

INTERNATIONAL POLO NADAAM  
GENGHIS KHAN POLO AND RIDING CLUB  
ORKHON VALLEY, MONGOLIA, 27 - 29/08/10

国际马球那达慕  
成吉思汗马球与马术俱乐部  
蒙古鄂尔浑峡谷, 2010年8月27日 - 29日

# Beneath an eternal sky

Lucy Monro

天苍苍，野茫茫



At dusk the Orkhon River appears as an iridescent ribbon draped as a sliver of silver through the heart of a valley that winds through an eternally immense landscape to Genghis Khan's ancient capital, Karakorum. Horses outnumber man 13:1 in this wild land and the hardy, half-wild beasts that roam the rolling grasslands of the Mongolian Steppe are the life partners of the nomadic population that calls this magnificently endless land 'home'.

Of all the possible candidates for the land of polo's origin, Mongolia is generally accepted as the most likely. Just last year ancient tombs yielded evidence of people playing polo in Mongolia as early as the 4th century and the mighty Mongol warriors' history with the game in the Middle Ages, when Genghis Khan's armies are reported to have substituted their victims heads for balls, is the stuff of legend.

Rich as Mongolia's polo heritage is, following the fall of the Mongol Empire in the late 1200s polo disappeared completely from the country, not to return until the twilight of the 20th century.

In 1998 the Genghis Khan Polo and Riding Club was founded in the Orkhon Valley on the Mongolian Steppe by filmmaker Christopher Giercke and his friend the late Jim Edwards.

"With a couple of willow sticks and a polo ball this started", Jim's youngest son, Jack Edwards, said simply at the 2010 edition of the polo event that grows in stature and legend each year.

It was on a family fishing trip in 1997 to the spot that Christopher and his Mongolian wife Enkhe had chosen as their summer home that Christopher, Jim and Jim's eldest son Kristjan determined to revive polo in its homeland. Kristjan set about fashioning polo sticks from the willow trees of the Steppes and with the support and keen participation of local herders the first polo 'match' for centuries took place in Mongolia. The proceedings came to an end when all the sticks were broken, but all involved determined to return the following summer to reintroduce polo to what they believed was most likely its homeland.

That was then. Now, 13 years after that inspired occasion the Genghis Khan Polo and Riding club hosted the first International Polo Nadaam, a mighty three-day event that saw an unprecedented 60-plus guests resident at the camp that Christopher and Enkhe have created as an exquisite haven in one of the world's most spectacular and remote outposts.

Over the years some of the biggest names in polo have made the journey to the polo club identified by its GPS co-ordinates,



Photo: Courtesy Shanghai Tang/Thomas L. Kelly.

RIGHT: In the Shanghai Tang Silver Cup D'Artagnan Giercke's orange squad was triumphant. Dovchin Tsevelдорж was a key player throughout.

在关于马球发源地的争论中，人们普遍认为蒙古是最有可能的马球发源地。去年从蒙古古墓中出土了一批文物，证明蒙古人早在公元 4 世纪就已经参加马球运动，而强悍的蒙古勇士在中世纪曾热衷于马球比赛，传说当时成吉思汗的军队曾用战俘的头颅代替皮球进行娱乐。

尽管蒙古马球颇有历史文化积淀，但随着蒙古帝国在 13 世纪末轰然崩塌，马球运动也彻底从这片土地上销声匿迹，直到 20 世纪末才重新出现。

1998 年，电影制片人 Christopher Giercke 及其好友 Jim Edwards（已故）在蒙古草原上的鄂尔浑峡谷创办了成吉思汗马球与马术俱乐部。



Photo: © Alan Greenfield.



Photo: © Alan Greenfield.



Photo: © Alan Greenfield.

N. 47' 04' 72.6, E. 102' 70' 76.0. Alexandro Novillo Astrada, Martin Aguerre, Guy Schwarzenbach, Mathias, Olaf and Patrick Guerrand-Hermès - who celebrated his 70th birthday here - number among those who have seized adventure's mane to accept Christopher's invitation to the camp.

