

## **Thailand Polo King's Cup Tournament – Day 5 – The Final**

*'Finals Day with a vintage Victorian inspired pitch-side theme at the VR Sports Club, Thailand'*

By Victoria Elsbury-Legg

### **Day 5 – Saturday 24th January - Final**

#### **17:30 King Power 13 v 12 Ahmibah Brunei (VR Field)**

On Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> January 2015 six international teams met for the first time at the Thailand Polo King's Cup 2015 Press Conference held at the King Power headquarters, in what looked set to be a truly international tournament full of action on the pitch and 'polo history in the making' as ten goalers Gonzalo Pieres and Pablo Mac Donough did battle on the VR Field, Bangkok, playing for the first time in Thailand.

The tournament did not disappoint as during each match the numbers on the scoreboard changed rapidly on either side as players and ponies ran end to end producing exactly the kind of on-pitch action to be expected at the highest handicapped tournament in Asia. After four days of exciting play it was the home side from Thailand - King Power - Apichet Srivaddhanaprabha (0) & Aiyawatt (Top) Srivaddhanaprabha (1), Gonzalo Pieres (10) and Marcos Di Paola (8) who would be facing Ahmibah Brunei - HH Prince Qawi (-1), HRH Prince Jefri Bolkiah (0), Francesco Bensadon (8) and Ale Agote (8) on the floodlit VR Field in the final at 17:30 on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> January 2015.

With a 'Vintage Victorian' theme inspiring the twilight match it was a stunning winged Pegasus and female rider in white who greeted the press and VIP guests with a polo ball held aloft at the start of what was certain to be a hard fought polo match. Playing under HPA rules and with umpires Oli Ellis and Tim Keyte in charge of play, as a 15 goal team (to 19 goal King Power) Ahmibah Brunei started the match with four goals on the board. They faced a strong King Power team with first Gonzalo, followed by Marcos and then Top each putting through a goal, so as the first chukka neared the end it was King Power 3 v 4 Ahmibah Brunei, however HH Prince Qawi then found a goal for Ahmibah Brunei and going into chukka two it was King Power 3 v 5 Ahmibah Brunei.

A goal from Top at the start of chukka two meant the scoreboard was then reading King Power 4 v 5 Ahmibah Brunei, with Gonzalo quickly scoring another superb equalising goal to bring the scores level at 5 v 5. Two minutes and forty seconds into the third a goal from a 40 yard penalty put Ahmibah Brunei ahead taking the score to 5 v 6, but King Power were not behind for long as Gonzalo

levelled again at 6 all. On a field full of open play Top then took the ball from his own 60 to put King Power back in front at 7 goals to 6, followed quickly by a 30 yard penalty being awarded to Ahmibah Brunei the scores were once again equalled at 7 v 7. In the final seconds of the first half another great goal scored from open play by Top and at the end of chukka three King Power were ahead 8 goals to Ahmibah Brunei's 7.

In what was a close match throughout its duration, nearing the end of the fourth great attacking play from Ahmibah Brunei put them ahead at 10 v 8 King Power, but it was an equally determined team in blue who kept up the pressure with another goal, ending the fourth chukka at King Power 9 v 10 Ahmibah Brunei. Despite the difference in handicap between the teams the scores remained incredibly tight throughout the game with Ahmibah Brunei keeping up the pressure and midway through the final chukka there were double scores on both sides of the scoreboard as King Power equalled at 10 all. With just three minutes of the fifth chukka to go Marcos Di Paola scored from a 60 yard penalty and King Power were leading the game at 11 v 10. With almost no time remaining on the clock in the penultimate chukka, Ahmibah Brunei were awarded a safety sixty which they converted and then promptly scored another goal, drawing ahead at 12 goals to King Power's 11, but, it was not to be for long as King Power then also found their twelfth goal.

Starting the sixth, the twenty four goals which had been scored throughout the match were equally distributed between the teams at 12 goals all. From a safety 60, three minutes into the final chukka Gonzalo Pieres scored for King Power putting them ahead 13 v 12. In the last thirty seconds of the match Ahmibah Brunei with the ball on their back line kept up the pressure on King Power, but it was to be a lucky number thirteen for King Power, and with great support from a home crowd the team from Thailand - Apichet and Aiyawatt 'Top' Srivaddhanaprabha alongside Argentineans Gonzalo Pieres and Marcos Di Paola rode of the pitch as the 2015 winners of the Thailand Polo King's Cup Final.

