

# Williams rewarded for his investment in home talent

Success of Apes Hill at the British Open Championships has been the best part of a decade in the making, says **Gareth A Davies**

Dubai's defeat at the quarter-final stage of the Jaeger-LeCoultre Gold Cup, by Zacara, was not the only result to send shock waves through the tournament. In the same round, Apes Hill, a team of British-born players, beat El Remanso 9-8 to take Sir Charles Williams, their patron, a step closer to his sporting dream.

Mark Tomlinson, Tom Morley, Ralph Richardson – who scored the winning goal against El Remanso – and Eduardo Novillo Astrada, an ambassador for Jaeger-LeCoultre who was born in England, make up the Apes Hill team.

Williams, at 82 officially the sport's oldest player, had the idea of fielding a home-grown team when he saw “three Argentine players against three Argentine players with two patrons from overseas” at the Gold Cup final in 2006. He also saw disgruntled English professionals.

He spoke with the Tomlinson family and an Apes Hill team was formed for the next season around Luke and Mark Tomlinson.

“The standard of the English polo player has improved beyond belief in recent years, and I've been in a position to help them be represented on the biggest stage,” Williams says. “It gives me great pride to see four Englishmen doing what they are doing in the tournament. Getting to the semi-finals this year means a great deal to me.

“Winning the Queen's Cup at the third try was a big moment a few years ago, but winning the Warwickshire Cup this year at the first attempt was equally exciting. To put it politely, a few people thought we would be a laughing stock in the Gold Cup, but the four boys have done me proud.”

Williams built up the Apes Hill Club's 470-acre estate in the centre of Barbados. Today it boasts one of the world's leading golf courses, polo grounds, luxury homes and a country club.

Polo has been his love. “My home is Barbados, but we have always had a close affiliation with England.



**JAEGER-LECOULTRE**

**Gold Cup semi-finals**

**Today 12noon**

Apes Hill v UAE

**4pm**

Zacara v King Power Foxes

Oliver Cromwell sent my family to Barbados in 1652 as a punishment for being Protestants but fighting on the Catholic side.”

Serious investment has gone into the Apes Hill polo team. “I can't tell you how much,” Williams says. “I'll just say my son would fire me on the spot if I told you. It's a lot of money. But I have certain ambitions. One was to set the record as the oldest player, the other was to win high-goal tournaments. You make your own luck in life and sport – through hard work and taking your opportunities.”

The Apes Hill foursome hope to take a leaf out of that book today when, as underdogs, they face UAE. It is one of the success stories of the season.



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**In action**  
Jaeger LeCoultre ambassador Eduardo Novillo Astrada

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