

The 2018 King's Cup Raises Millions for Thailand's Pachyderms



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Bangkok, March 12th 2017: After four days of fun festivities on the bank of Bangkok's Chao Phraya River, the 16th King's Cup Elephant Polo Tournament wrapped up on Sunday 11th March. A total of ten teams with over 40 players from around the world created many memorable moments on and off the pitch during the annual charity event.

A total of 20 unemployed ex-street elephants took part in this year's tournament, during which time they received full veterinary checks from the Zoological Parks Organisation of Thailand under the patronage of His Majesty the King of Thailand and the Department of Livestock Development. In addition, all elephants were given essential vitamins, food and care which are not available to them during their normal daily lives.

The event had something for everyone, kicking off with a colourful opening parade, with the opening ceremony overseen by the Kru Ba Yai, Thailand's 'elephant spirit men', traditional dancers, and Children's Day where local school children were invited to get up close with the elephants and learn more about their national animal. A range of educational walks, games and activities all teaching the benefits of elephant conservation and wellbeing were showcased by the organisers. Saturday was 'Ladies Day', popularly known as 'Bangkok Ascot', where ladies dressed to impress with the best dressed lady winning an amazing holiday Oman.

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 THB 55 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 highly anticipated final was presided over by the King of Thailand's Royal representative, H.E. Privy Councillor Air Chief Marshal Chalit Pukbhasuk. Reigning champions Mekhong went head to head with PWC New Zealand All Blacks culminating in a thrilling penalty shootout with Mekhong clinching the title in the last moments of the match, resulting in a final score of 7-6

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

For more information on the 16th Annual King's Cup Elephant Polo Tournament, please visit www.anantaraelephantpolo.com.