

The
American Polocrosse Association
Player Development Program



Polocrosse
Beginner's Handbook

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*Many thanks to Susan Hatch, Greg Russell and Hank Watson
for the conception and work on this book--
for their undying love of polocrosse--
and their passion to spread knowledge, and build
a safe and enjoyable sport, while creating better partnerships
with our amazing horses.*

*As we move forward in our quest to encourage more people
to try this sport, I am hopeful that
the Player Development Program will continue
to thrive and that this book will just be the beginning
of many more influential materials
we all can use to grow and improve our game!*

I appreciate all that you have accomplished.

Donna Ellis

APA Player Development Chair

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The mission of the American Polocrosse Association is to offer educational programs which promote the sport of polocrosse for youth and adult players by providing the framework for domestic and international programs that further education on horsemanship and sportsmanship; and that ensure the safety of horse and rider.

The American Polocrosse Association (APA) Player Development Program, governed by the Player Development Committee (PDC) is designed to provide programs to improve all levels of play for all members of the APA. This publication has been developed by the PDC to provide a basic start to playing polocrosse for the horse and rider. For your safety, the PDC and APA recommend all new players receive instruction from Certified Polocrosse Coaches/Instructors/Clinicians.

1. FORWARD

Welcome to the sport of polocrosse!

Polocrosse is a fun, family friendly sport that is enjoyed by players and horses of all ages, abilities, backgrounds, and levels. It is not uncommon to see three generations of the same family playing on a team together. Men and women compete on equal footing. English and Western horses who have competed in various other events such as roping, jumping, racing, gymkhanas, dressage, endurance riding, and many more have found success in polocrosse. It is also a great training mechanism and opportunity for you and your horse. The game gives the rider greater confidence and the horse more courage. The skills learned in polocrosse are infinitely applicable to other disciplines.

First and foremost, polocrosse is fun. While it is a competitive sport, it should be enjoyable above all other things. Your attitude is everything and will not only determine what you get out of the sport but how you play the game. Players usually come off the field with an uncontrollable smile, whether they have won or lost.

In this guide, we will tell you what gear and skills the horse and rider will need to get started in this great sport. We will also outline a few things to keep in mind as you move forward.

When starting to play, you will need a horse, a racquet (also spelled racket), a ball, safety equipment, appropriate tack, and a safe playing surface. You and your horse will also need some basic skills. We will detail all of those things in the following pages.

We will not however go into great detail about the rules of the game. Once you get familiar with the basics, we suggest you review the official **Standards of Play of the American Polocrosse Association (APA Rulebook)** which can be found at <https://www.americanpolocrosse.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/APA-Standards-of-Play-2018-Final-2.pdf>.

You can access the information you need to find a certified clinician, see current polocrosse news and events, find a club in your area, and how to start a club of your own. Please visit www.americanpolocrosse.org, or email at info@americanpolocrosse.org.

See you on the field!

2. PLAYER EQUIPMENT

Good equipment is key. If you begin your polocrosse journey with broken or sub-par gear, learning the sport will be much more difficult and not nearly as much fun. (There is a list of links for where to purchase polocrosse equipment in the back of this booklet. **See page 27.**)

Racquet

The racquet is designed and manufactured specifically for the game of polocrosse. A broken or low quality racquet will only lead to frustration. When picking a racquet you should look for the following:

- The net should be completely intact and not so worn that it can no longer be adjusted.
- The head and shaft should not be bent or warped.
- The net should be properly adjusted for a beginner. It should not be too deep or off center. While adjusting the net can be done by anyone with a little patience, we recommend having someone who is already experienced with adjusting your racquet help you.

Ball

We recommend starting with a brand new polocrosse ball. If you must start with a used ball, make sure that there are minimal surface blemishes and that the ball is easy to bounce. You should be able to drop it on a hard surface and have the ball bounce back to 60/70% of the height from which it was released.

Helmet

An equestrian and/or US Pony Club approved helmet is required. Some players choose to use a face mask but they are optional. Visors are also allowed but optional.

Crops and Whips

If your horse behaves better with a crop or a whip, you may use one, but they must have a flap at the end that has an area of at least one square inch.

For polocrosse equipment suppliers see page 27.

3. TACK

Saddle

There are only two restrictions on saddles. They cannot have a horn and they must have a breast collar. However, Australian Stock type poley saddles are recommended. The saddle should allow the player to move freely as the game requires the player to be active in the saddle.

Bridle

There are no restrictions on headstalls but those that are unlikely to slip off are recommended (i.e. headstalls with throat latches, no single ear headstalls). Bits are not allowed to have any shanks or protrusions off of the main ring as per **APA Rulebook Section II-7. ii**; (for example, full cheek bits, hackamores with shanks, and most shanked western bits). Any hooks, such as those on curb chains, must be wrapped with tape so that a racquet net cannot get caught in them.