Housed in traditional gers (canvas covered circular felt tents), perched along a ridge above the Orkhon River the camp is a wondrous place where magic appears to happen. Guests enjoy piano recitals, Bach and Chopin, on a baby grand piano (the only one in Mongolia shipped in especially from Ulan Bator) before dinner every night. An opera singer performs Schubert and water is drunk from silver goblets fashioned by a silversmith in Kathmandu in the style of the ubiquitous disposable paper cup. At night guests sleep beneath cashmere blankets and wrap themselves in cashmere robes.

A visionary in every sense of the word, Christopher Giercke is a patron of the arts and of sport, his raison d'être being to identify and promote Mongolian talent wherever he may find it - hence the opera singer, the concert pianist... and, of course, the polo.

As well as founding the Genghis Khan Polo and Riding Club and the camp - which is set up at the same location for three months each summer between June and the end of August - Christopher founded the Mongolian Polo Association in 2002, garnered support from around the polo world for Mongolian polo and has taken Mongolian polo teams to play in Argentina, Australia, France and Singapore. This autumn he will return to his native Berlin for the first time since 1961 with a Mongolian

**ABOVE:** Jonathan Lloyd rides off Dovchin Tseveldorj in the Shanghai Tang Silver Cup.

**RIGHT:** Ich Tenger Giercke on the ball as captain of the winning team two days running.

**BOTTOM RIGHT:** A week of polo on the Mongolian Steppe culminated with a three-day tournament at the end of the Nadaam.

1997 年，这对好友以及 Jim 的长子 Kristjan 在一次钓鱼时突发奇想，决心让马球在它的故乡重新焕发光彩。Kristjan 首先以草原上生长的柳木作为原材料，制作了时尚精美的马球棍。接着，在当地牧民的大力支持和积极参与下，成功举办了蒙古草原数百年来第一场马球“比赛”。“比赛”场面极其热烈，直到所有马球棍都折断了才宣告结束，但所有参与者都表示来年夏天还要参加，让马球在他们认为最有可能的发源地上恢复生机。

这就是当年的状况。而今，在成吉思汗马球与马术俱乐部隆重举办第二届国际马球那达慕 13 年后，60 多位嘉宾齐聚 Christopher Giercke 和他的蒙古族妻子 Enkhe 精心建造的俱乐部营地，参加一场为期三天的马球盛会。这个俱乐部位于世界上最壮阔而偏远的居住地之一，该营地还是第一次迎来这么多贵客。



Photo: © Lucy Morris.

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team to play an exhibition match at the Berliner Polo Club. He is the FIP Ambassador for Mongolia and acting international coordinator. The GKPRC is an official member of the FIP.

Many have joined Christopher on his remarkable mission to reintroduce polo to Mongolia. Nikhilendra Singh from Jodhpur was one of the very first to help, Benoit Perrier from Apremont Polo Club worked as a trainer for three seasons, as did Gustavo Gai. Most notably Indian polo legend Col Raj Kalaan has visited the camp every year since 1999 to pass on his considerable expertise to the local players. In 2005 Shanghai Tang's Executive Chairman Raphael le Masne de Chermont, visited the camp, returning in 2006 to sponsor the inaugural Shanghai Tang Polo Cup that has evolved in just four years into the Shanghai Tang Silver and Gold Cups with a posse of international players taking on the locals. This year one of polo's most innovative sponsors joined Christopher's ardent band of supporters with Royal Salute sponsoring the inaugural Mongolian version of the Royal Salute Puissance (a concept launched in Jodhpur at the end of 2009) and joining forces with Shanghai Tang once again to present the latest edition of the Royal Salute Colours Jacket Awards, the Genghis Khan Frontier Colours.

Traditionally a nadaam, which means 'festivity' includes horse racing, archery and wrestling. The International Polo Nadaam 2010 included all those and more... polo.

#### HIGH SPEED HERITAGE

Proceedings opened, once Buddhist monks had blessed the occasion, with a traditional horse race. Centuries ago a 12-day postal service ran between Istanbul and Karakorum with Mongolian horses covering the distance in 40-kilometre stages. It is from this 'pony express' that modern day endurance races in Mongolia descend with most races being of roughly similar length. A shortened version opened the Orkhon proceedings.

"I believe they will come", Christopher declared the evening before when asked how many horses would enter the race. Word had been 'put out' around the local nomad community and those who knew better than a few newly arrived sceptics were confident that entries would be plentiful. They were.

