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Cal Poly Women's Polo Team Wins First Place at 2023 Nationals

SAN LUIS OBISPO —The Cal Poly Women's Polo Team won the national title at the 2023 National Championship at the recent 2023 USPA Division II National Intercollegiate Championships.

The Cal Poly team consists of six men's team members and 14 women's team members, and another 10 club members with students from various colleges throughout the university.

After earning a wild card slot leading up to the final competition, the team worked its way to the finals. The team, under the coaching of Megan Judge, overcame a 6-2 deficit at half time to defeat the University of Connecticut to take the first-place ranking.

The team has been working together since September at Cal Poly's Oppenheimer Family Equine Center and Central Coast Polo Club to prepare for the national competition.

"When the clock was counting down, all I could think about was how grateful I am to be a part of the team and how appreciative I am for my coach, Megan Judge," said Anna Mendez, a third-year animal science major. "Her mentorship has allowed all of us to grow exponentially and this win was just as big for us as it was for her. We have put in so many hours of hard work to get to this point and it made the win that much sweeter, especially because we were the wildcard for the tournament."

The women's team finished the season 8 - 2. At the USPA Division II National Intercollegiate Championships, held at Cal Poly, the team defeated the University of Wisconsin in penalty shot overtime 12-11, Oklahoma State 10-7, and on the final day of competition the University of Connecticut 9-8.

Earlier in the season the Cal Poly team played and won against Stanford, Harvard, UC Santa Barbara, Idaho and Montana State.

"We spent a lot of time working on things like discipline and staying cool, calm and collected, and having the mental game down before we went into the arena," said Judge. "I'm very proud of all these young athletes. They set down their goals and they did all the hard work to focus and reach them. We're very proud to be Cal Poly Mustangs."

The Cal Poly Polo Team has been on campus for more than 45 years, ranking as regional champions 12 of those years.

The women's team is comprised of third-year wine and viticulture major Camilla McFall, third-year animal science major Anna Mendez, second-year animal science major Caroline Mathews, third-year architecture major Nicole Bailey, second-year animal science major Sofie Rosenquist, along with junior varsity players third-year animal science major Molly Feins, first-year electrical engineering major Reese Tepper and second-year plant sciences major Maya Pena. The men's team is led by non-competing club members, Cuesta student Cort Rowley, club president third-year industrial technology and packaging major Max Irwin, third-year agribusiness major Jack Dresick, second-year agricultural systems management major Carson Stueve, fourth-year computer science major Grant Baer and first-year agricultural systems management major Daniel Miranda (also a member of the Cal Poly Rodeo Team).

About Coach Megan Judge

Megan Carter Judge is the owner and manager of the Central Coast Polo Club in San Luis Obispo, Calif. Judge, along with her associates, started the Central Coast Polo Club in April 2002. She is a U.S. Polo Association (USPA)-certified arena polo umpire and instructor and has been coaching for more than 20 years.

Judge graduated from Cal Poly with an undergraduate and master's degree in agribusiness. While attending Cal Poly, she competed for the university's intercollegiate polo team from 1995-1999 and was a member of the All-West All-Star team all four years. She was also a member of the Western Regional Championship teams in 1996 and 1999.

About Cal Poly's College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences

Cal Poly is a nationally ranked, comprehensive polytechnic university. The university's College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences, cafes.calpoly.edu, is comprised of expert faculty members who take pride in their ability to transform academically motivated students into innovative professionals ready to solve the complex challenges associated with feeding the world in sustainable ways. Students have access to state-of-the-art laboratories, including ranch land, orchards, vineyards and forests, all of which provide the basis for Cal Poly's Learn by Doing methodology. It is the fifth-largest college of agriculture in the country, with 4,000 undergraduate students.