Horse Protection

All playing horses must have protective leg wraps and bell boots on all four legs. Polo wraps and sports medicine boots are both acceptable. All types of bell boots are allowed. Hoods to protect the horse's eyes are permissible, but not required.

4. RACQUET SKILLS

As previously mentioned, good equipment is paramount to success. It is easier to learn to throw with a slightly more shallow net rather than a deeper one. As you advance and your playing style changes, you can adjust the depth of the net to suit your needs. The trajectory of the ball as it leaves the net will be determined by the mechanics of the net and the technique of the player.

Prior to mounted practice, we suggest players should be reasonably proficient with the ball and racquet on the ground. Proficiency on the ground will lead to better proficiency in the saddle, thus helping your horse connect to the ball and racquet.

5. HORSE SKILLS

(Basic Polocrosse Training Techniques)

All horses that play must be safe above any other consideration. The guidelines detailing what constitutes a 'safe' horse can be found in the **APA rulebook, section II, 4.**

Any horse can play if it conforms to the following criteria:

1. Is not a stallion.
2. Has sight in both eyes.
3. Is sound of limb and gait.
4. Is under proper control.
5. Does not exhibit any dangerous behavior or disease.
6. Does not show a vice that is dangerous to the rider, other players and/or other horses.

The more time you take to desensitize the horse to the situations they will experience during the game, the safer and more confident the horse will be while playing. The horse must not only be comfortable with the motions of the racquet and ball but with being in close contact with other horses. Regardless of any previous training, the horse should be introduced to all aspects of the game slowly.

Ball and Racquet

The horse's, like the player's, first introduction to the racquet and ball should be during quiet ground work before either are rushed to mounted practice. The horse should be desensitized to the racquet and ball being in any position around its body. The ball and racquet should never be seen as a threat to the horse.

Familiarizing Your Horse With The Ball and Racquet

Begin the ball/racquet introduction from the ground by using a lunge line on your horse.

1. Rub the horse with the racquet and ball all over its body. Repeat with the ball in the net of the racquet.

For the following exercises, start from several feet away and as the horse accepts these simple requests, work in closer. These will desensitize the horse to the motions used during the game.

2. Slowly move the racquet around the horse at all angles. As the horse learns to accept your movements, increase their speed.
3. Roll the ball around the horse, making sure the horse is accepting of the unfamiliar object moving along the ground.
4. Now combine the two by gently lobbing the ball around the horse with the racquet.
5. All of the above exercises requires a level of ball and racquet skills from the rider/player-- the rider should have control of the racquet and ball before attempting to desensitize the horse.

Once the horse has accepted the ground work, try to simulate some of these actions while mounted. Start slowly and build the horse's confidence as you go.

Riding with your Racquet and Ball

The rider/player should be able to ride and maneuver their horse with leg and seat aids and be able to use only one hand controlling the reins (such as neck reining). Your racquet will be in the other hand. The rider must be able to control the horse. The horse should be able to stop and turn safely within the guidelines of the game.

The player and the horse must also understand the importance of weight distribution while picking up and throwing the ball. Your horse will need to learn how to support the unusual weight movement while moving in a straight line.

- a. The rider should obtain and maintain their center of gravity in the saddle. They should then practice balanced bending from the waist with their legs properly under the body so that the rider's weight is supported. The rider should not balance on the horse's mouth. The rider's legs should be supporting their weight. The rider should practice bending on either side of the horse as they will need to be able to pick up the ball from both sides of the horse. The rider should put more weight on the racquet side leg while leaning off of the horse. This will help both the horse and rider maintain better balance while reaching for the ball on the ground. Learning how to hold one's body in this position will also allow the player to throw the ball without hitting the horse. Refer to the Spot drill on page 9.

- b. Players may use the racquet in either hand but they must not switch hands during play. The racquet should be placed in the dominant hand while the other hand is used for reining the horse. It is suggested that the rider learns to “bridge” the reins. For young riders, a knot in the reins can help keep the reins at the proper length.
- c. The racquet should be held the same way as it was while practicing on the ground. The player should learn to adjust their grip on the racquet so it can be lengthened or shortened depending on the position of the ball. This is achieved by sliding the hand up and down the shaft.

6. FROM THE CLASS TO THE GRASS

Drills to get you started!

Drill #1: SPOT DRILL

In learning how to pick up the ball, the location that you place your horse in relation to the ball is critical, both for near and off side pick ups. When it comes to picking up the ball, the horse is everything. Can you pick up the ball if you are going faster than you are comfortable going? Can you pick up the ball if your horse is riding right over it? Or way too far away from it?

Bettering Our Horse to Help Our Success

Most beginner polocrosse players have a tough time being consistent with their horses' location to the ball. Once the horse arrives at the ball and feels you bend over to get it, the horse will sometimes get uneasy and throw out their shoulder, or move away from the ball. This drill is here to help with that.

