

Reigning Champs Mekhong Clinches Royal Cup from PWC New Zealand All Blacks in the 2018 King's Cup Elephant Polo Finals



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Bangkok, March 11th, 2018: After four days of fun festivities, fabulous food, live music and elephant polo action, featuring ten teams from all over the world comprising of international rugby players, professional polo players and the stars of the event – 20 ex-street elephants, the final day of the King's Cup Elephant Polo Tournament offered plenty of memorable moments and a returning champion team.

The highly anticipated final, presided over by the King of Thailand's Royal representative, His Excellency Privy Councillor Air Chief Marshal Chalit Pukbhasuk, placed two stellar teams – PWC New Zealand All Blacks with 2017 winners Mekhong to defend their title in a closely fought penalty shoot off.

The Mekhong team was comprised of the talented Kalaan brothers, Uday and Angad, along with Cameron Humphries, whilst the PWC New Zealand All Blacks featured international rugby stars Robin Brooke, Steve McDowall and Olo Brown. The trunk to trunk action kept spectators in suspense as the New Zealanders pulled ahead with a two shot lead over the 2017 winners, Mekhong in the last few minutes of the game. However it was left up to Mekhong's Cameron Humphries to even the score which he did with ease bringing the game to a nail-biting sudden death shootout that finally ended on 7-6 to the reigning champions Mekhong, with Uday Ka-laan scoring a stunning winning goal.

The exciting event has not only been about fun and games – a generous sum of over THB 4 million was raised for many elephant charity projects during the event bringing a total sum raised to date to almost US\$1.7 million. Funds from the 2018 event will be donated to various projects including the Zoological Parks Organisation of Thailand which supports veterinary and educational projects to improve the year-round lives of elephants and mahouts in the Surin Province where ex-street elephants face ongoing hardship.

Other significant benefits from the money raised by the tournament include: the ongoing Thai Elephant Therapy Project which has been underway since 2009 in conjunction with Chiang Mai University's Department of Occupational Therapy, with future clinics to include children with Down's syndrome and other conditions now committed until the end of 2018 as well as the funding of Asia's first workshop to show traditional elephant trainers and camp owners the benefits of Positive Reinforcement Training for captive elephants with additional workshops this year in Myanmar reaching teams responsible for over 200 elephants.

The King's Cup Elephant Polo Tournament has also been recognized with a silver medal for Sports CSR Initiative of the Year at the Asia SPIA Sports Industry Awards in partnership with the Thai Ministry of Tourism and Sports and the Sports Authority of Thailand, the awards applauds sports

industry leaders that demonstrate a balance between business, community and environment.

Final Leaderboard for 2018 King's Cup Elephant Polo Tournament:

1. Mekhong
2. PWC New Zealand All Blacks
3. King Power
4. JW Blue Label
5. Casillero Del Diablo (CDD)
6. Angus
7. Challenge Everything (INVNT)
8. IBM
9. Pelago Luxury
10. Italia

His Excellency Privy Councillor Air Chief Marshal Chalit Pukbhasuk presents the King's Cup trophy to the winning Mekhong team

(In Photo) William E. Heinecke, Founder and Chairman of Minor International, with the winning Mekhong team members.

Photo (from left to right)

1. Uday Kalaan
2. William E. Heinecke, Founder and Chairman of Minor International,
3. Mr. Kamolnai Chaixanien, Senior Vice President of Thai Beverage Public Company Limited
4. Cameron Humphries
5. Angad Kalaan

For more information please visit: www.anantaraelephantpolo.com