

Successful debut for White Birch in 16-9 win

By Alex Webbe

It was an eventful return to the playing fields of the International Polo Club for Peter Brant and his White Birch team (Tomas Alberdi, Ezequiel Ferrario, Mariano Aguerre and Peter Brant) Saturday morning as they took the legs out from under a talented Audi/Millarville (Grant Ganzi, Nic Roldan, Julian Mannix and Freddie Mannix) foursome on their way to a 16-9 winning debut in the 2016 20-goal Ylvisaker Cup.

After three and-one-half scoreless minutes of play, Audi/Millarville got on the scoreboard on a 60-yard penalty conversion by Nic Roldan. Forty-five seconds later Ezequiel Ferrario tied the game with a goal from the field. After the first seven minutes of the match, the teams were even at 1-1.

Audi/Millarville got more aggressive in the second period and continued to press the attack. Roldan and Ferrario traded penalty goals in the opening minutes of play, 2-2, followed by a goal from the field from Roldan, 3-2. Aguerre tied it at 3-3 with a goal from the field midway through the chukker and Roldan converted a 60-yard penalty shot that closed out the scoring in the chukker with Audi/Millarville on top, 4-3.

Roldan's fifth goal of the game came on a 40-yard penalty shot in the opening minute of the third period, 5-3. Tommy Alberdi responded for White Birch with his first goal of the game to make it 5-4. Roldan added another goal at the 3:51 mark, stretching the Audi/Millarville lead to two goals, 6-4, but Alberdi scored the final goal of the first half, cutting the Audi/Millarville lead to a single goal again, 6-5.

Ferrario tied the game at 6-6 with a 30-yard penalty shot in the opening seconds of the second half, 6-6, but Audi/Millarville stormed back. A goal from the field from Julian Mannix and a penalty goal from Roldan had Audi/Millarville in front by two goals, 8-6. The White Birch defense collapsed on the Audi/Millarville attack for the balance of the fourth chukker and two more goals from Ferrario (one on a 40-yard penalty conversion) had the score all even at 8-8 with two periods left to play.

Aguerre gave White Birch their first lead of the game, 9-8, with a goal from the field at 6:47 of the fifth chukker. Ferrario followed up with a 60-yard penalty conversion 30 seconds later, 10-8, and the White Birch attack continued to gain momentum. Back-to-back goals from Aguerre extended the White Birch lead to four goals, 12-8, as the Audi/Millarville offense floundered. Two more goals from Ferrario (one on a penalty shot) and a closing score from Aguerre left Audi/Millarville demoralized as they left the field at the end of the chukker trailing by seven goals, 15-8.

The final chukker was an exercise in futility for Audi/Millarville as they struggled to develop a rhythm and continuity to their offense. Grant Ganzi scored from the field with 4:8 on the clock, cutting the White Birch lead to six goals, but that was the high point of the chukker. A second yellow card sent Julian Mannix off the field for the balance of the period and a miss-hit clearing shot by Roldan went through his own goalposts giving White Birch their sixteenth goal of the day in a 16-9 drubbing.

Ferrario led the field in scoring with eight goals (five on penalty conversions). Aguerre added five goals; Alberdi scored twice and the team received a goal on a miss-hit by Roldan. Roldan scored a team-high seven goals (five on penalty shots). Ganzi and Julian Mannix each scored a goal in the loss.

Ylvisaker Cup action is scheduled to continue on Sunday with a 3pm stadium game between Horseware/5 Star Builders/Tackeria (Matt Coppola, Hugo Lloret, Mike Azzaro and Brad Mallett) and La Indiana (Michael Bickford, Joao Paulo Ganon, Ruki Baillieu and Tommy Collingwood). The game will mark the debut of the Horseware/5 Star Builders/Tackeria team and will feature former 10-goaler Mike Azzaro.