Beginners, referring to first time riders in polocrosse with a “polocrosse green” horse, will need to start out with a simple pick up exercise beginning without a ball to help the horse get used to the basic movements of their rider bending up and out of their saddle to the left and to the right. Without the ball, you will progress your

horse through the gaits. This is a great exercise to build your and your horse's confidence before adding the racquet and ball to the equation.

Before you try this drill with your ball and racquet you should be confident in your horses' ability to handle the racquet around their head and legs, and a ball on the ground.

Objectives

This drill lays the groundwork for both the horse and rider to be in the correct position to pick up a ball.

- The rider learns to keep their horse moving forward in a straight line using properly balanced riding and reining techniques while moving in the saddle.
- The rider learns to move their body while keeping their legs and rein hand steady.
- The horse learns to accommodate the shifting weight of the rider.
- The horse and rider learn the best position relative to the ball to be able to pick it up.

Stage 1: SPOT DRILL (see Figure1)

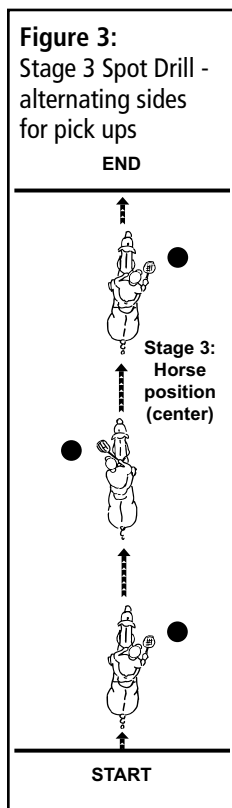
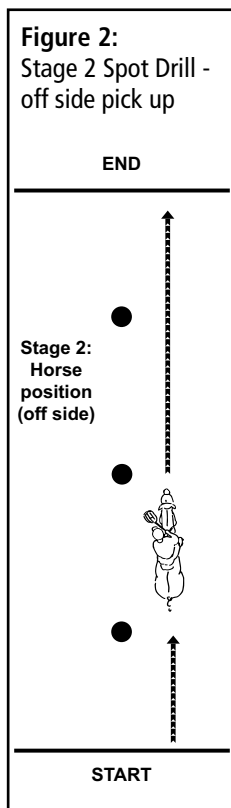
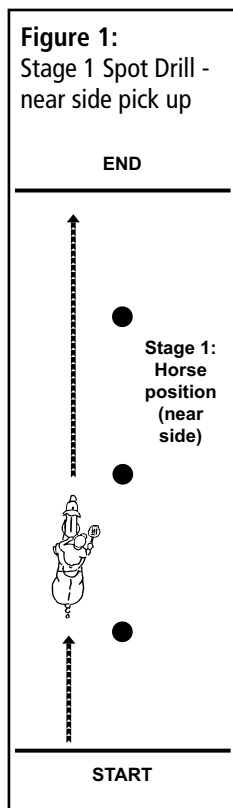
Using water based spray paint, paint a 10-yard START line. Then, in 10-yard increments spray circles (the total number is up to you) then conclude the set-up with another END line.

Stage 2: SPOT DRILL (see Figure 2)

This alternate drill uses the same spot pattern as in Stage 1. The only difference is that now you ride down the opposite side of the spots for an off side pick up.

Stage 3: SPOT DRILL (see Figure 3)

This alternate drill will be only slightly different than Stage 1, requiring the spots to be placed as shown in Figure 3. Alternate the spots on each side of the riders line, which is to be ridden down the middle of the spots, alternating from near side to off side pick-up.



Coaching Points

The spots resemble polocrosse balls to help start the desensitization of the ball to the horse.

- When approaching the spot, where do you think you should position your horse? A general rule of thumb for a proper/comfortable distance from the ball is 2 feet.
- Be sure keep your hand low and quiet when bringing your horse next to the "ball" to make sure they know you are confident and relaxed.

- Enter your 3-point position* (not a 2-point position which can be considered too far out of your saddle) when approaching the ball spot so that you can bend at your hips and not with your back (this is crucial as you gain speed.)

Points to Ponder

- Emphasize a STRONG wrist when pushing into the ground (you can mimic this motion without the ball- but it's necessary with the ball in place for Stage 3.)
- Make sure the players are dragging the ball straight and not making an "S" shape trying to "sweep" up the ball. They will be more prone to missing the ball doing an "S".
- *3-Point position. Should it be 2-point? Not for this sport. 2-point leaves you a little too far out of your saddle and can make you feel insecure, but in 3-point you stay closer to the saddle, just unweighting your seat enough to bend at your waist.
- The speed of these drills is dependent upon the level of racquet skills and horsemanship of the riders.
- Once the riders and horse have mastered this drill and its intricacies in a straight line, it can be set up on an arch or in a circle.
- Coaches can use this drill to assess where the individual participants need the most help; racquet skills or horsemanship skills.

Drill #2: LEAP FROG

Objectives

This drill lays the groundwork for both the horse and rider to be able to control the speed and adjustability of their mounts as well as working in close proximity to another horse.

