

Blanco TX Cup

PTF January Youth Series Friday January 24th 2014

The second annual Blanco TX Cup was an exciting 8 chukkers of fast, classic polo at the beautiful International Polo Club on Friday January 24th. Four college players, hosted by the Polo Training Foundation and the Villa Del Lago Polo Team, joined 12 of Wellington's young, up and coming players in an exciting 4 team tournament.

Team Red took on Team Light Blue for the first 2 chukker playoff. Wellington's own Matias Gonzalez led his Light Blue team with two impressive field goals to lead 2-0. Santino Magrini took a knock-in from Gonzalez, broke away from the group to run 220 yard to score the third goal of the game, leaving the score at 3-0 for Light Blue at the end of the first chukker.

The second chukker was dominated by the Red team, with Michael Bellissimo converting a field goal to bring the score to 3-1. A few missed penalty fours by the Red Team, ended the chukker with the Light Blue team winning 3-1.

The second 2 chukker playoff proved to be an evenly matched battle between Tony Uretz and his Navy team versus Tommy Collingwood and his White team. Battling back and forth, with both teams playing strong defensively, the first chukker ended 0-0. Tony Uretz converted a penalty 3 early in the second chukker to break the tie, putting the Navy team ahead by one. Tommy Collingwood quickly retaliated with a strong run down for a beautiful field goal, tying the game again at 1-1. With a nice assist from Tony Uretz, Santiago Avendano scored the tie breaking field goal to send the White team into the final round.

The consolation game seemed to be owned by Collingwood and his white team as they took the lead at 2-0 to end the first chukker. Cacho Galindo and Michael Bellissimo for the Red team were quick to fight back, adding a field goal apiece to end the second chukker 2 all. A shootout ensued, but The Red team pulled ahead to clinch the win.

The Final round of the day began with Tony Uretz edging his Red team to an early lead with a hard fought field goal. Aristide Faggionato working hard for his Light Blue team, helped move the ball down field, passing off to young Santino Magrini who converted his second field goal of the game, tying the game at 1-1 at the end of the first chukker.

The Red team of Enrique Barco, Santiago Avendano, Ayaan Quraeshi and Tony Uretz fought hard throughout the second chukker, but couldn't overcome the chemistry and teamwork of the Light Blue team. With Connell Erb blocking and covering for her light blue team, her teammate Matias Gonzalez was able to complete two field goals, putting Light Blue ahead 3-1 half way through the second chukker. Aristide Faggionato, who always seemed to be in the right place, was able to finish off the game with an additional field goal to win his Light Blue team the 2nd Annual Blanco TX Cup.

The Best Playing Pony was awarded to Matias Gonzalez's mare "Tiger Lily," while the Most Valuable Player was awarded to the University of Virginia's Aristide Faggionato, who worked relentlessly to bring his team to victory.

While the Youth Player Series is only in its second year, it is truly magical to watch these young players grow and improve from game to game. Witnessing the transition, as these players grow from playing as individuals into a new level where they organize themselves as a team, make plays and cover for each other is amazing. The beauty of this series is that the team that organizes themselves and uses all of its players is often the victorious. For the Light Blue team, teamwork paid off, leaving them as the victors of the 2014 Blanco TX Cup