

Staff Spotlight

Kaila Dowd Tournament Manager

I am the tournament manager, overseeing national, sanctioned, and circuit events nationwide. I facilitate the tournament application and awarding process, organize and record the USPA tournament schedule, track statistics and ensure all players and teams are eligible to participate. I offer support to all clubs hosting USPA tournaments, advise on tournament formats and conditions, serve on Host Tournament Committees and offer resolutions to issues that may arise.

One aspect of my job that is particularly satisfying for me is developing new tournament programs, incentives and initiatives that help grow the sport of polo at all levels. I oversee and manage numerous programs, including the Tournament Support Program, Prize Money Matching Program, Arena Tournament Incentive Program, Military Tournament Incentive Program, Women's Tournament Incentive Program, Legacy Polo Series, Bridge to High Goal Initiative, and Trophy Reimbursement Program, as well as order USPA trophies. I also serve as the main staff person for the Arena, Women's, Armed Forces, and Tournament Committees, as well as attend and participate on several other committees.

I also travel to different clubs each year to help out with USPA tournaments. It is a personal goal to continue this trajectory of improvement and elevate the prestige of each USPA tournament. I work closely with Umpires LLC to facilitate our programs that supplement umpire support, and feel this aspect is of the utmost importance.

I grew up in East Longmeadow,



Kaila and Duke

David Lomihaka

Massachusetts. No one in my family is involved in polo or rides horses. I started riding when I was 5 at Shallowbrook Equestrian Center in Somers, Connecticut. I started in hunter/jumpers and showed for years. I got my first horse, a 3-year-old off-the-track Thoroughbred named Doll when I was 12.

I worked every day at the barn to pay for board, feed and lessons. Over the next several years I trained her and competed until she was about 7. We won many CHJA awards, and she was a top hunter in my division at the time. She was the most special horse I have ever owned and really fueled my passion for horses. My connection to her is the reason I am still involved with horses today and the reason I spent most of my life with an obsession for horses and equestrian sports.

I had my first experience with polo when Hal Vita Sr. decided to throw me into a practice game. I was hooked and I started practicing everyday. We then formed an interscholastic polo team and I never looked back. I spent all the hours outside of school at the barn working, riding, practicing and

playing. I helped take care of all the polo ponies in the barn, cleaned the stalls, mowed the lawns, maintained the polo field, built fences, painted boards and managed the summer camp and the drill team.

After high school, I attended the University of Connecticut, studying animal science. While there, I played on the varsity polo team all four years, serving as captain three of those years. After college I moved to Wellington, Florida, and worked in polo until taking my current job four years ago.

I am very active and enjoy the outdoors. I try to practice yoga at least five days a week. I also love sports, animals, fashion and art. In addition, I love to spend quality time with my family and try to see them as much as possible. I absolutely adore my dog, Duke. He is a Lab-Australian Shepard-Australian Cattle Dog mix, and is so smart and athletic.

Other than the barn, the beach is my favorite place in the world. I love the sun, the ocean and the Florida heat.

I also love to travel and explore the world as often as possible. Experiencing other cultures authentically is a passion of mine and I am fascinated by seeing the world through other perspectives. I want to go to a lot of different places, but Italy is at the top of my list. I hope to someday spend time there, visiting different areas and eating my favorite foods—pasta and cheese.

Other things on my bucket list include learning to surf, learning to speak Spanish, completing my yoga teacher training certification and getting a project horse so I can get back into training. I don't ride as often as I like, but I am confident I will get back to riding regularly someday.