- The rider learns to keep their horse moving forward but adjusting the speed of their mount within the gait (ie: slow trot to fast trot, slow canter to faster canter.)
- The horse learns to accept other horses moving up on them, in front of and behind them.

- The riders learn communication skills with their teammates.
- This drill desensitizes your horse to other horses so it does not feel threatened or becomes aggressive. Horses who kick or bite are not allowed in the game.

Execution

Stage 1:

- 2 horse and riders ride one in front of the other. It's good to start at a trot if each are ready for riding closer and together. The rider in front maintains a regular pace with the other following.
- The second rider communicates that they will be moving up and they can choose either side. The second rider increases the speed of their horse slightly, while the front rider slows slightly. The second rider passes the rider in front to take over the front position.
- They should remain in that position for a few strides to make sure the horses are comfortable, consistent in their gait and listening. Then repeat the process.

Stage 2:

- Increase the gait and/or add a third horse. In this case the third horse moves to the front, the second horse moves back one position and becomes last, and the first horse moves back to the second position.

Coaching Points

- Are the horses responding appropriately to their riders?
- Are the horses acting aggressively to one another in any way- this is not acceptable and there may need to be more work on desensitization exercises.
- This drill can be done with or without racquets but it is suggested to execute without racquets first.

Drill #3: LINE-UP DRILLS

The Line-Up is a critical part of the game. This starts the game, and is the starting point after each goal, and in some cases, after an infraction. If you can not get your horse to line up correctly to allow you to have a better opportunity to catch the ball or jump out of the line-up to reach the ball on the ground, then you already have one less chance to get a goal! Knowledge of how to position yourself is important, but getting your horse to be comfortable in this high-energy situation is paramount.

Objectives

These drills are set up to introduce your horse to the line-up and create a quiet, calm and happy horse: teach the horse to pause and to wait confidently for the signal to engage; get your horse to respond appropriately; and build your horse's confidence to go into this high energy situation with multiple horses surrounding them.

- Helps the horse be more connected to the rider - then to the ball
- The rider learns how to position their horse in the Line-Up
- The horse and rider learn to stand in each position
- The horse learns to settle, gain confidence, then leave

Execution

Create less stress for the horse by starting in an angled line-up position instead of head to tail. Begin practicing all of these drills at the walk. As the horses become more comfortable and gain confidence, they have quiet departures, and they are successful in returning to the correct positioning in the Line-Up more efficiently, progress to asking for a trot when leaving the Line-Up.

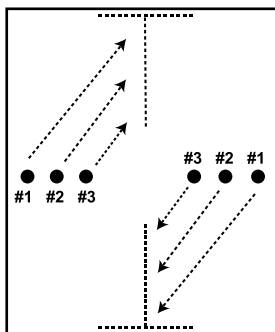
Stage 1: Initial Stack Drill For The Line-Up (Fig. 1)

This beginning Line-Up drill eases the pressure of the more traditional Line-Up positioning. With 3 or 6 horses, bring groups of 3 horses together in a stack (line), side by side, in numerical order. The stack will face the "T" as shown in the Figure 1.

- Let the horses stand until they are comfortable together and alter how closely they stand together.

- Alternate your position in the stack so your horse can get comfortable in each spot in the stack. If a horse is having a problem in a position, move them to another position until they are comfortable.
- Repeat on both sides of the field.

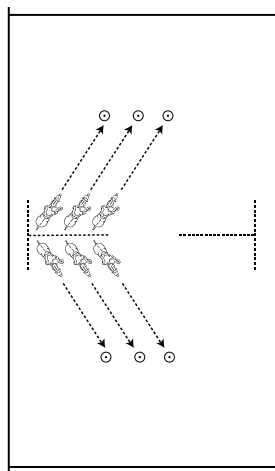
Figure 1: Initial Stack



Stage 2A: Line-Up Stack Drill - To Ease Pressure (Fig. 2A)

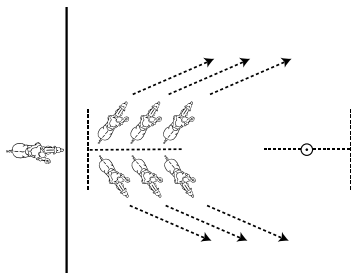
Using the "T" without an Umpire, line up with the horses with their heads facing into the field at an angle away from the stack on the other side. Place a ball for each player on the ground about 15-20 yards from the stack (see Figure 2A). This position gives your horse an "open" place to focus, while they get the feel of having horses next to and behind them.

Figure 2A:
Reverse Line-up Stack



- Each horse enters the Line-Up stack position, and settles.
- Horses and players will be looking towards the balls in the midfield
- Once all the horses are settled, ask them to walk out of the Line-Up towards the ball that is in their line of the ball (path).
- Beginners to this drill should leave the ball on the ground and return to the Line-Up stack to repeat. Once the horses are settling easily, the riders may then pick up the ball.
- Practice from all the positions.

