

Royal Palm

# POLO

Boca Raton, Florida







Gold Cup Presentation at Cowdray Park in England. Left to right: Joe Casey, Jack Oxley, Lord Cowdray, Mrs. John Covernton (wife of John Covernton, who is director of Martini International), John Oxley (captain) and Roy Barry, Jr.

By TOM OXLEY

# Boca Raton Team First American Team To Capture England's Gold Cup

I am extremely proud of my father and brother and the rest of the Boca Raton Polo Team, Joe Casey and Roy Barry, Jr. Actually, I have every right to be proud of them — because they made international news this last summer, by being the first American Polo Team ever to win England's Gold Cup, defeating Prince Philip's Windsor Park Team in the final game — 13 - 10. The team spent the months of June and July in Midhurst, England, and the month of August in Deauville, France. England was a fantastic success, and France was a number of near-trophy victories.

In England, all training and readiness was geared for the tough 20-goal competition in the Gold Cup. The Boca Raton team was ready for this one and did the impossible!

In France, both horses and players were tired and that extra sharpness was gone. However, the team still did unbelievably well getting to the finals of the Paris Cup and the Silver Cup. What was even more astounding was the fact that these tournaments were played on the handicap and the Boca team was giving away 3 and 4 goals to these teams.

In both the Paris Cup and the Silver Cup Boca Raton won the first game, and then won the semi-finals game by one goal, only to lose the final game of these two tournaments, by one goal. Even though they lost the Gold Cup Tournament in France, it was only lost by one goal to the French team, in the first round, — the team that went on to win the Gold Cup of France. This wasn't so bad considering that 7 of the 27 horses of the team were lame and couldn't be played, and the other 20 were just plain tired from two months of fast tournament play. The players were all just recovering from flu and not quite as razor-sharp — which proved that they were not superhuman, either.

But, what about England? It was fantastic, but I think my father's letter to Alan Howard, Publisher of the Social Spectator Magazine best explains the great triumph there. Therefore, in the following it is reprinted in its entirety, for the enjoyment of all.



# Americans Win England's Gold Cup For First Time

By John T. Oxley, Captain  
Boca Raton, Florida Team

## PONY POWER, TEAM WORK AND SKILLFUL PLAY GAVE BOCA RATON VICTORY OVER WINDSOR PARK



Boca Raton Team in England as they parade on field before a Gold Cup game at Cowdray Park. Left to right Joe Casey, Jack Oxley, Roy Barry, Jr., John Oxley, and Umpire.

We had been planning to take a team to England and Europe since 1962, but due to accidents and unforeseen circumstances the trip had been postponed from time to time. Finally in February of 1970, we definitely decided that if we could organize a well balanced team we would make the trip this year. We selected the following players and entered our team as the Boca Raton team from Florida:

	<u>Handicap</u>
1. Joe Casey	4
2. Jack Oxley	5
3. Roy Barry, Jr.	8
4. John T. Oxley	<u>3</u>
	20 Goals

Alternates:

Lester Armour III	4
Lester Armour, Jr.	3

We chartered a DC8 Stretch Jet to transport the ponies from Kennedy International Airport, New York to Heathrow Airport, London. The Boca Raton team took 27 ponies and transported 3 of Hap Sharp's ponies, making a total of 30 head. The ponies left Kennedy on May 31, flying time being 6 hours between New York and London. All the ponies arrived in excellent shape.

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Joe Casey and Roy Barry, Jr. entered several of the lower goal tournaments that were playing there during the first half of June with other English players.

Lord Cowdray of Cowdray Park set up a couple of invitational tournaments for the Boca Raton team, the first invitational tournament being on June 21st, for the Coach Behar Cup. Our team was not yet rolling at full strength and we lost this first game by a score of 7½ to 5, to the Jersey Lilies. In previous years the Jersey Lilies team had won the English Gold Cup two or three years in succession.

Our next invitational tournament was for the Argentine Ambassador's Cup. We met the Pimm's team, a 20 goal team that included Daniel Gonzalez, 9 goals. Pimm's was the winner of the English Gold Cup in 1968. Boca Raton won this match with a score of 8 to 5.

After the above two tournaments, we continued to practice our team as a 20 goal team, and work toward getting our players and horses up to their peak for the beginning of the Cowdray Gold Cup. There were ten well balanced 20 goal teams that entered and played in the Gold Cup Tournament. Boca Raton's first game was against the Pimm's team. This game was played on super-fast ground and was probably the best, with the exception of our final game against Windsor Park. One Sports Editor commented, "Hanut Singh, whose team the Jersey Lilies, had won the Gold Cup in prior

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years (Hanut was absent this year having retired from polo) would have appreciated the close marking by both sides which, although producing top-pace polo, resulted in the low score of 6-4 to Boca Raton. The Americans' handier ponies turned the scale — and, perhaps, Roy Barry."

The semi-finals between Boca Raton and Stowell Park was a real battle. This time it appeared undoubtedly that our team was suffering from tournament nerves, and it was Roy Barry's outstanding hitting of 4 penalty goals which lifted our team into the finals, with a 10-9 win.

So on July 19 it was the two giants, Boca Raton and Windsor Park that rode out to contest the Gold Cup. Windsor Park having won the Cup in 1969 were out to defend their title. The crowd was expecting a battle royal, and in spite of a half inch of rain the previous night, and a showery forenoon which soon caused a badly scarred lawns polo grounds, they got it. When Windsor scored the first two goals I am sure that neither team or the spectators would have liked to forecast the afternoon's result. Boca Raton soon settled down to top form and 6 of the fastest 20 goal chukkas which the writer has ever played in polo. Roy Barry was hitting exceptionally well in this game and was making long passes to Joe Casey, and Joe was successful in sending 7 of them through the uprights. The ratio 13-10, Final Score, just about gauged Boca Raton's superiority, particularly in pony power.

