



Press Release

1st FIP Arena Polo European Championship Azerbaijan: Rising star – Baku is heading towards an exciting polo future

Teams Azerbaijan and Germany qualify for the big final of the 1st FIP Arena Polo European Championship Azerbaijan in Baku.



Photo: POLO+10 / Stefanie Stüting

Baku (POLO+10 – 11/09/2015) – Six days, six international teams and highly competitive matches for the 1st FIP Arena Polo European Championship turn Azerbaijan's capital Baku into the worldwide focus of the sport of polo.

After a thrilling first weekend teams Azerbaijan and Germany have now claimed the role of favourites and are focussing on Saturday's big final. "Azerbaijan turned out to be one of the biggest surprises of the tournament", says Jan-Erik Franck who was not only the official commentator but also advised the German team referring to his own arena experience during the absence of team coach Dirk Baumgärtner. "With the very strong Argentinean Silvestre Garros, who had been coaching the Azeri team for the past three months one could see a massive improvement and progress of playing skills and strategy within the team." In the opening match of the Championship the Azeris beat Germany by two goals. Tomorrow they will face each other again in the final.

A horse race opened day five of the tournament, which was presented by the grooms of all teams. In the first match of the day Germany faced Switzerland and straight from the start team Germany took control of the game. Patrick Maleitzke,



Philipp and Oliver Sommer sharing positions with the talented young Niklas Steinle making debut appearance. With a very fast pace and a strategically smart game plan, Germany took an early lead already in the first chukka and never looked back. Switzerland started with a goal advantage of 1.5 but the dominance and dribbling skill combined with strong teamplay lead Germany to a convincing victory of 7 – 4.5.

In the second game of the day Spain faced Azerbaijan and spectators enjoyed a very competitive and fast match. Enthusiastic support of the local audience spurred team Azerbaijan on. Incredibly fast, tactically strong with very clever plays – the Azeri team took control of the game. Applause, applause ... and with a 9 – 3 win Azerbaijan team secured, as the only unbeaten team of the entire tournament, their place in Saturday's final. Outstanding performances from Elchin Jamalli who made life easier for team captain and teacher Silvestre Garros, as well as team mates Tarlan Gurbanaliyev and Elmir Aliyev.

Italy against Ireland was the third pairing of the day with Ireland starting with a half goal advantage and scoring the first goal of the match just a few seconds after the initial throw-in. With Siobhan Herbst, the Irish team was the only team to had a lady player. Team Italy included the youngest player of the tournament: 16 year old Giordano Magini from Polo Club Roma. The game started with a very even first half. Having lost their best player Franco Piazzi due to an injury at the beginning of the tournament, Italy played with substitution, Sebastian Amaya, who brought highly motivated action into the game. At the start of chukka number four Italy had taken the lead by 5 – 3.5 which remains the final result.

World Polo and the ARAF-Elite Horse & Polo Club organise this first ever FIP Arena Polo European Championship. And they go ahead: As Reto Gaudenzi, CEO of World Polo announced, the first Polo School in the Caucasian area is going to be build soon at the Elite Horse and Polo Club, where as well the construction of two new fields is planned. Next December, Azerbaijan will present an application for the 2017 World Polo Championship in the upcoming FIP Annual Meeting in Buenos Aires. 2016 Baku will host an international polo tournament for higher rated teams.



Photo: POLO+10 / Stefanie Stüting

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