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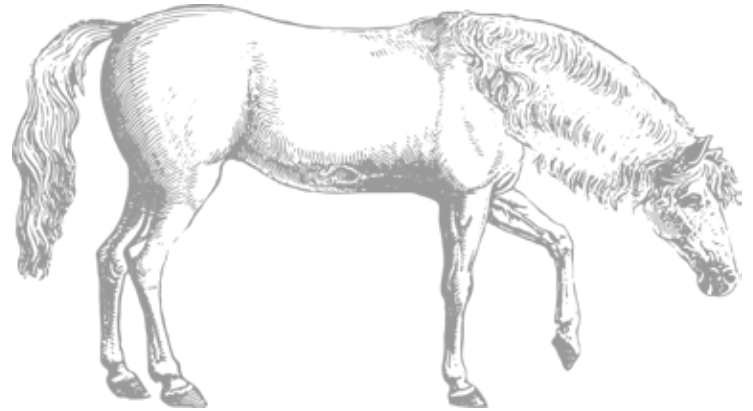
POLO IN BALDWIN COUNTY

Enjoyable for both spectators, tailgaters and players

14

EASY ROLLS

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LOCAL FOCUS FAITH & WORSHIP PAGE 15

ON THE COVER: Did you know you can attend a polo match in Baldwin County? The Spring Season is underway and runs through May 31. See the story on page 6 for all the details and how you can attend the next match. Photo provided by Ethan Galis Photography

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Club President, Hutch Radcliff. Photography by Steve Reed

THE SPORT OF KINGS

BY LINDA WILLIFORD

Polo is often called the “sport of kings.” It has a connection to royalty and the elite society. It carried an image of elegance and was played only by the wealthy. But at Point Clear Polo Club in Baldwin County, that image shifts into something far more approachable—and distinctly Southern.

Ethan Galis, Sponsorship Coordinator for the Point Clear Polo Club, said that you can be a spectator or a player. “This sport is for everyone.” There are no dress codes for the spectators, and you can tailgate right up to the field in your vehicle with your family and pet (pets on leashes, of course). Galis is also the announcer for the Sunday games and heads all the marketing at Point Clear Polo Club. He plays the sport, as well.

Galis said, “I am originally from Fort Worth, Texas, and was first introduced to sport polo at the University of Texas at Austin.

While there, I became the president of the polo club for two years.” After graduating in 2013, Galis joined the U.S. Polo Association for an internship program designed to create more managers and polo instructors.

Galis said, “I have been mentored under various club sport managers, polo instructors, and have played at various clubs throughout the United States.” Galis has played in New Zealand and was an assistant manager in Ireland.

One would think that you would need a little experience with horses, but Galis said, “You don’t have to have any horse experience to become a polo player. All you need are boots and a helmet.” They provide the horses. They also provide lessons. Megan Flynn, co-worker at the club and also a graduate of the internship at the US Polo Association, is the head instructor at Point Clear Polo Club. They offer lessons for the seasons, which are spring and fall. The spring season runs from April through May. And the

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Ethan Galis, Sponsorship Coordinator at Clear Point Polo Club.
Photography by Linda Williford



Megan Flynn, Head Instructor at Point Clear Polo Club.
Photography by Linda Williford

< FROM PAGE 6

fall season runs from October through November.

The game is played on horseback between two teams of four players who use mallets with long flexible handles to drive wooden (or strong plastic) balls down a grass field and between two goal posts. The ball is hit with the side of the mallet, like a golf putter. It is the oldest of equestrian sports.

Galis says that 95% of the game depends on the horses, due to their strength, speed, and agility. In polo, these horses are traditionally called ponies, regardless of their actual size. The most common breed is the Argentine thoroughbred, a cross between hardy Argentine ranch horses and American thoroughbreds.

Polo players are not to be compared to jockeys, who must meet strict height and weight requirements. However, taller, bigger players have a natural advantage in polo, since it is a contact sport. Riders can legally use their horse to bump into an opponent to push them away to gain possession of the ball.

Galis explains that each polo team is backed by a sponsor, who hires three professional players, and he plays alongside them. For these athletes, polo is a full-time commitment. They spend

long hours not only preparing for the matches, but also caring for and training their horses. Each player usually maintains a string of eight to twelve horses, which travel with them to competitions to ensure peak performance throughout each game.

The spring season runs from April 19 to May 31. Galis invites and encourages everyone to come out to the Sunday matches, which are at 1:00 pm and 3:00 pm. Admission is free. You can reserve a tailgate parking spot for better viewing. They offer tents to rent for your comfort and also have food trucks. Galis says, "We have tailgate competitions with prizes for the best tailgate setups.