Minutes before the scheduled start time horses appeared as if from nowhere from all directions. Most arrived in pairs - a father and child with the proud parent entering their child (who must be between four and 12 years old) into the race. Numbered headscarves were tied around heads and the children, after the traditional three clockwise circuits of the ovoo that stood at the crest of the hill sat served as the 'paddock', headed off to the start several kilometres down the valley. Some had



Photo: © Alan Greenfield.

LEFT: Twelve year old D'Artagnan rides the far older and more experienced Chuka Urtnasan off for the length of the field, successfully much to the dismay of the senior player (above).

近年来，已经有许多顶级马球选手借助 GPS 坐标（北纬：47.04726，东经：102.70760）造访了这座马球俱乐部。俱乐部营地在鄂尔浑河上游依山而建，营地内的房子都是传统的蒙古包，即，用帆布覆盖的圆形毛毡帐篷。这里山清水秀，一看就是个可能产生奇迹的地方。每晚吃饭前，客人都能欣赏到巴赫与肖邦的钢琴曲独奏，弹奏所用的小型钢琴是特地从乌兰巴托运来的，这可是蒙古草原唯一的一架钢琴。此外，还有一位歌剧演唱家为客人献上舒伯特的名曲。众人在优美的乐声中端起银杯，感受着草原美好的夜晚。这些银质水杯虽然造型如同随处可见的一次性纸杯，但却是经过加德满都银匠精心雕琢的。晚上，客人们穿上羊绒睡袍，盖上羊绒毯，在蒙古包里酣然而眠。

Christopher Giercke 是名副其实的识才伯乐，他热衷于赞助艺术和体育事业，走遍草原每个角落，以发掘和培养蒙古草原上的精英才俊为己任。正因如此，他才会将那位歌剧演唱家和那位钢琴演奏家聘请到俱乐部来。当然，也正因如此，他才会如此热衷于蒙古草原的马球运动。

saddles, most did not and more than a few children opted to ride in their socks.

From a cloud of dust they emerged in thunderous celebration, rawhide thongs swirling above heads as they drove their horses forward. To win a race is a matter of honour and prestige in nomad communities and victory can increase the worth of a herd as well as the stature of a family.

The winner was a young boy on a finely built black gelding. He was closely pursued across the line by his sister who was generally accepted to be the star of the valley and would have been favourite for the win had the distance been longer. Blue silks were wound around browbands and proud fathers lined up alongside their offspring to collect well deserved winnings.

#### THE JAMES ASHTON MEMORIAL CUP

Next up was the inaugural staging of the James Ashton Memorial Cup. The interim head of the FIP who died following a polo accident in Thailand at the beginning of the year was described by Christopher as, "A dear friend to polo in Asia." Had tragedy not struck James would have spent his summer at the polo camp so the tribute was appropriate in both terms of sentiment and location.

Played as a four-chukka round robin with teams made up in an international spirit of co-operation of which James would have thoroughly approved, four teams: green, pink, orange and blue, made up of players from 14 different countries, lined up in a flamboyant colour splash to do battle. Ultimately it was Christopher's youngest son, 12 year old D'Artagnan's orange squad comprising superstar Mongol striker Dovchin Tsevelдорж, Raphael le Masne de Chermont and Dutchman Stijn Welkers that rode out triumphant from the afternoon's thriller.

#### THE GENGHIS KHAN POLO CUP

The second day's proceedings saw the fifth renewal of the Genghis Khan Polo Cup. Launched with the backing of Technomarine in 2005, who won the inaugural match, the trophy was claimed in 2006 and 2007 by Mongol teams before Guy Schwarzenbach's Black Bears triumphed in 2008. Last year Christopher's eldest son, 15 year old Ich Tenger, triumphed with a Mongol team and for the 2010 renewal he had challenged his younger brother D'Artagnan.