Figure 2B: Reverse Line-Up Stack



Stage 2B: Reverse Line-Up Stack Drill To Ease Pressure Use Umpire To Throw In Ball (Fig. 2B)

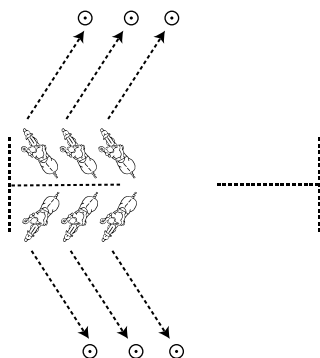
Using the same positioning as Stage 2A, but now add an Umpire who will throw in a ball from the top of the "T" - from behind the horses. (see Figure 2B).

- Move each horse into their position in the stack which is now a little straighter facing into the field.
- Settle horses and create a moment of "pause."
- Once the horses are settled, have the Umpire throw a ball into the center of the field.
- Ask the horses to leave the Line-Up towards the ball that the Umpire has thrown.
- Practice from all the positions.

Stage 3A: Line-Up Stack Drill To Ease Pressure- (Fig. 3A)

Using the "T" without an Umpire, line up with the horses with their heads facing the top of the "T" but with their heads angled out into the field at an angle away from the "T" line. Place a ball for each player on the ground about 15-20 yards from the line-up (see Figure 3A). This position gives your horse more of a sense of a true Line-Up position with horses starting to line up next to and behind them, but still eases the pressure by angling their head into open space.

Figure 3A: Line-Up Stack



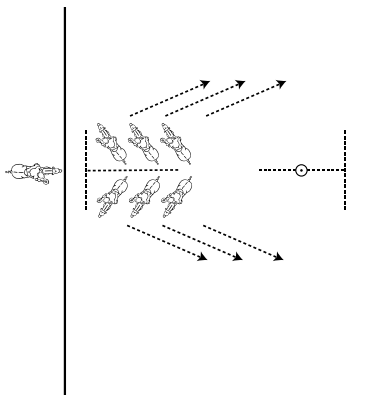
- Each horse enters the Line-Up stack position, and settles.
- Horses and players look towards the balls in the midfield.
- Once all of the horses are settled, ask them to walk out of the line-up towards the ball that is in their line of the ball (path).
- Beginners to this drill should leave the ball on the ground and return to the line-up to repeat. Once the horses are settling easily, the riders may then pick up the ball.
- Practice from all the positions.

Stage 3B: Line-Up Stack Drill To Ease Pressure - Use Umpire To Throw In Ball (Fig. 3B)

Use the same positioning as Stage 3A , but now add an Umpire who will throw in a ball from the top of the "T" - at the front of the horses in the stack. (See Figure 3B).

- Move each horse into their position in the stack which is now a little straighter into the field.
- Settle horses and create a moment of "pause".
- Once the horses are settled, have the Umpire throw a ball into the center of the field.
- Ask the horses to leave the Line-Up towards the "one" ball that was thrown.
- Practice from all the positions.

Figure 3B: Line-Up Stack



Coaching Points

If you have large groups, you can use both sides of the field at the same time. (You will need extra coaches help to do this). As the players and horses progress, you can stack the Line-Up along the

"T" in the traditional positioning. Horses that move around and do not settle should go back to the various "angled stacks". Vary the order that the horses enter the Line-Up stack. And most importantly, don't rush this process. Take your time with any horse that is having problems. Patience and time spent will ensure success.

Drill #4: BARREL PATTERN DRILL (see Figure1)

Objectives

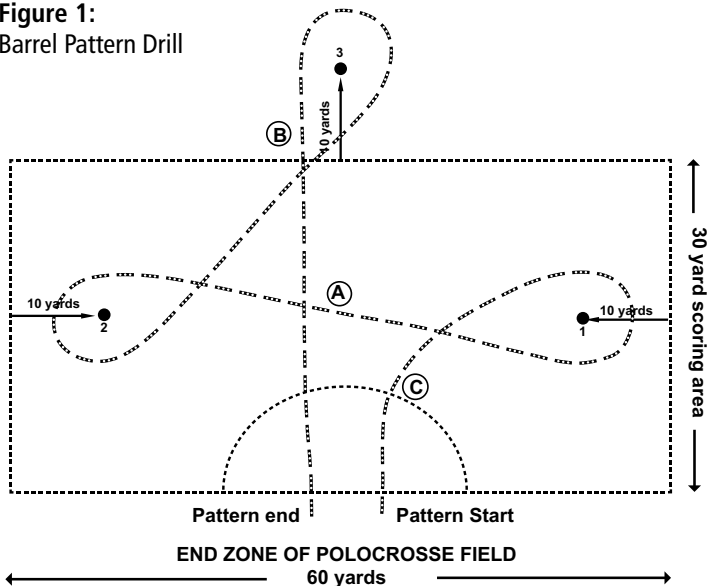
Using a barrel racing pattern helps to prepare the rider and horse for some of the directional changes and racquet disciplines in the game of polocrosse. The horse and rider should be confident in basic riding and racquet skills.

