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Minnie Keating

Student aims to take high-goal strategies back to club level

By Hayley Heatley



Bray was impressed with how quietly Minnie (shown on Indigo) rode, getting along with even some of his more sensitive horses.

Minnie Keating is no stranger to the world of polo, boasting an impressive resume in polo management with roles ranging from director of equine management at Newport Polo Club and interscholastic coach to camp coordinator and adult polo instructor. She has played in Newport's International Polo Series since 2010 and made it to the Girls' Interscholastic National Championships.

When presented with an opportunity to mentor under American Team USPA player Jesse Bray in Wellington, Florida, she eagerly accepted. Keating began her three-month mentorship in February and quickly became accustomed to the fast-paced and intense atmosphere surrounding the busy winter months in Wellington.

Keating traveled to sunny Florida, excited to leave Rhode Island and surround herself with horses in the mecca of polo. Before accepting the opportunity, Keating spent time researching Bray and his organization, watching game videos and inquiring about the philosophies and training methods Graham Bray, Jesse's father, brought over from New Zealand. She felt the Bray's interests and values regarding polo and horses aligned with hers, giving her confidence in her decision. She was ready to jump into the season, surrounding herself in the polo industry at its highest levels in the United States.

Upon arrival, Keating confronted the challenge of being a young female in a male-dominated sport headfirst.

"I work very hard to show that I can keep up with the guys. Wellington and the high-goal season can be very intense," she said.

Keating's riding abilities and patience quickly made her an asset to the organization. Bray immediately saw her riding talent and paired her with Trobi, a young grey Thoroughbred working her way up in the string.

"I heard Minnie rode really well, but you never know exactly how someone will get along with your horses until they get on. I was impressed with how

“It can be very intense, but just like a horse, keep your head down and back to the wind and continue doing your best. Your work ethic and ability to do your job will show.”

—Minnie Keating

quietly she rode and got along with even some of my more sensitive horses,” said Bray. “I enjoy helping people in the sport. I hope she is able to take something from this experience and bring home ideas to her horses and club.”

Keating shared a similar sentiment. “Everything I am learning and absorbing, I want to try and implement at home. Even small things like starting the day earlier to allow the horses more time to rest during the day, down to body clipping and the amount of maintenance that goes into keeping horses fit and looking good for this level of polo,” she said.

Her father, Dan Keating, supported her decision to come to Wellington for the winter to learn. “It’s a great opportunity for a young professional committed to our industry to work in the most competitive polo in our country. We’re hoping the skills and things that Minnie has learned will be able to help us, at the club level, take our organization to the next level,” he said.

The temperament of the horses surprised Keating the most when she first began riding and working with them.

“I anticipated the horses being hot and full of power, which they are, but I didn’t expect to see how calm and mellow they can be. They are very responsive and have a “tranquilo” side of them,” laughed Keating.

She formed a bond with Trobi, but had a hard time picking which horse stood out as her favorite.

“Venice and Disney are beyond words, they are hard to beat. The horses are all so different. I am learning their small habits and what works and doesn’t work while schooling and riding.” Seeing the horses succeed on the field has been the most rewarding aspect of her mentorship. “I am here for the horses in all ways, that is why I came down here.”

Keating’s ultimate polo dream mirrors that of many involved in the polo industry. She would like to own a farm, polo school and breeding operation while also traveling to play polo.



Minnie’s love of horses is evident. She is shown here with Laguna.

After spending a month in Florida, she offered the following advice: It can be very intense, but just like a horse, keep your head down and back to the wind and continue doing your best. Your work ethic and ability to do your job will show.

Keating’s work ethic and love of horses is evident. “She is a very hard worker, and always has a smile on her face. I have really enjoyed working with Minnie, and I hope to have her come back. She has done an excellent job with all of the horses,” said Bray. “Passing on knowledge about horses and polo can only help the industry and sport grow.” . ○