

# Mohammad leads Al Habtoor to easy win

Annual challenge match sees home team beat Moscow's Ivan The Terrible 7-2 in a fast-paced match



Mohammad Al Habtoor pumped in four goals, Spanish professional Mario Gomez Duran added two and Habtoor Al Habtoor with one put the icing on an emphatic 7-1 win against Ivan The Terrible team in the annual polo challenge held at the Dubai Polo and Equestrian Club on Saturday.

Played in the presence of Prince Rostislav Romanoff III of Russia, the home side were in fine form with Mohammad and Duran combining early for a 4-0 lead by the end of the first chukka.

Though four-goal handicapper Jamie Morrison from the Berkshire Polo Club pulled one back early in the second chukker, young Habtoor Al Habtoor moved in from his marker to secure a fifth to make it 5-1.

The visitors, who had arrived only the previous night from Moscow, tried their best to match their younger and fitter opponents. But Mohammad was in no mood to give in as he completed his hat-trick and then pushed in a fourth from close to make it 7-1 by the end of the third chukka. Morrison did find his way past the Al Habtoor defence a second time, but it was too late as the home team savoured yet another win following last year's 11-7 result at the same venue.

Al Habtoor skipper Rashid Al Habtoor was thrilled with the level of play shown by his side. "This was a fast match and we had the home advantage. Considering that they had arrived the previous night I think they did a great job by putting up a good fight," Rashid stated.

Rival skipper Dmitri Chebotarev, who has worked in Moscow and London international law firms, is also the founder of the Ivan The Terrible polo team. "We were no match for the Al Habtoor team. They were fast today and a lot fitter than us," he conceded.

Moscow Polo Club President Alexis O. Rodzianko, who plays off a one-goal handicap, admitted that his team were always at a disadvantage.