During the first period the grounds were quite slick and both Joe Casey and I narrowly escaped going on the ground twice by the ponies slipping. Most of the sports editors of the press stated that this was the fastest, best and most

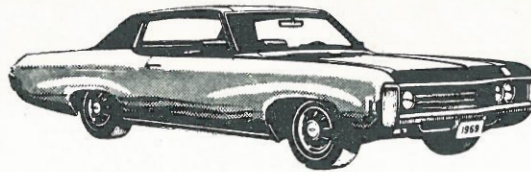
interesting match ever played in England during the past decade. They further stated that the high scoring was indicative of high class polo and anyone that was "treading in" on the ground at half time would recollect that all of the hoof prints were up and down the middle of the ground and that the umpires seldom had to throw the ball in from the sidelines. (Note for those of you who are not familiar with English polo: All polo is played there without side boards.) It was a splendid galloping final game and every player hit accurately and always to the center. One sports writer was quoted as saying "Windsor played great polo, as well or better than they did in 1969 when they won the Cup. Lord Patrick Beresford played the best game of his life and, on Archie David's ponies, was the one Englishman able to compete with the American string of brilliant thoroughbreds." At this point I would like to pay credit where credit is due, and say thanks to a great American sire, "Woodie D." (better known as "Stormy" of the Walt Disney movie), who sired more than half of the American string of 27 ponies shipped to England.

All of the English teams were mounted predominantly on Argentine ponies, and I should like to quote Sir Andrew Horseborough Porter, Sports Editor of the Field Magazine, who paid, I think, the American ponies their greatest compliment, "But the American ponies were most interesting. They are the same type as the Jaipur team brought to England in 1933, averaging about 15 hand, 1", thoroughbred and schooled to stop on their hocks. The predominance of Argentine players and ponies — (I beg their pardon) horses — in England during the last 20 years has made the

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Final of Gold Cup at Cowdray Park, Left to right: Major Lord Patrick Beresford, Windsor Park (Prince Philip's Team), Jack Oxley, Boca Raton (USA). Boca Raton beats Windsor Park (Prince Philip's Team) in finals 13-10 to become first American team ever to win Gold Cup of England!



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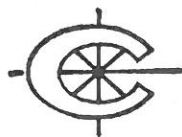


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John Oxley is shown above with his top pony "UPFRONT", who won the Gold Cup award in England for the best playing pony. Upfront is a 5 year old mare by Woodie "D" ("Stormy") out of a thoroughbred mare "Our Set Up."

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idea of checking on the hocks 'old fashioned'. Two hands on the unbreakable reins and a swing on the forehand is modern polo equitation. Not that the Beresford brothers use this method, but throughout the tournament the Americans turned inside their various opponents and always had their stick hand free."

There were three other foreign teams beside Boca Raton, and six teams from England. Cowdray Park played an all English side with four young players averaging less than 25 years of age. I made the following statement to the press in connection with this team, "In a couple of years I see these boys probably winning the English Gold Cup and we hopefully pray that they will make a grand tour of the United States."

The other three foreign teams were Les Diables Bleus from France, San Miguel of Spain, and Greenhill Farm of Tulsa, Oklahoma. One writer said that in any ordinary year any one of these teams might have reached the semi-finals, but the improvement of the English players and their increased understanding of team play, found their opponents' weak points. Les Diables Bleus and San Miguel relied too much on individual play, and Greenhill Farm, although playing good polo, ran out of pony power after a few chukkas.

The Windsor Park team consisted of Lord Patrick Beresford (4 goals) at 1; Lord Waterford (4 goals) at 2; P. Gallardo, replacing Prince Philip at 3, (5 goals); and Paul Withers (7 goals) at back. Roy Barry, Jr. probably played one of the best polo games of his entire career; but as every polo player knows, it takes four men to win a polo game, and certainly Joe Casey and Jack Oxley can be commended for their fine support. The Boca Raton team played in England all the months of June and July, and

shipped the ponies to Deauville, France on August 5.

Before leaving England we were invited for a 20 goal match against Windsor Park to be played at Windsor Park, and by this time Prince Philip had recovered sufficiently to regain his position from Gallardo. This was also a very fast 20 goal game and our team was beaten in the last two seconds of the 6th chukka by a score of 7-6. It was apparent that the American team could not continue at their peak form as our team was beaten in this game for the Westbury Cup presented by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

As a loyal supporter of the game of polo, the most encouraging thing I encountered during the entire trip, is the outstanding progress and recovery of excellent polo in England since World War II. Certainly the polo world will be forever indebted to Lord Cowdray for his dedicated work in sponsoring and restoring high goal polo to this country. It really is an example of what we could do in the United States if everyone would get together and do some long range planning and personal sacrifice toward improving the game in America.

All in all, it was a most enjoyable international polo trip for our team. We were so grateful for the generous hospitality extended to us by the English people. The writer very heartily recommends to all polo players everywhere that if at all possible they should make this trip sometime. For certainly it has been one of the most memorable polo trips I have ever experienced, and I am sure I can speak for the rest of my teammates. On behalf of all the American team I would like to express my sincere and grateful thanks for a lifetime of memories.