

## Olympic Hockey qualifier: India struggle to beat Austria

India were made to struggle by little-known Austria for their 7-3 win in the Olympic Hockey qualifiers at the Prince of Wales Stadium here Sunday night.

India were held to a 2-2 tie at half time but found their bearings in second half for a final score line that looked comfortable.

But what would have Indian coach Joaquim Carvalho concerned would be the ease with which Great Britain won their second game 8-0 against Russia. Great Britain have now scored 19 goals without any reply, while India has 15 against three.

In the third match on the second day, Chile bounced back from their first round loss to Austria, to beat Mexico 4-0.

The game against Austria started with a shocker for India as Robert Buchta found the target in the very second minute. Buchta picked up a great pass from Benjamin Stanzl and sounded the board to make it 1-0 for the Austrians.

The Indians were jolted into instant action, but it still took them seven minutes before Dilip Tirkey restored parity by converting a penalty corner.

The Austrian team still gave no indication of buckling under pressure as they fought tooth and nail.

Tirkey added a second goal from another penalty-corner, much to the relief of the sizeable contingent of Indian supporters.

But then the Austrians piled on pressure and earned a series of penalty-corners. From one of them, Christian Minar took a direct hit and sounded the boards to tie the score at 2-2, the way it stayed at the interval.

Some sharp words from coach Carvalho during the interval had an effect on the Indians as they looked more sure of themselves in the second session.

The Austrians held firm in defence for the first few minutes after half-time before Ignace Tirkey gave India a 3-2 edge with a fine field goal in the 41st minute.

It was another 10 minutes before the floodgates opened. In the last 15 minutes of the game, the Austrians wilted and let in four goals. Shivendra Singh (2), Bharath and Rajpal found the target to make the score line more convincing.

After the second day of competition, Great Britain and India are leading the points table.

Great Britain and Russia opened in a fast-paced manner in scorching heat, which steadily slowed down all.

Russia who lost to India 0-8 on the first day were unable to do much as Great Britain controlled the game.

The British scored twice early through penalty corner conversions by Barry Middleton and Glenn Kirkham, who was playing his 100th game for his country.

As both teams made a lot of errors, there were numerous stoppages, but Britain still managed two more before half time. Matt Daly drilled in a field goal and Mark Ralph scored off another penalty-corner on a direct hit.

In the second half Britain overran their rivals even as Russia's one goal was disallowed by the video-umpire.

Middleton (37th), James Tindall (41st), Matt Daly (46th) and Kirkham (65th) scored once each as Britain won 8-0.

The British team now has two wins, against the two weakest teams in the competition, but will certainly be more tested in their third game against Chile.

With hosts Chile on show, the stands were packed and their hero once again was skipper Felipe Montegu. Mexican goalkeeper, Moises Vargas Garcia, who has been brilliant under the bar, was once again superb.

Chile wasted a stroke in the 23rd minute, when Ian Koppenberger shot into the post. The Chileans wasted a few more chances before Montegu came to their rescue. He converted a penalty corner to give them a 1-0 lead at half time.

In the second half Montegu struck twice more and Matias Amoroso scored once as Chile ended 4-0 victors, but not before Mexico won a lot of applause.

The next set of matches will be on Tuesday when Mexico meet India, Austria take on Russia and host Chile clash with Great Britain.

Results Day II:

Great Britain beat Russia 8-0 (HT 4-0)

Scorers: Barry Middleton (7th min, 37th); Glenn Kirkham (11th, 65th); Matt Daly (25th, 46th); Mark Ralph (31st); James Tindall (41st)

Chile beat Mexico 4-0 (HT 1-0)

Felipe Montegu (29th, 46th and 70th); Matias Amoroso (68th)

India beat Austria 7-3 (HT 2-2)

India: Dilip Tirkey (9th, 23rd); Ignace Tirkey (41st); Shivendra Singh (51st, 55th); Bharath (53rd); Rajpal (54th)

Austria: Robert Buchta (2nd); Christian Minar (28th, 60th);

( © IANS / India eNews)