

24th Cartier Polo World Cup on Snow in St. Moritz

Polo, the sport of kings, emperors, and princes takes on a new twist when played on snow, as the Adventure Kids experience the 24th [Cartier Polo World Cup on Snow](#) in [St. Moritz, Switzerland](#).



Polo, the daring sport that takes place on horseback, although has also been played on camel, elephant, and bicycle, and is played on grass, has an interesting history that dates back to around the time of 600 BC. By the time 800 rolled around, polo had swept Asia, and by 1850, British officers added polo to their sports repertoire establishing the first club in Europe in 1873 with fixed rules. By 1899, polo had reached St. Moritz, Switzerland, and in 1985, a polo tournament was played for the first time on the frozen St. Moritz Lake.

We traveled to St. Moritz at the end of January 2008, to experience the 24th Cartier World Cup on Snow (January 24 - 27, 2008), and what an incredible luxury experience that was! First of all, the scenery was breathtaking from the majestic snowcapped alps surrounding the lake, and the people watching was par excellence as St. Moritz is a fashion hotspot for jetsetters where even the dogs at the event were fashionably attired.



If you have never experienced polo, either on grass or on snow, you are in for a rare treat. Before we begin, we would like to explain a few rules of the game and the terminology involved. In Europe, the game is divided into 4 rounds called chukkas lasting 7.5 minutes each for the first three chukkas, and 7 minutes for the last chukka. There are two opposing teams with four players on each team. Each player has a minimum of two polo "ponies", actually horses that are 14.2 to 16 hands high at the withers, as the polo pony can only be used in a maximum of two chukkas, and may not be used in two consecutive chukkas. In addition

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to the players, there are two umpires also on horseback on the field, and a referee in a tower watching the match. The game is played on a field measuring 300 yards (274.2 meters) in length with a width of 160 yards (146.24 meters). When the game is played on snow, the ball that they use is larger (normally weighing 130 grams (4.5 ounces) and is 7-8 cm (2.7 - 3.1 inches) in diameter and is made of brightly colored plastic. The object of the game is for the teams to hit the ball with a long mallet called a stick held in the right hand while riding horseback to their goal. The horses wear special plastic coverings over their hooves for protection against the snow and heavy bandages on their legs to protect them against injury from the players' sticks.



Now that you have somewhat of an understanding of polo, let the first chukka begin! We arrived in St. Moritz in time to watch the exciting last match between **Team Cartier** (Adriano Agosti from Switzerland, Guillermo Terrera from Argentina, José Donoso from Chile, Marcos Di Paola and Argentina) and **Team Brioni** (Guy Schwarzenbach from Switzerland and Australia, Johnny Good from the UK, John Paul Clarkin from New Zealand, Nacho Gonzalez from the UK).



The day was bright with sunny skies, cold, and so windy that the St. Moritz ski slopes closed for the day, yet that did not deter the polo fans that came to cheer on their favorite team for the Cartier Trophy, and naturally, we were there cheering alongside them.

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Each team is handicapped according to the skills of the players, and to ensure that there are no ties, Team Brioni began with a ½-point lead. Imagine players galloping on horseback across the frozen lake over compacted snow with the wind whipping as they battled to score their goals. With adrenaline racing and no thought to the weather, by the end of the first chukka, Team Cartier had scored 2 goals. The excitement continued to build as Team Brioni went on to score 2 goals, Team Cartier scoring 1 goal and leading by a ½ point. By the end of the third chukka, Team Brioni had scored 3 goals to Team Cartier's 2, with Team Brioni now leading by a ½ point. In the final chukka Team Brioni scored 3 goals to Team Cartier's 1, with the crowd going wild as John Paul Clarkin of Team Brioni scored their last goal just as the bell rang!



Team Brioni results: Guy Schwarzenbach, 1 Goal, Johnny Good, 1 Goal, John Paul Clarkin, 3 Goals, and Nacho Gonzalez, 3 Goals.

Team Cartier results: Adriano Agosti, 1 Goal, Guillermo Terrera, 2 Goals, and Marcos Di Paola, 3 Goals.



Award Ceremony

By the time the Cartier trophy was presented to the players, the wind was so strong that the ceremony had to be delayed for a few minutes, as it had blown down the players' tent, however, that did little to stem the enthusiasm of the appreciative fans who waited until the very end of the day before leaving with dreams of next year's Cartier Polo World Cup on Snow.



Best Playing Pony 2008



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For information on **Switzerland**, please visit the website: www.MySwitzerland.com. For information on **St.**

Moritz, please visit the websites: www.StMoritz.ch and www.Engadine.StMoritz.ch.



For information on the **Cartier World Cup Polo on Snow**, please visit the website: www.PoloStMoritz.com. For information on the **St. Moritz Gourmet Festival** and all of its events, please visit the website: www.StMoritz-GourmetFestival.ch.

For information on **Swiss International Air Lines**, please visit the website: www.Swiss.com. For information on the **SwissPass**, please visit the website: www.SwissTravelSystem.com.

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