Cartier

Saturday, September 16, 2017 | Match Highlights

TEAM KEA [WINNERS]
John Paul Clarkin (Captain)
Simon Keyte
Santie Torres
Gaston "Mono" Gassiebayle

TEAM ELE'ELE
Luis Escobar (captain)
Jeff Hall
Mariano "Nano" Gracida (Hawaii Polo Life Ambassador)
Inaki Laprida

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

HONOLULU, HI (September 18, 2017 – Match recap provided by official Polo Commentator, JOHN KENT from England who called the match).

As the eight hand-selected ALL-PRO players from around the world landed on the Waimanalo Polo Field by way of HAWAII POLO LIFE helicopters courtesy of Makani Kai for the historic 2017 "Kahala Hotel & Resort Hawaii Invitational of Polo, Presented by Cartier," there was a huge sense of excitement and anticipation across the lush land of the Honolulu Polo Club. The coveted field, sponsored by Hawaiian Airlines World Elite MasterCard, nestled below the towering Ko'olau mountain range with stunning Tesla's glimmering in the countryside sunlight. Both teams, KEA and ELE'ELE, appeared perfectly prepared and balanced with a game that promised a mixture of flair upfront being consolidated by big hitting game winners at the back.

The much-anticipated historic ALL-PRO match led with a Hawaiian cultural opening ceremony featuring

Hula Halau Ka Lehua Tuahine led by Kumu Hula Kailihiwa Vaughn; Leiala Cook Pau Riders accompanied by a performance of Pomaikai Lyman who also sang Hawaii Pono'i (composed by His Majesty King David Kalakaua in 1876 honoring King Kamehameha I, founder of the Hawaiian Kingdom in 1810), and the National Anthem led by powerhouse singer Tioni Sam Sing.

From the ball roll-in, done by former Governor John David Waihe'e III, it was the Hawaii Polo Life Team KEA (led by Captain Jean Paul Clarkin) who were quickest to settle. The innate understanding between the two New Zealand internationals JP Clarkin and Simon Keyte at the back made it almost impossible for either Iñaki Laprida or Nano Gracida to force their way through, and though the first chukka ended level at 1-1 through goals from JP Clarkin and Luis Escobar, it was certainly Hawaii Polo Life ELE'ELE (led by Captain Luis Escobar) who had the work to do.

The 2nd chukka went much the same way as the 1st, with Santi Torres and Gaston Mono Gassiebayle having plenty of chance to impress picking up the backhands of Keyte and Clarkin for team KEA. A goal for Torres and then a wonderful cut shot from Clarkin meant they went into the 3rd with a 3-1 lead.

From there on, the form of the game began to shift, with team KEA thereafter struggling to get the ball out of their own half. Taking control for ELE'ELE in particular was Luis Escobar, whose passes to youngsters Gracida and Laprida started to stretch apart the KEA defense. Jeff Hall also showed why he is known as one of the fiercest competitors in the sport, not giving the whites any time to settle on the ball!

Despite the pressure though it took until the 4th chukka for them to finally break through, and when they did it was only by a moment of magic from Laprida, slotting the ball home from a full 150 yards. The game then went into the last chukka with just one score separating the sides, and spectator commentary around the ground was focusing on the possible comeback!

There would be no more goals in the game though. Despite the relentless nature of the KEA attack throughout the 5th chukka, they could not pierce the wall of white shirted defenders.

All the players spoke after the match of the exciting nature of the game despite the relatively low score of 3-2. The fact that it was played under the accreditation of the APPL only added to this, with the open nature of these rules only adding to the speed of the affair. The chase down style penalties also caused some of the most breathtaking moments of the game!

Both teams gathered in the winner's circle for the award presentation surrounded by community, statewide polo club members, socialites, and endless photographers. The winning cup went to the White Team KEA who each received Cartier Tank Solo Timepieces and Team ELE'ELE each received Santos de Cartier Cufflinks. Speeches and pictures were conducted with Chris Dawson, Founder and President of the Hawaii International Polo Association (HIPA), event Chairman Paulo Skellon, Honoree Greg Pietsch for his grandfather Charlie Pietsch, corporate sponsors, player's families and Miss Hawaii USA, Julie Kuo. A magnum bottle of Cartier Brut Cuvee Champagne uncorked with celebration of the

historic Kahala Hotel & Resort Hawaii Invitational of Polo, Presented by Cartier on Saturday, September 16, 2017 at Waimanalo Polo Fields, Home of the Honolulu Polo Club.

Proceeds from the Hawaii Invitational of Polo will benefit the 501-3© Hawaii International Polo Association's mission:

1. Celebrate polo's unique history in Hawaii dating back to 1880.
2. Establish an Equine retirement program for polo ponies.
3. Develop Hawaii's at-risk youth via horsemanship clinics.

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About The Kahala Hotel & Resort

The legendary Kahala Hotel & Resort is an oceanfront, destination luxury property known for its gracious Hawaiian hospitality. Located just minutes from Waikīkī, The Kahala offers an exclusive ambiance of a neighbor island experience. The Kahala has been Honolulu's social address for weddings and gatherings since its opening in 1964. World leaders, royalty, rock bands and Oscar winners call the 338-room resort their Hawaiian home-away-from-home. The Kahala is a member of The Leading Hotels of the World and Preferred Hotels & Resorts. The resort is home to *The Kahala Spa*, lush tropical gardens and a natural ocean-water lagoon with the hotel's own resident dolphins cared for by *Dolphin Quest*. The Kahala also has five restaurants: *Plumeria Beach House*, *Seaside Grill*, *The Veranda*, *Arancino* and the award-winning *Hoku's* restaurant. Stay connected with The Kahala via www.kahalaresort.com, on Instagram at [kahala_resort](#) or on Facebook at The Kahala Hotel & Resort and Twitter at [@KahalaResort](#). Share your Kahala moment [#AtTheKahala](#).

About Cartier

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About Hawaii International Polo Association

The Hawaii International Polo Association was founded in 2013. The most reputable polo players in Hawaii serve as advisors and ambassadors, each with more than 20-years of polo experience and contributions to Hawaii. This Association not only celebrates the rich history of polo in Hawaii, but also assures that the next century is even more spectacular. Our challenge now is to ensure polo's place in Hawaii for generations to come. Toward this goal, Hawaii Polo Productions was created to identify unique venues, produce world-class polo events and showcase individual and collective talents. Hawaii should be showcasing world-class polo. In doing so, we celebrate our rich history of polo in the Hawaiian Islands, dating back to 1880 during the reign of our King David Kalakaua, while promoting polo for future generations.

Engage and Experience the Legacy, Culture and Future of HAWAII POLO:

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