

WESTON, Fla., Oct. 9, 2013 /PRNewswire-iReach/ -- South Florida's four bike polo clubs, Dani
a
sed online bicycle purveyor and title sponsor
[Republic Bike](#)
and
Miami's
equipment and services vendor St. Cago Polo Works have set the stage for the world's leading
sixty-four bike polo teams, comprising 192 players from six continents, to converge on Weston
Regional Park's rinks on
October 16
th
-20
th
to compete for the top spot at the
[Republic Bike World Hardcourt Bike Polo Championship \(WHBPC\) 2013](#)
presented by St. Cago Polo Works.

The championship opens with a qualification tournament - the [WHBPC 2013 Wild Card Entry](#) -
slated for
Wednesday Oct. 16th
, which will allow many of
South Florida's
first-rate male and female polo players to showcase their skills and compete for a chance to
swing their mallets in the championship.

The [WHBPC 2013 International Ladies Bench Event](#) is scheduled for Sunday Oct. 20th, an

opportunity for the female cyclists who participate in the sport to tout their talent in the rink and battle it out.

"Bike polo is an amazing community of incredibly passionate people doing something they love. The group of people I've met playing is incredibly supportive, especially the women. I've met women from around the world, and you can jump on the court and play and there's an instant sense of camaraderie and friendship," said KCJ Szwedzinski, a 31-year old artist who lives and plays polo in Jacksonville, FL. A native of Charleston, SC, KCJ trains service dogs and works at Lululemon Athletica.

"There are some badass women playing this sport. Bringing women from around the world to play for a bench minor is incredibly exciting because it highlights women in a sport that others might not think women would play, and cheering on my fellow ladies is always fun!" said KCJ, who has been playing bike polo for two years.

[Hardcourt bike polo](#) is a rapidly growing alternative sport. It combines the athleticism of precision cycling with the team camaraderie of soccer and hockey. Over 400 international clubs are registered with the sport's governing bodies and it's seen a 25% growth in the last 18 months alone.

South Florida's expanding polo community consists of clubs in [Miami](#) , [Ft. Lauderdale](#) , [West Broward](#) a

nd [Palm Beach](#)

. The oldest among the local clubs,

Ft. Lauderdale

hosted the North American Hardcourt Bike Polo Southeast Regional Qualifier in

May 2012

and the All Florida Bike Polo Championship in

December 2009

. Miami's

club, which just passed its two-year anniversary, is one of the largest in the nation and among the strongest at introducing new players to the sport.

"Our main priorities have always been to spread awareness of the sport, make it easy for new players to get in the rink and to supply quality gear for current players," said Andrew Feher, the 30-year-old lighting director for Univision's Despierta America who is behind

Miami's

[St. Cago Polo Works](#)

"Tournaments are a key part in supporting those priorities, advancing the sport and most importantly bringing our polo community together. When talks started about hosting WHBPC 2013 in South Florida we couldn't let this opportunity pass. Ever since Eric Madrid, now president of Miami Bike Polo (MBP), and I founded MBP a little over two years ago, we've wanted to host a major tournament. Now with the help of the four host clubs, our sponsors, the NAH (North American Hardcourt Polo Association) and St. Cago, we hope to produce one of the best WHBPCs to date. We all couldn't be more excited," he said.

Eric Madrid, a 32-year-old freelancer in film and TV production who founded the MBP club and is also the president of the [Magic City Bicycle Collective](#) – a nonprofit bicycle repair education center – is among the local talent set to throw in his mallet in the WHBPC 2013 Wild Card Entry on Oct. 16th for a chance to compete in the championship.

A leading online source for made-to-order bikes based in Dania Beach, FL, [Republic Bike](#) offers customized bicycles with versatile components based on quality, value and aesthetics. Their bikes are practical, affordable and built by design, encouraging customers to take an active role in creating the perfect bike for their individual needs. Republic Bike also extends their "*built by us & you*"

designs to certain corporate customers needing something as unique as they are and have outfitted

Google

with a fleet of bikes that employees use to get around the Googleplex campus in Mountain View, California

[St Cago Polo Works](#) is South Florida's top purveyor of bike polo equipment and services, focusing on custom mallet builds, dual pull brake levers and fusion capped HDPE heads renowned for their quality and durability.

Other sponsors for the Republic Bike WHBPC 2013 include bike component fabricator **Origin 8**, British bike polo clothing brand

Chunk Clothing

, polo bicycle frame specialist

Velo Lucuma

, bike polo equipment source

Fixcraft

, Canadian bike polo equipment purveyor

Northern Standard

,

London

-based equipment vendor

Magic Bike Polo

,

Toronto

-based mallet maker

Modifide

,

Massachusetts

helmet manufacturer

Bern

,

Miami's

bike-friendly

Wood Tavern

in the Wynwood Art District and the

National MS Society

.

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