

Saudi Polo Federation

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Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Pablo MacDonough



الاتحاد السعودي للبولو
SAUDI POLO FEDERATION

Q. Can you tell us about the dessert polo concept, the idea behind dessert polo? What's different? Why is it good?

PABLO MAC DONOUGH: Well, first of all, it's great because it gives you the chance to be playing in a facility like this where it can't get any better than having a field close to the rocks, and even at night, it's even better. We are very happy to be part of this event. Of course for us playing on grass is what we like the most, but this is playing on sand, and here it's like an easier way to put in a facility where people can come and enjoy polo and see what we do with the horses, with the ball, and to see a little bit what polo is about in general terms.

I believe that this event is going to be growing year after year, and I'm very happy to be part of the field.

Q. When you first came to AIUla and saw AIUla and this setup, how would you describe this?

PABLO MAC DONOUGH: Well, it's an incredible place. Not only for the first time, even coming now the second time, I was pretty amazed, too, even knowing the place from before. I don't know, you see the people coming from the first time, you see their faces and they all love it.

I don't know, I just need to be thankful for being here.

Q. To the sport of polo, there's that famous quote, a polo handicap is a ticket to the world. Has that been the case for you?

PABLO MAC DONOUGH: Yeah, polo has given me the chance to know a lot of places in the world, of course in our country, in America, in Europe, here in the Middle East, in Asia, and as well meeting a lot of people, people that without polo I would have never met them, definitely sport people, important people like from all over the world.

Yes, in a way, polo, it's a huge passport to the world and to different people.

Q. Obviously so great to see all these Saudis and people from the Middle East enjoying the sport, getting a chance to see the sport. What do you hope they feel

and they see when they watch it?

PABLO MAC DONOUGH: Well, we all know that horses are in their culture. It's something very important for them. They like it, and for polo, if you don't like horses, then you have to move on to another sport. Once you like horses, I think it's the best thing to do if you like horses is competing, and if you like competing, as well, it's playing polo. It gives you that kind of adrenaline where you need to hit the ball, where you compete against an opponent, where you use the strength of the horses and the ability of them and your ability. There is so many things mixed in one sport that I think that's the one thing that makes polo so special.

As I said at the beginning, if you are in a place where horses is an important part of their culture, then I think it's the right sport to start developing the game.

Q. Where do you think polo could go in Saudi? Do you think this could be a much bigger sport in Saudi Arabia?

PABLO MAC DONOUGH: Well, once they have polo on grass and they get more locals to play and to enjoy the game and to understand it, then you can think of bringing horses and players from all over the world to increase the level of the sport here. Normally that is what happens in every country in the world that we take part of the season or an event is the best players of the world come to one place to join different teams, and there you have a competition.

Of course it's step by step and you first need the real polo fields. Keeping the sand or the arena polo is very important to get new people to know the sport, but eventually you will need to have polo on grass and more horses and more players to make a better level, you know.

Q. What does it take to become a top polo player? What does it take to become the No. 1 polo player?

PABLO MAC DONOUGH: Well, it's a very long -- it's like every sport. You dedicate yourself a lot when you're a kid, not 100 percent because there are some other things in life you have to enjoy, of course, when you're young. You

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have friends, you have to go to school, there are many things you do until you decide 100 percent that you're going to become a professional polo player.

Once you decide that, then you have to fully commit to do the best, and not to see the others but to try to be the best version of yourself. I think that's the motivation we all have, and competing is fun, and if you like the horses it's even better. I think it's a key; you can't play polo if you don't horses.

I don't know, so many things, but again, I'm quite thankful because I have had until now a very good career, and of course in the future I want to do a lot more.

Q. Obviously Richard Mille an ambassador, a specific watch for polo, a watch which is designed for polo or something that makes it easier for you or makes it more enjoyable?

PABLO MAC DONOUGH: Well, first of all, I've been 10 years with Richard Mille, and I feel very privileged to be part of their family. I know Richard very well since the right beginning, and he's been amazing to -- the way they make you feel inside the brand is like being one member of a family. Now I'm very grateful, as well, because Richard Mille in the last five or six years, they have grown so much, and I'm still there, and I have a watch under my name. It can't get any better than that.

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