Figure 1:

Set up painted spots on the ground in a barrel racing clover leaf pattern as shown in figure 1. If you have a polocrosse field set up, it helps to use the 30 yard scoring area, allowing the player to better understand the 10 yard distances.

Figure 1:

Barrel Pattern Drill



Execution

- Start out by walking the horse through the typical clover leaf barrel pattern. As the horse and rider become more comfortable with the directional changes, move to the next gait.
- Practice riding the pattern reining the horse with one hand, and using leg and seat aids.
- As the horse and rider progresses, introduce racquet and ball skills to the pattern. Place a ball on the ground at (A). Pick it up while moving through the pattern. Complete the pattern.
- When the rider and horse become confident, add a bounce/catch or a 10 yard throw, at (B).
- As the horse relaxes, start with a 10 yard throw and catch from the back line (C). Complete the pattern performing the different disciplines previously stated.

Coaching Points

- The horse will need to know the reining process, along with the rider's leg and seat aids, to be able to understand this style of reining for directional changes.
- As the rider and horse become more comfortable with the directional changes, move to the next gait. Emphasize correct use of upper body: looking over their inside shoulder, around the turns and lifting the inside hip.
- If you are in a club/clinic situation, you can add a rider/horse pair. In a passive role riding alongside, it will add pressure to the horse/rider combination performing the skills.
- Does the horse understand the turning concept without the rider having to pull the horse around the turns?
- Does the rider need more practice and understanding of placing/bouncing the ball out in front?

Drill #5: ON THE GROUND PASSING DRILL FOR 6 OR MORE

Objectives

These drills help the player develop proper racquet and ball skills. Each drill should be started with a minimum distance to throw.

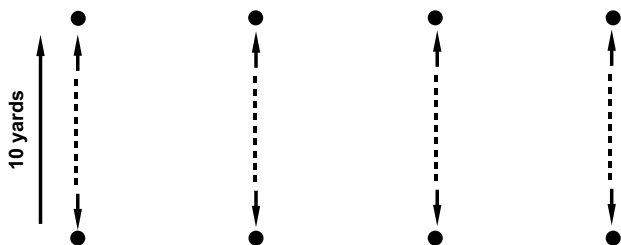
- Emphasize NOT moving their foot to throw.
- Understand correct use of the shoulder/elbow/wrist and by leaning into the racquet side leg, help establish a correct position for throwing once in the saddle.
- Since polocrosse is a team sport, communication between players is paramount. Encourage the players to "call-out" names of the player they are throwing to.
- As the players become more proficient in their skills, the distance between the players, and the speed of the drill can be increased. Consistency and accuracy will develop better habits on the field.
- These drills can be 'played' as relays and encourages team spirit and friendly competition.

Execution

Line up in 2 parallel lines with players facing the line of players across from them. (This works best with at least 6 players.) Players in the same line, should stand at least one racquet length apart from each other. To begin the line of players should be about 10 yards across from each other.

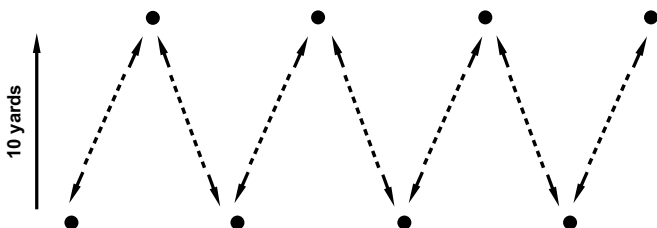
Stage One:

- Start with players tossing the ball back and forth until they are comfortable and successful with the distance to throw and catch.



Stage Two:

- Next, have the players in one line step left so that they are alternating between the players in the line across from them.



- Gather all the balls on the ground in front of one player at one end of one line. That player is the start/beginning of this drill. Pick up one ball and toss it to the player diagonally across from them, calling that player's name.
- The player that has just caught that ball, then calls the player diagonally across from them and throws the ball. The ball continues to be thrown until it reaches the last player who puts the ball down.
- Continue using one ball at a time to encourage accuracy in passing and catching.
- Once all the balls are at the opposite end, the player at that end picks up a ball and begins the same process going back in the opposite direction.

Stage Three:

- As the players get more comfortable, accurate and consistent in their throwing abilities, follow the same procedure as in Stage Two. Begin with multiple balls on the ground next to the starting player. The starting player in the line passes to the second player across from them, and immediately picks up another ball. As soon as the second player across from them has passed the first ball to the third player diagonally across from them, the starting player calls the second player's name again, and passes ball and so on.
- The process continues until all the balls are at the end of the line. Then the same process continues in the other direction until all the balls are back at the original starting player.