Fireworks and cheering spectators greeted the teams at the post-match presentation of the Trophy to King Power, with MVP being awarded to HRH Prince Jefri Bolkiah. This was followed by a spectacular party to celebrate the win, with players and VIP guests being entertained by equine displays of an altogether different, yet equally impressive style, including a winged Pegasus and pony performing tricks that simply had to be seen to be believed.

See below for full team list and schedule of play.

*Tournament sponsors included: Maxims Casino Club, SCB, King Power, Air Asia, Singha Corporation, Tourism Authority of Thailand, Sweat Rock, WIZ Auto Sales Co.,Ltd., Samart Telcoms, Pullman Hotels, Ralph Lauren, Accor Hotels, TWG Tea, Divana, Hello Bangkok, Plan B Media, True Vision. See link for further details: <http://www.thailandpolo.or.th/our-partners>*

## **King's Cup Tournament Schedule of Play 2015**

**Day 1 - Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> January**

16:00 King Power 9 v 7.5 Tang Polo (VR Field)

17:30 BP Healthcare 6 v 9.5 Ahmibah Brunei (VR Field)

### **Day 2 – Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> January**

1600 BP Healthcare 8 v 9.5 Global Port (SSP Field)

17:30 King Power 11 v 9.5 Brunei Polo (VR Field)

### **Day 3 – Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> January**

16:00 Tang Polo 10 v 8 Brunei Polo (SPP Field)

17:30 Global Port 5 v 5.5 Ahmibah Brunei (VR Field)

### **Day 4 – Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> January – Thailand Polo King's Cup Sub-Finals**

16:00 Brunei Polo (5<sup>th</sup>) 8.5 v 8 BP Healthcare (6<sup>th</sup>) (SPP Field)

17:30 Tang Polo (3<sup>rd</sup>) 10 v 9 Global Port (4<sup>th</sup>) (VR Field)

### **Day 5 – Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> January – Thailand Polo King's Cup Final**

17:30 King Power 13 v 12 Ahmibah Brunei (VR Field)

## **King's Cup Tournament 2015 Teams\***

*\*Please note: The King's Cup is a 15-18 goal tournament, King Power's team was entered in December when Aiyawatt 'Top' Srivaddhanaprabha's handicap was 0, subsequently, on the 1st January 2015 his handicap was raised to 1, so King Power will play as a 19 goal team. All handicaps will be introduced with goal advantage for less handicapped teams.*

### **Group 1**

**King Power** (19 goals) – Thailand (blue)

1. Apichet Srivaddhanaprabha (0)
2. Aiyawatt (Top) Srivaddhanaprabha (1)
3. Gonzalo Pieres (10)
4. Marcos Di Paola (8)

**Tang Polo Club** (17 goals) – China (yellow)

1. Shilai Liu (1)

2. Miguel Diaz (5)
3. Temi Wellington (7)
4. Antonino Menard (4)

**Brunei Polo Team** (17 goals) – Brunei\*\* (red)

1. HRH Princess Azamah (0)
2. HH Prince Bahar (1)
3. Joaquim Pittaluga (7)
4. Ignacio Novillo Astrada (9)

\*\*Please note: In matches played on Wednesday 21st January Pablo Mac Donough (10) substituted for Ignacio Novillo Astrada (9), meaning the Brunei Polo Team was an 18 goal team, in all other games Ignacio Novillo Astrada will be playing.

**Group 2**

**BP Healthcare** (18 goals) – Malaysia (orange)

1. James Beh (1)
2. Jevity Beh (4)
3. Garvy Beh (4)
4. Nachi Heguy (9)

**Global Port** (17 goals) – Philippines (black)

1. Michael Romero (0)
2. Benjamin Urquiza (5)
3. Manuel Crespo (7)
4. Anthony Garcia (5)

**Ahmibah Brunei** (15 goals) – Brunei (white)

1. HH Prince Qawi (-1)
2. HRH Prince Jefri Bolkiah (0)
3. Francesco Bensadon (8)
4. Ale Agote (8)

**Notes:**

**For tournament info via social media please follow The Thai Polo Association – hashtag for the event is #kingscup2015:**

Twitter: @tpa\_polo

Facebook Page: Thailand Polo Association

Instagram: Thailand Polo Association

Website: [www.thailandpolo.or.th](http://www.thailandpolo.or.th)

All information is for immediate publication. Please link any articles published online/social media to the Thai Polo Association.

Links to photos of the final day and tournament are attached.

**For further Press information please email Victoria Elsbury-Legg: [hello@victoriaelsbury-legg.com](mailto:hello@victoriaelsbury-legg.com)**