Christopher 振兴蒙古马球的伟大事业得到了许多人的帮助，其中就有著名的印度马球传奇人物 Col Raj Kalaan，他从 1999 年起每年都要到俱乐部来向当地球员传授自己高超的马球技能。2005 年，上海滩集团的执行总裁 Raphael le Masne de Chermont 造访俱乐部营地，并于 2006 年赞助了上海滩杯马球赛的开幕式。仅仅四年后，这场比赛就发展成为上海滩银杯赛和金杯赛，由各国组成的国际球队挑战当地球队。今年，一家最富有创新精神的马球赞助商加入积极支持 Christopher 的行列：皇家礼炮集团慷慨赞助蒙古皇家礼炮马球障碍赛开幕式（该比赛理念于 2009 年底创始于印度 Jodhpur），并与上海滩集团再度联手，颁发最新版皇家礼炮彩色夹克奖品，即“成吉思汗开拓者”彩色夹克。

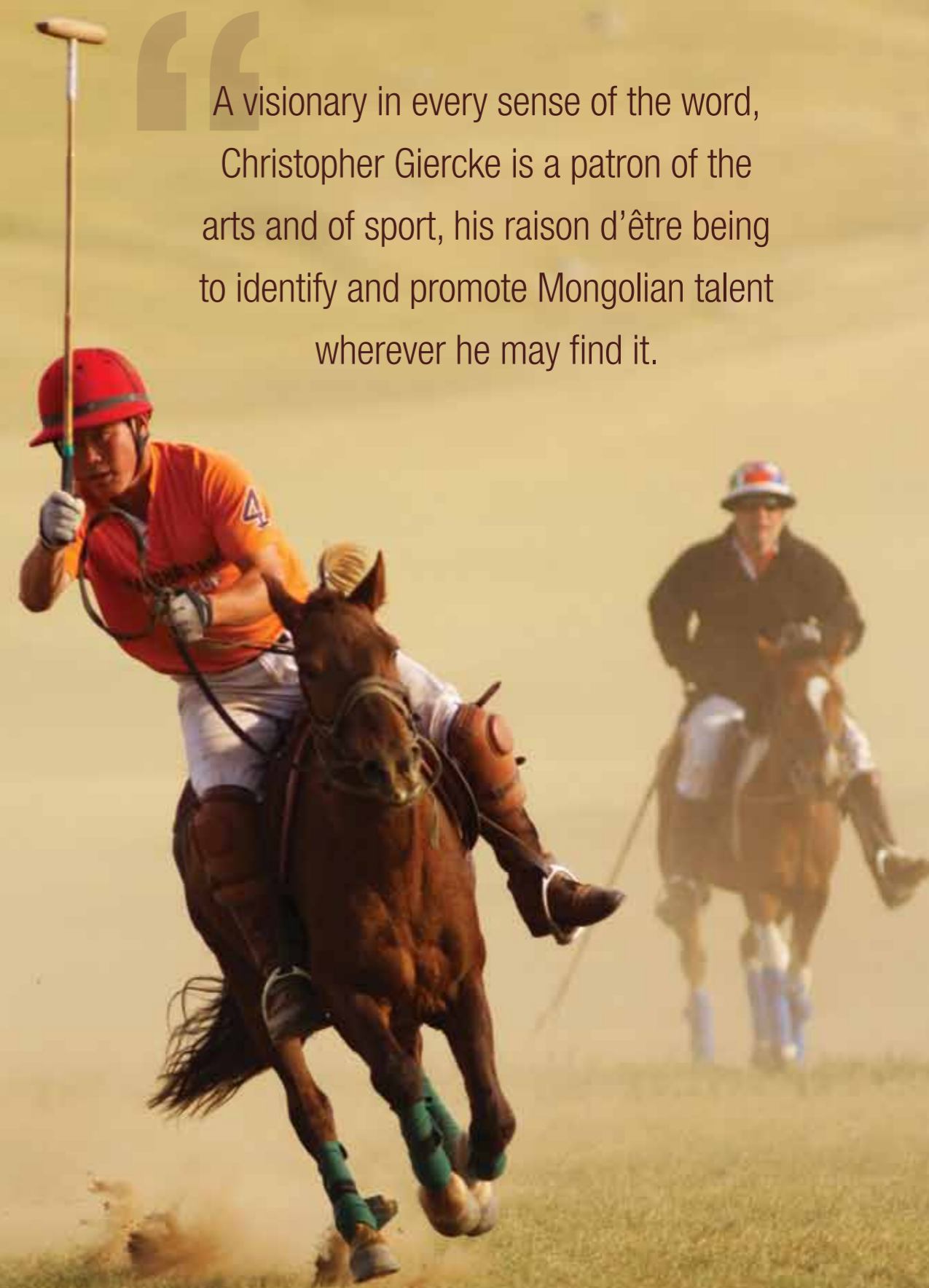
#### SALUTING POLO PIONEERS

The occasion of the international polo nadaam saw the extension of one of polo's most coveted award series to one of the sport's most pioneering frontiers. As a tribute to the world's most exclusive polo tournaments, Royal Salute combined with Shanghai Tang to create the much prized Royal Salute Colours Jacket Awards for individuals who have excelled both in horse polo and various other activities both on and off the field of play. The award was launched in Jodhpur under the auspices of His Highness the Maharaja of Jodhpur Gaj Singh II, Prince Yuvraj Shivraj Singh The Crown Prince of Jodhpur, His Grace The 13th Duke of Argyll, Raphael le Masne de Chermont, and Peter Prentice.

The Chairman of the Royal Salute Genghis Khan Frontier Colours Club is Christopher Giercke, with his Founding Committee comprising Colonel Raj Kalaan, Raphael le Masne de Chermont and Peter Prentice of Royal Salute. Four of the prized Royal Salute Frontier Jackets for the Shanghai Tang Cup were awarded to Enkhe Giercke, Jack Edwards, Steve Wyatt, and Jumbaana of Ulan Bator - all of whom took great pride in joining the hallowed ranks of past winners such as Prince Albert Esiri of Nigeria, Nicholas Colquhoun-Denvers (Chairman HPA), KV Singh, David Freeborn, Pete McCormack and Uday Kalaan.



Photo: © Allan Greenfield.



“A visionary in every sense of the word, Christopher Giercke is a patron of the arts and of sport, his raison d'être being to identify and promote Mongolian talent wherever he may find it.



Impressive players with skill and courage far in advance of their years, Ich Tenger and D'Artagnan Giercke began riding at four and three years old and started playing polo at the ages of nine and eight. As is the case with many children who learn the game playing regularly against adults, both boys demonstrate a level of courage and determination that is quite exceptional.

