

Saudi Polo Federation

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Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Mohammed Al Habtoor



الاتحاد السعودي للبولو
SAUDI POLO FEDERATION

Q. Can I just take your name please.

MOHAMMED AL HABTOOR: Mohammed Al Habtoor.

Q. Great to be here in AIUla. What was your first reaction when you saw this place?

MOHAMMED AL HABTOOR: I was here in the first edition, which is just January before 2020, and it was for me the first time discovering areas within the region with this nature, these mountains. Beautiful area.

In the past we didn't know that there is such a thing in this area, but if you don't try, you do not know. I was invited by Amr Zedan, and when I came here I was astonished with what I saw, the nature, the history, et cetera, and all these things. I cannot list what I saw, many things.

Of course I know Saudi Arabia. I know the people of Saudi Arabia, generosity and all these positive energy things, but when I came first and saw the arena over here playing the sand, I had played four beach polo in Dubai. I am the one who started the beach polo, which is around 18 years ago. Four editions, but I haven't played for a very long time.

So when I came two years ago, I started, which I stopped 10 years -- it's not as easy as you see. It's very tiring. It's not like when you play on the field. But it's amazing, and you know what, I think the first series didn't have this much people attending, so people now are getting a little bit educated towards this sport, and I think -- I mean, the polo is not far from this region, from Persia and all this area. Here we know from our history in the Arab world, especially in this area with the horses, Arabian horses.

As you can see, beautiful show they have now.

Q. Playing in the last match, how was it? How was the match?

MOHAMMED AL HABTOOR: I mean, we were like 5-2 ahead and we went to 6, so they caught up with us 6-5. I was worried, a couple of minutes left, because their best player, which is Pelón, he worked harder in the last chukker, but we scored one more goal, so we are like 7-5. So we're looking forward to the next day, the match,

because last year we did the same thing, we win the first game, we lost the final. So we're looking forward to winning tomorrow so we can --

Q. I know you said it's the first time you've been playing polo for a long time?

MOHAMMED AL HABTOOR: This kind of polo, yes. Two years ago was the first after 10 years.

Q. Must be great to be back on the horse and playing again.

MOHAMMED AL HABTOOR: Of course. It's fun. It's amazing. It's close polo, not the big field when people go too far. Close to audience, also, which makes it more interesting; you hear people. On the big field you don't hear people when they scream. It's amazing, interesting. Looking forward to playing also the following year.

Q. Like you said, you've been such a big part of polo in Dubai. Great to see it growing in Saudi. We want to see polo growing in the region.

MOHAMMED AL HABTOOR: Yes. Me as chairman of the UAE Polo Federation, and Amr also, he's the chairman of the Saudi Polo Federation, tomorrow we have a meeting, me and him together, to see how we can coordinate between our tournaments and the tournaments on the big field or in Riyadh, and whether we can see how we can both of us support each other. We don't compete against each other with polo, so we can support the season equally between Saudi Arabia and the UAE.

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