During the half-time breaks, our spectators can go on the field and stomp down the divots that the horses make." It's important that the horses play on a level field, which helps to avoid accidents and injuries for both horses and players. "It is a good time for people to stretch their legs and even talk to the players," Galis said.

Go to Facebook or Instagram for more information. Contact Ethan Galis with any questions at 817-991-1366. For polo lessons, contact Megan Flynn at 414-651-8091. Point Clear Polo Club's location is 13456 County Rd. 48, Silverhill, AL

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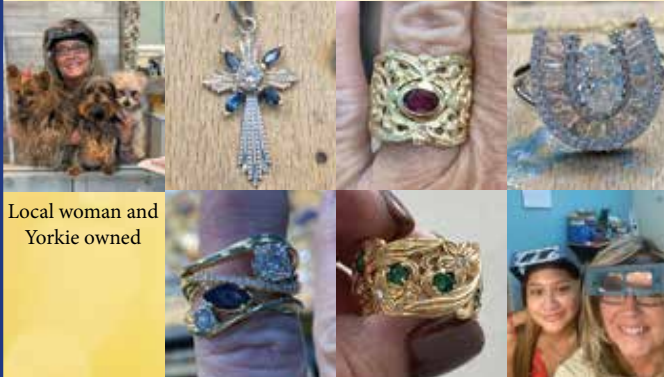
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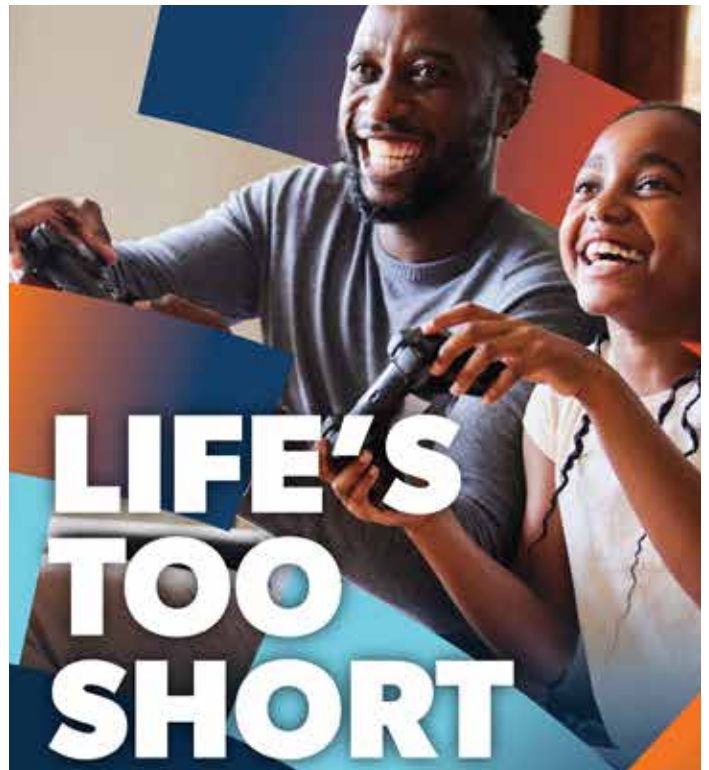


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Easy Bread Rolls *From the kitchen of Julie Hutcherson*

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 CUPS WARM WATER 110°
- 1/2 CUP WHITE SUGAR
- 1 AND 1/2 TABLESPOONS ACTIVE DRY YEAST
- 1 AND 1/2 TEASPOONS SALT
- 1/4 CUP VEGETABLE OIL (CAN USE OLIVE OR AVOCADO)
- 5-6 CUPS BREAD FLOUR OR ALL PURPOSE

PREPARATION:

- In a mixer bowl, add 2 tablespoons of the sugar with 2 cups warm water. Mix till dissolved. Add yeast, small stir and let activate for 5 minutes. It will look foamy on top.
- Add salt, oil and remaining sugar. Start mixing, using the dough hook. Slowly add flour one cup at a time. You may not need all the flour. Your dough should pull away from the bowl, sticking to the bottom in a small circle.
- Knead dough for 7 minutes. Place in a well-oiled bowl, cover with a thin dish towel and let rise one hour in a warm spot.
- Punch dough down. Roll out and cut rolls. Let rise another 30 minutes.
- Bake on a greased pan for 30 minutes at 350°. Spread melted butter on top after baking and enjoy.





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