The occasion of the brotherly contest was one of which Christopher was rightly proud, not just because both his extremely impressive and talented sons were in the saddle, but because it was the first occasion that the trophy had been contested by a team as young as that of D'Artagnan's (the four man line-up included players of 12, 15 and 16) and the event marked the 'coming of age' of a group of young players who had grown up with D'Artagnan and Ich Tenger, with many on the field already having enjoyed the opportunity to play abroad.

Fast and furious from the outset the all-Mongol teams set about proving that the investment made in them by so many was paying dividend. Within minutes Ich Tenger found his mark twice to put his squad ahead 2:0 and, despite his younger brother's impressively determined best efforts, D'Artagnan's team was unable to reply before the bell sounded on the end of the first chukka.

When play resumed Ich Tenger scored in the opening minutes, but on this occasion his younger brother did have the answer and D'Artagnan's orange-shirted squad opened their account - 3:1. A slick goal from their 12 year old captain closed the gap further so that at the half-time mark the scoreboard read 3:2 in Ich Tenger's favour. Evidently inspired during the

#### 上海滩杯马球赛

在上海滩金杯赛上, Ich Tenger 率领的蒙古队将迎接来自国际球队的挑战。这支国际球队是各客场国家能够组成的最强球队, 阵容不可小觑。队员包括上海九龙山杯马球赛的创始人 Steve Wyatt (队长) 与印度籍新加坡 2 级球员 Satinder Garcha。在第四回合的比赛中, Jonathan Lloyd/James McBride 与 Raphael le Masne de Chermont/Antoine Servat 也加入战局。而主场作战的蒙古队除了队长 Ich Tenger 之外, 还包括 Battur Tseveldorj、Chuluunbaatar Urtnasan 和 Uuganbayar Bold。

As if from nowhere, right on cue father's rode out of the hills from every direction accompanied by their sons and daughters. Proud parents entered their children into the race and waited excitedly at the finish to see which would emerge from the dust cloud triumphant. Much celebration followed the event with *arak*, fermented mares milk, drunk in copious celebration.

break, Ich Tenger's squad rode back onto the field with purpose. Seizing control in the opening seconds of the third chukka they quickly dominated proceedings, widening the gap over their younger rivals with every minute that ticked by and closing the third chukka with a 6-goal lead, 8:2.

