

## **Lechuza se alza con los 4 títulos del Polo Challenge**

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**La Romana.** - Lechuza claims fourth title in Polo Challenge event at Casa de campo Resort and Villas. The 26-goal Caribbean Open has come to an end and Lechuza, once again, stand victorious. On the other hand, the 14-goal tournament is ongoing; the final will be played on April 2.

Tuesday, the first day of play, saw a ferocious game between two tremendous teams. Cinque Terre, Gold Cup finalists, motivated by the addition of Ambrosio to the team, faced Los Establos, who boasted two Toccalino brothers and Ale Muzzio. Los Establos immediately set the pace; Santi Toccalino, the team's Back, scored two goals while his brother scored one.

Nacho Novillo Astrada replied with a goal and a successful penalty in the second chukker; Los Establos scored two more unanswered goals, and Cinque Terre only replied in the fourth, with a goal by Iñaki Laprida. Novillo Astrada managed to make it 6-4 in the fifth, and 6-5 in the last, but Muzzio took control with a goal and Enrique Bonetti, in the last moments of play, flew down the field to seal the deal for Los Establos. The victory earned them a place in the Caribbean Open final. Santi Toccalino was named MVP.

Polo continued on Thursday, March 25, on Casa de Campo's number three field. As always, a revitalised Cinque Terre looked promising. Juan Martin Nero, while not scoring as many goals as usual, was omnipresent throughout, while David Stirling helped Lechuza get enough goals to qualify for the final. The final score was 10-8 in favour of Lechuza, who won the second place in the great final.

The final of the Caribbean Open, the last tournament of the Polo Challenge, took place on March 26; like in the three previous competitions of the season, Lechuza reigned victorious. The day began with a parade by children of the MIR Foundation, a non-profit organisation which works to educate disadvantaged children from the La Romana area. They sang the national anthem and led the first throw in of the final between Los Establos and Lechuza.

Both teams looked powerful before the game. However, the La Dolfina fraternity in Lechuza dominated from the start as Nero scored the first goal from the throw in. His work was continued by Stirling, who scored a couple more goals, and then Vargas. Los Establos were unable to score for almost three chukkers, until the Toccalino brothers broke through and scored one a piece. By that point, the score was 7-2 in favour of Lechuza. While Los Establos scored a few more times, it was impossible to keep Lechuza under wraps. Stirling, who scored six goals, took a tumble in the fourth, but quickly remounted to continue the game and, together with Juan Martin Nero, lead his team to a brilliant 10-6 victory and the fourth title of the season. Santi Toccalino was named MVP by JW Marriot; the Best Playing Pony Maserati RD award went to Siena, owned by Victor Vargas.

The end of the Dominican “quadruple crown” was celebrated in style at the After Polo Grey Goose, with music by an in house band. The Polo Challenge continues with a 14-goal tournament, which will end on April 2.

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