Coaching Points

- Are the players calling the names of the person they need to throw to, and being accurate in their throws?
- How well are the players throwing and catching the balls? Perhaps they need some extra help with using their racquets properly.
- As the players become more proficient, the distance between the lines and players can be increased to add difficulty.
- Focus, accuracy, and speed together will improve their abilities once they are mounted on their horses.
- Making this drill into a games/relay, promotes competition and makes it fun!

7. BASIC GAME PLAY

Here we will discuss basic game play without going into advanced strategies. Strategies will be discussed in later publications and in situations with a knowledgeable Coach/Instructor/Clinician. This publication will help get you started playing polocrosse!

Object

The object of the game is to achieve ball control through horsemanship and racquet skills in order to advance the ball down the field and score more goals than the other team. Goals are scored when the 'Number One' (#1) throws the ball through the two upright posts at the end of the field. The strategies to score come from the contributions of the three individual positions on the field (1-2-3).

As you better understand the demands of each position, the continuity between you and your teammates will increase.

Field

A polocrosse field is 160 yards x 60 yards. The field itself is divided into three portions. There is a 'scoring area' at each end that is designated by lines 30 yards from each back line. The rest of the field is considered 'midfield'. The exact field standards can be found in **Section II of the APA Standards of Play** rulebook and the diagram on page 23.

If an area of that size is not available, a smaller space can be used for practice. We recommend working on at least an acre. That allows you to cut the field roughly in half making it 80 yards x 60 yards.

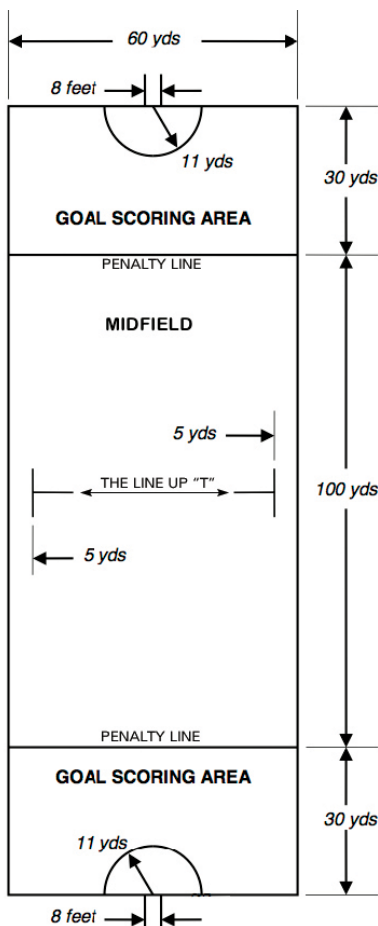
Regardless of size, the surface must be safe and suitable for working horses. There should be no obstacles on or near the playing area.

Teams

Teams are traditionally comprised of six players. The teams are then divided into two, three-person 'sections'. Only one section plays at a time.

Positions

- #1** - The #1 scores the goal and is allowed in midfield and the scoring area in which they are they are scoring.
- #2** - The #2 is the tactical position and plays both offense and defense. They are only allowed in midfield.
- #3** - The #3 is the defensive position and is allowed in midfield and the scoring area of which they are defending.



Time

Games are divided into periods called chukkas. A chukka is either six or eight minutes long. Length of chukkas is left to the discretion of the Tournament Organizers. If chukkas are six minutes long, then six are played during a game (each section plays 3 chukkas). If chukkas are eight minutes long, then four are played during a game (each section plays 2 chukkas). The sections alternate play. For the first chukka, the first sections will play while the second sections wait on the sidelines. Then the second sections will play the second chukka. The sections will alternate playing until the end of the game and the score is cumulative. See **Section II-5 of the APA Standards of Play** in the rulebook for alternative formats. (A horse may not play more than a maximum total of 54 minutes in one day.)

Important Basic Rules

- When the ball is in your racquet, it may not cross the centerline of your horse unless you are picking up the ball on the offside or in the process of throwing the ball.
- Horses may not cross too close in front of or behind other horses. Doing so creates a dangerous situation.
- DO NOT stop and turn back towards the ball if you miss a pick up. This is called "Crossing" and is very dangerous and illegal.
- Horses may not come into contact with another horse perpendicularly, i.e. "T-boning".
- The ball may not be carried across the 30 yard line either going into the scoring area or leaving the scoring area.

Line-Up

Play begins with a Line-Up. The Umpire faces the field at the top of the Line-Up 'T' in the middle of the field. The sections line up next to each other on either side of the 'T', facing the Umpire. The 'Ones' line up at the top of the 'T' next to each other, the 'Twos' line up behind them, and the 'Threes' line up behind them. The Umpire then throws the ball down the middle of the players as the players try to catch the ball and/or keep the other team from catching it. Teams score in the end zone farthest from them in the Line-Up. The other section will always be between you and your goal in the Line-Up as illustrated in the Line-Up Drills on page 14.