Many older and more experienced may have given up, but not D'Artagnan. He and his team fought until the bitter end, proving that they were still very much in the game in the closing minutes with a goal from their captain after a field-long dash with just three minutes left to play, 10:3.

Ich Tenger replied almost instantly but although the match closed with the older team victorious 11:3 the result was a triumph for all concerned and particularly for Mongolian polo. The winning team had an average age of just 25 and D'Artagnan's one of 18. Both teams had demonstrated skill, panache and determination and none present doubted that a bright future beckons for the sport in its homeland. "I can see the future", said Christopher with a proud smile.

THE SHANGHAI TANG POLO CUP

Days on the Mongolian Steppes are without comparison. The Siberian winds that had chilled the previous day were just a distant memory as the sun rose to herald the nadaam's final dawn and the event's highlight, the Shanghai Tang Polo Cup. Competing in a three-chukka round robin for the Shanghai Tang Silver Cup were three international teams. Green saw Nick Wills from Ham Polo Club in London line up with Leon Chu and Tan Hock from Singapore Polo Club and Hong Kong-based Welshman Jonathan Lloyd.

Clad in stylish blue with pink lettering Singaporean young stars, brothers Clifton and Keith Yeo, were joined by James McBride, Frenchman Antoine Serval and Ang Bang Tong. In orange under D'Artagnan's direction were local big-hitter Dovchin Tseveldorj, Stjin Welkers and Harpreet Garcha.

First up were orange and green. Jonathan Lloyd opened the account for the greens within the opening minutes but a bout

Battur Tseveldorj 是一位来自 Uvurkhangai 省的牧民，他是 GKPRC 俱乐部的核心成员，全年负责照看俱乐部的赛马；Chuluunbaatar Urtnasan 昵称“Chuka”，同样来自牧民家庭，是一名经验老道的土拨鼠猎人，同时也是一位优秀的马球选手；Uuganbayar Bold 昵称“Uugaa”，父亲是一位医生，他冬天做木匠营生，同时也是 GKPRC 俱乐部的司机。蒙古草原的孩子都是在马背上长大的，因此蒙古队所有队员都是技艺精湛的骑手。这支球队象征着 Christopher 对蒙古马球的希冀，也是他在过去十年内投入无数精力与技术所收获的成果。

蒙古队自始至终牢牢控制战局，最终凭借巧妙而坚决的打法，以 8:2 大胜国际球队。比赛结束后，Ichtenger 兴高采烈地高高举起上海滩金杯，与家乡父老共同庆祝，展望蒙古马球的美好未来。🏆

of determined tit-for-tat play between two well-matched teams saw the scores stay level for the duration until the 12 year old superstar found his mark seconds before the final bell to put his squad ahead 3:2.

D'Artagnan's squad lined up next against the blues and they didn't give an inch throughout. Stylish their strips may have been, but the blues failed to find form as Harpreet Garcha delivered a hat-trick that resulted in a 3:0 victory for orange.

The green and blue encounter opened with the two teams initially appearing well-matched. But, possibly still reeling from their rout in the previous chukka the blues rallied to deliver a 4:2 victory over the greens and D'Artagnan rode out as the victorious captain once again. So to the big one. In the Shanghai Tang Gold Cup, Mongolia, captained by Ich Tenger, would take on the Rest of the World. The RoW squad was the best that the visitors could muster and was not a bad line-up; founder of

**THE ROYAL SALUTE PUISSANCE**

The Royal Salute Puissance captivated the world of polo when it was introduced by Royal Salute in December 2009 at the Maharaja of Jodhpur Golden Jubilee Cup.

The brainchild of Peter Prentice, the event combines a thrilling mix of a penalty shoot-out with the longest drive. All players are given two chances to strike the ball as far as possible over the Royal Salute Puissance Wall. The ball must carry over the wall and between two marker flags.

