

# Boys & Their Toys

## Are you Polo enough?

Polo is a sport that requires hard work, dedication, and passion to bring a team to victory. Game on!

By Behonce Beh

**S**peed. Agility. A keen eye on the ball. Perceived to be the sport of kings, polo has found a following in our local shores.

Trailblazing the sport locally in Malaysia and around the world is the director of BP Diagnostic Centre Sdn Bhd, Chevy Beh, who has found a place in the world of polo.

Beh's personal achievement in polo is considered one of the best in Asia. His accolades include being champion of the Harriman Cup in 2008 and 2010, being awarded the United States Polo Association (USPA) Intercollegiate All Star in 2007, and champion of the Polo Masters Palermo, Argentina in 2004.

His passion for polo started at the tender age of seven when he followed his father, BP Healthcare group chairman, Datuk Beh Chun Chuan, on polo tournaments abroad.

"The best place to learn polo is Argentina as they have the natural resources; the flat land, and the horses." Beh was trained there and tries to make it a point to play in Argentina once a year.

"We used to play a lot as a family, locally and in England. However, since my brothers and I left to further our studies, it was a harder the to coordinate the team. Now that we are back, we intend



to play more as a family," he explained.

The family team, BP Polo team was established in 1989 by Datuk Beh, who saw the need for a team name and polo organisation to compete globally.

The Beh family's passion for polo is in their blood and this keeps them competing whenever possible. The BP Polo team is widely recognised in the polo circuit as they have competed in many countries namely: Brunei, Singapore, Spain, England, United States, Argentina, China, Chile and France.

In line with their passion for everything polo, the family has a stable of 18 horses, with a majority of them being cross-breeds of Argentinean Criollo and racing thoroughbreds.

"Criollo horses are easy horses without speed, but thoroughbreds have the speed but not much handling. The cross breed combines the best of both worlds," explained Beh.

Unlike skiing or golf, there is a lot of preparation involved in keeping the horses, and the players in tip top condition.

"It is not a sport where you can buy the equipment and leave it in the store room if you don't like the game. With horses, you have to constantly feed them and keep them fit.

Being a team oriented sport, there is a need for a stable of fit and able horses that are in tip top condition at all times. Prior to any tournaments, the horses need to be trained well, however not pushed to their limits. "You can't over-train your horses or they will be exhausted during the game."

Polo horses too are like athletes. They follow a strict diet regime, are trained and prepared for the tournament.

On a personal level, polo players are required to be in fit riding form. Beh said that aside from gym training, stretching is important before a game of polo.

His latest polo tournament in China was one of the more memorable ones where he played in a "Snow Polo Challenge"

Asia's first ever Snow Polo, held in

February, took place at the Golden Metropolitan Polo Club in Tianjin, where the polo pitch was covered with artificial snow. The event saw six top global teams competing and promoting the sport in China. Beh, representing the Hong Kong team, was the only Asian player to play in the tournament.

Polo is often played by the *crème de la crème* of society; the who's who of every nation. However, he clarified that polo is not a competitive sport.

"Polo has always been played as friendly matches. The sport helps open lots of doors for you as it is not a game played by the masses."

Judging from the turnout at the game in Tianjin, Beh believes that polo is not a dying sport with China's *nouveau riche* showing interest in the sport.