Midfield

After the ball is thrown in, players compete for control of the ball. If the ball is not caught by either team in the Line-Up, both teams should try to get the ball off of the ground. Safe blocking of opposing players is allowed (see APA Standards of Play rulebook Section III-12,13 and 14). In addition to blocking, players may try to dislodge the ball from another player's racquet by hitting it in an upward motion.

If the #2 or #3 get the ball either in the Line-Up or off of the ground, their objective is to deliver it to their #1 in the area so that they can score. If the #1 gets the ball, they must either pass the ball to a teammate and have that teammate pass it back to them while they are in the area, or bounce the ball across the 30 yard line. The ball may not be carried across the 30 yard line.

The Area

When the ball is in the area, the #1 scores by throwing it through the two upright posts at the end of the field. The #1 and his horse's feet must be outside of the semi-circle "D" when the goal is shot or it does not count.

The opposing #3 is also allowed in the area to defend the goal. They can put pressure on the #1 to try to either drop the ball or miss the goal. As a general rule, they should stay between the #1 and the goal.

When the #1 scores a goal, play is restarted with a Line-Up at the 'T' on the opposite side of the field from the last Line-Up.

If the #1 shoots at and misses the goal, the opposing #3 is awarded the ball and game play is restarted at the thirty-yard line. The umpire marks a spot on the thirty-yard line where play is to resume by pointing to a spot on the line with the racquet. When the Umpire says 'play', the #3 starts behind the Umpire, moves towards the spot marked, and upon reaching the mark must either execute a 10 yard throw or pass the ball to a teammate. The opposing #1 follows the #3 out on the #1's horse's hip. The #3 has first call on the ball after it has traveled 10 yards but not more than 15 yards.

Between Chukkas

At the end of the chukka, the riders dismount immediately (in most cases on the field), loosen their horse's girths and put up stirrups or cross them over the saddle. They then promptly leave the field so the second chukka can begin. Depending on the time of the chukkas (6 or 8 minutes), the players and horses will have that same amount of time to rest, cool off, and get drinks. It is the responsibility of the players to be aware of the time of the chukka on the field, be prepared to enter the field promptly, and start the next chukka as soon as the umpire calls them into the Line-Up to start the next chukka.

Umpires

There are two mounted Umpires who monitor the game, one on each side of the field. Their job is to start play, call goals, make sure that the rules of the game are followed, and ensure that players and horses are safe.

Infractions

For a complete list of infractions, please see the **APA Standards of Play** rulebook. After an infraction, the Umpires will restart the game by either awarding the ball to the opposing team or ask the players to line-up on the sideline near the point of infraction.

For example: If the ball is in a player's racquet, the ball may not cross the centerline of the horse. If it does, the Umpire stops the play, and the ball is awarded to the opposing team.

8. APA CERTIFIED POLOCROSSE COACHES/INSTRUCTORS/CLINICIANS

The APA has a current contact list of Certified Coaches/Instructors/Clinicians who are available to travel to your location for clinics and instruction to safely help your polocrosse experience. APA Certified Coaches have been approved and held to a high standard by the Coaching Accreditation Program (CAP). The CAP was created to standardize the process of certifying qualified polocrosse instructors. These individuals have committed their time and energy towards the growth of polocrosse in the United States, ensuring a core competency in play and in teaching. They've also demonstrated their commitment to safety and horsemanship, having undergone the necessary course requirements to validate their certification. We strongly encourage new players to utilize an APA Certified Coach of this caliber.

A current listing is available at:

***[https://www.americanpolocrosse.org/
coaches-instructors-clinicians/](https://www.americanpolocrosse.org/coaches-instructors-clinicians/)***

9. POLOCROSSE EQUIPMENT RETAILERS

Bennett Polocrosse Rackets and Equipment
www.polocrosse.biz

SC Polocrosse Equipment
www.scpolocrosse.com

Jack Rabbit Tack and Consignment
www.facebook.com/pg/JackrabbitTack

BRINGING POLOCROSSE NEARER TO YOU

By now you have learned a little about playing polocrosse! If you have had an APA Coach/Instructor/Clinician teach your group the basics.....and you are hooked.....the next step is to **JOIN the APA, JOIN an APA CLUB, or START an APA CLUB!**

Joining an existing APA club in your area or joining the APA itself is easy. Just visit the APA website to find the clubs that are in your area, and/or to sign up for an APA membership.

When a group of people want to register as an APA club to play and promote the sport of polocrosse, the APA requests that the club contact submit the following to the APA Executive Administrator:

- 1) Club name
- 2) Team colors (colors your club teams will compete in, to be recognized as your club)
- 3) Names of office holders and contact information
- 4) Membership roster

You can find the Executive Administrator on the APA website or you can send this information to info@americanpolocrosse.org.

Good luck and have fun with polocrosse!



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