

Pablo MacDonough, polo player

By Guillermo MacLoughlin Bréard

MacDonough, Pablo (1982-), polo-player, was born on 21 February 1982 in Buenos Aires, and is a fifth-generation Irish Argentine. He completed his secondary education at San Martín de Tours school and did a degree in Business Administration at the Universidad Del Salvador. At the end of 2007, at the age of 25, the Argentine Polo Association awarded him the ten goals handicap, continuing a tradition of outstanding Irish-Argentine polo players who attained the highest handicap in the sport, which had begun with Juan Traill in 1913.

He can trace his Irish roots back to his great-grandfather, James MacDonough, from County Sligo, who arrived in the River Plate in 1865 and married Jane Watson from County Clare. The MacDonoughs settled in the extended Pampas, initially managing *estancias* and eventually becoming substantial landowners themselves, as well as becoming closely associated with the equine sector.

There is a long polo-playing lineage in the family. Pablo's father Jorge is a former player himself, as well as being a qualified Veterinary Surgeon. His grandfather Thomas Garrahan was the owner of the *estancia* "La Espadaña", which was prominent in the development of polo. Garrahan was himself the founder of a long line of polo-players. His great-grandfather, James Garrahan, was considered a true 'gaucho'. When he died, an obituary in *The Southern Cross* (the oldest Irish newspaper printed in Argentina) said of him: 'It was rare to find a man of any nationality who could

throw the loop as dexterously and as surely as "Don Santiago"'.

Pablo began playing polo as a child in the 'Nueva Escocia,' training centre in Pehuajó in Buenos Aires Province, under the tutelage of the renowned former player, trainer and breeder of polo horses, Eduardo 'Gordo' Moore. As part of the 'Nueva Escocia' team he won the 'Potrillos' Cup, the most prestigious worldwide tournament for Under-14s, which takes place every December in the Club de Polo Los Indios de San Miguel in Buenos Aires.

MacDonough played in different teams during his teenage years. In 2001 he won the Chamber of Deputies Cup with his team 'La Irenita', which included his brother Matías, Martín Garrahan and Gonzalo Von Wernich. He joined his brother Matías and second cousins Gonzalo Jr. and Facundo Pieres to form the 'Ellerstina' team in 2003. They have won almost every important competition, including the Tortugas Open and Hurlingham Club Open. Although appearing in two finals, the Argentine Open has eluded them to date. They narrowly lost by 15-16 goals in the 2007 final against La Dolfina. 'Not yet', said Pablo after the 2007 Argentine Open, who after reaching two finals is looking forward to his third opportunity.

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