Hot favourites for the inaugural edition of the Royal Salute Puissance in Mongolia included Antoine Serval, Satinder Garcha, Jonathan Lloyd, Steve Wyatt, and Raphael le Masne de Chermont in addition to local heroes from the Orkhon Valley Dovchin, Uugaa, and Chuka. The ultimate winner was local hero Dovchin of Orkhon with a 93-yard pile driver that beat Steve Wyatt from Shanghai by 60cm. In addition to the men's Puissance and by popular request, the assembled dignitaries were treated to the spontaneous creation of a ladies Puissance, competed for by 12 talented women from all four corners of the globe.



Photo: © Allan Greenfield.





CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Master of all he surveys, Christopher Giercke has created polo's most extraordinary venue and festival; Christopher wishes the teams luck before the Genghis Khan Polo Cup; Raphael le Masne de Chermont first visited the camp in 2005; Peter Prentice heads to the field laden down with Scotland's finest; Wrestling and equestrian acrobatics are traditional features of nadaam's in Mongolia; Steve Wyatt on umpire duty; Col Raj Kalaan has been instrumental in the development of the club; Raphael le Masne de Chermont presents Ich Tenger Giercke's team with the Shanghai Tang Gold Cup; Archery is a traditional pursuit.



Nine Dragons Hill Polo Club in Shanghai, Steve Wyatt (captain) and India's Singapore-based 2-goaler Satinder Garcha were joined in the four-chukka encounter by Jonathan Lloyd/James McBride and Raphael le Masne de Chermont/Antoine Servat. For the home team Ich Tenger was supported by Battur Tsevelдорж a herder from Uvurkhangai province who is a key member of the GKPRC stable, working year-round to care for the club's horses, Chuluunbaatar Urtnasan, known as Chuka who also grew up in a herder family and is an experienced marmot hunter as well as talented polo player, and Uuganbayar Bold, known as Uugaa, the son of a doctor who works during the winter as a carpenter and driver for the GKPRC. All consummate horsemen - Mongol babies are placed on horseback as soon as they can sit up - the team were the embodiment of Christopher's dream for Mongolian polo and the product of the energies and skill invested in them over the past decade.

Things didn't get off to the slickest of starts. A 50-yard penalty could very well have delivered the first goal of the match for RoW, but didn't. It was to be an error that the international raiders would rue.

From a 60-yard penalty Chuka opened the Mongolian account minutes later and went on to deliver a hat-trick by the time the first chukka closed, 3:0.

Mongolia remained dominant when play resumed. Ich Tenger took control from the outset to make a field-long dash with possession that Chuka once again sent home for his captain. RoW's best chance came from a 60-yard penalty. Steve Wyatt stepped up to the mark but the shot was just wide leaving Mongolia 5:0 ahead at half-time. Within minutes of

play resuming in the third chukka Mongolia's lead increased further to 6:0. Ich Tenger broke free once again to score from a field-long dash worthy of the maestro, Adolfo Cambiaso, whose helmet he wears and the chukka closed 7:0 in Mongolia's favour.

With just seven minutes left to restore multi-national honour the RoW had a challenge on their hands. Mongolia scored yet again within minutes, but from somewhere the RoW found some command of the proceedings and Raphael le Masne de Chermont sent two balls between the Mongolian posts. But it wasn't enough.

Even the 5-yard penalty that Jonathan Lloyd will probably never forget failing to convert in the final seconds would not have prevented what was obviously inevitable. The RoW were trounced 8:2 by a slick and determined Mongolian squad and a delighted Ich Tenger raised the Shanghai Tang Gold Cup aloft to the delight to the home crowd and the good of Mongolian polo.

It was a fitting end to a great tournament and none present would dispute that the future of polo in Mongolia is bright. As the lucky few who have experienced the wonders of Christopher and Enkhe Giercke's polo camp over the years will testify, it is a place like no other - a wondrous haven in the midst of a wild land in which talent is nurtured and dreams come true.

"You are all ambassadors for polo, ambassadors for what you have witnessed", Christopher declared to his guests as he bid them farewell. "It is not easy to describe what you have seen because people will not believe you." Now there's a challenge...

You are all ambassadors for polo, ambassadors for what you have witnessed", Christopher declared to his guests as he bid them farewell.

