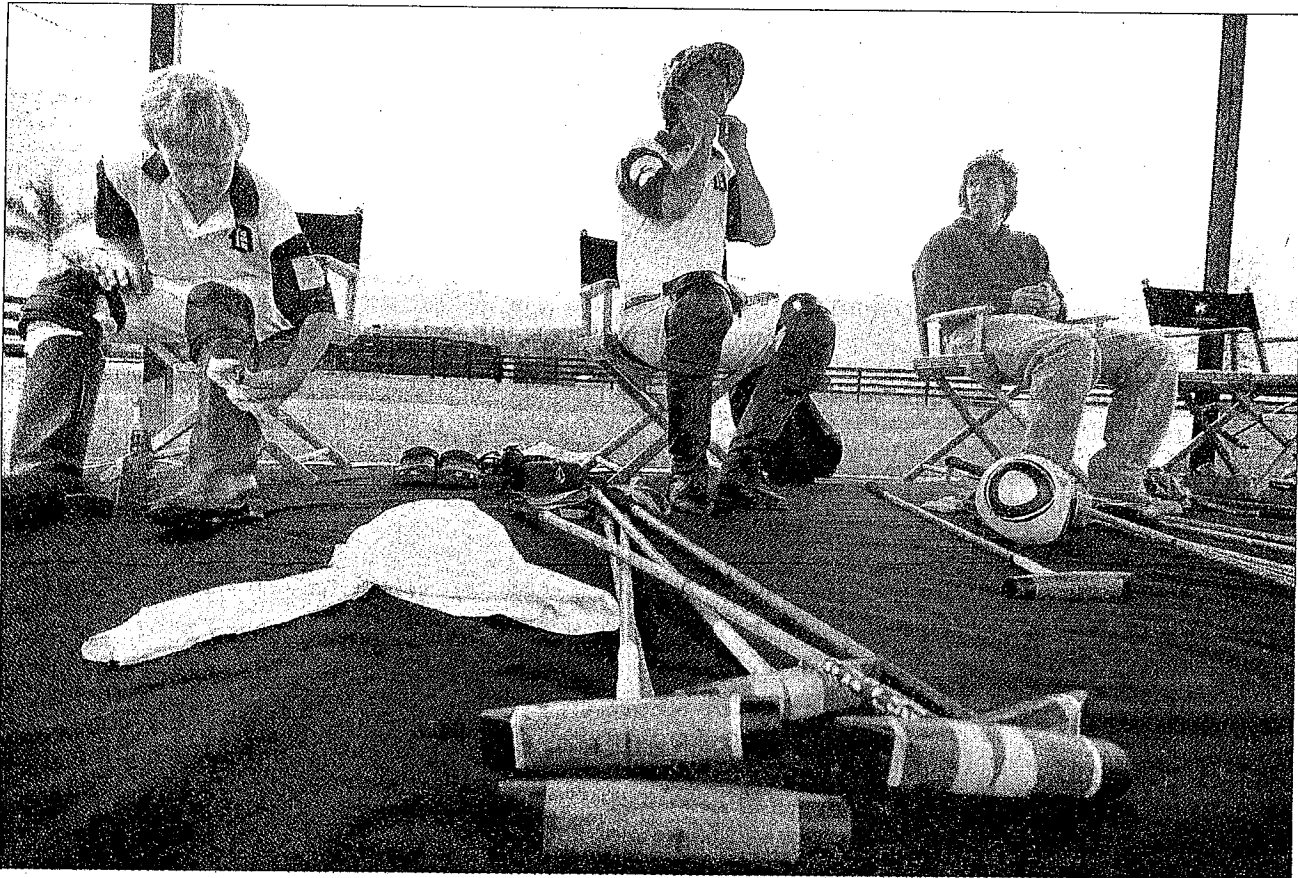


# Polo makes its mark at Hobe Sound Polo Club



Above: Mallets lay ready as Detroit Blues teammates, from left, Steve Jenkins, of Wellington and Colin McCosh, of West Palm Beach, get ready for their game against El Sur at the Hobe Sound Polo Club on Bridge Road on Feb. 27. Diego Gallego, a polo player from Portugal, right, sits in their corner to lend support. Top left: Polo players Kelly Torres, right, of team El Sur, and McCosh chase down a ball while battling in the second of a four-chukker game. Top right: Kathryn Capozzo, right, of Fort Myers, sits alongside her sister, Janet Hayden, of Loxahatchee, while holding a cup of hot tea in the rain during a game.

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Polo player Diego Gallego, left, of Portugal, gives advice to Duncan Watson, of team Detroit Blues before the start of the third chukker of a four-chukker match-up against team El Sur at the Hobe Sound Polo Club on Feb. 27.

The thunder of horses sets the stage as polo makes its mark on Hobe Sound at the Hobe Sound Polo Club, a relatively new facility along Bridge Road. The sport itself is not new, dating back to the Persian empire between the sixth century B.C. to the first century A.D.

Polo is played on an open field about 200 by 300 yards with four players riding horseback on each team. The game is played in four to six chukkers that last 7½ minutes, similar to a “quarter” in football, where the teams try to score hitting a plastic ball through a set of goal posts to score points using wooden mallets. Riders need to have at least four to six horses each and can change horses any time throughout the game. Each chukker can see as much action as a horse running the equivalent of two Kentucky Derbys, so changing of horses is a necessity.

“I grew up playing polo. My dad used to play and my family was always involved with horses back in Holland. After that, it pretty much was my passport to the world as Winston Churchill said, ‘It made me travel all over the world’ and I am playing polo that way. What can you ask more for,” said Vincent Masker, polo director at Hobe Sound Polo Club.

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Vincent Masker, polo director