

Such a great number of players, playing on different courts and all living in different parts of such big city as London, a certain amount of organisation was needed. It was necessary to gather up all the info on a good blog (www.lfss.com), to determine when, and where to play. The blog also became a great way to carry on teasing each other. These days the players have agreed to play in Downham and Mitchinson in North London (on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays) and in Newington in South London (on Wednesdays). They also play in Hurlingham in West London on Thursdays. Sadly there are no covered courts apart from a car park in Peckham in the South West. Generally, they just play shirtless under the rain!

In fact, their relations with the police and locals are pretty good. Some are really surprised to see the level of skills shown by the players, and are amazed by these young cyclists handling a mallet in one hand and a bike in the other. "It fuck'n wicked!"

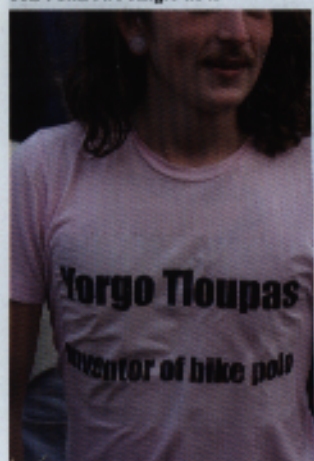
As usual, each builds his own mallet, the bikes are built and customised, and the courts are found by the players with no help from the authorities. The London council had agreed to improve the Brick lane court by installing fences, but sadly it just wasn't appropriate for bike polo and wasn't often available. Not far from there, many shops figured out a new sport was emerging, and thus provides adequate gear. Brick lane bikes imports quality products, like velocity chucker wheels with 48 spokes. 14 bike co is sponsoring and developing a special frame with the BAD polo team. Holloway Cycle supports the Malice team. Push Cycle gives a 10% discount to any member of the London Hardcourt Bike Polo association. The saddle makers Brooks graciously supports every tournament. They even offer customised saddles emblazoned with the major tournaments.

You can find many pictures of bike polo in London on Flickr; on the accounts of Ray Cheung: rtocheung, Robb: Slamm, Roxy: roxysreal, Will: wiganwil, M.J.S and many more. The director Brendan McNamee (BAD Polo/Blunt films) directs and produces bike polo films regularly shown at the Bicycle Film Festival (www.bicyclefilmfestival.com).

The London bike polo community is not the oldest, but it has to be largest in Europe. It was the first city to have organised the European Hardcourt Bike Polo Championships 2009 (EHBPC2009) gathering 48 teams. This sporting event was organised months in advance by an effective team made up exclusively of bike polo players. Each member represented a different job (photographer, carpenter, producer, press agent) giving each person a clear position and the ability to organise everything independently. The EHBPC2010 will be in Geneva on the 15/16/17th of July. All info is available on www.ehbpc.org. The London Opens will take place on the 21st of August (www.lhbpa.org/london-opens), and the post event at the world championships in Berlin on 13/14/15th of August (www.wbhp2010.org).

Many thanks to Matt Vidal, Robb Meertens and Brendan McNamee for their precious information.

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Mallets accrochées à Downham



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