

# The American Polocrosse Association



## 2024 Standards of Play

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# **The American Polocrosse Association**



## **2024 STANDARDS OF PLAY**

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*Thanks to the many  
who contributed over the years,  
giving their time and expertise in  
the making of our rulebooks.*

*American Polocrosse Association  
Board of Directors*

Please Note: new or revised rules are called out with a gray vertical line shown in the outside margin of the page.

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## DEFINITIONS

**10-yard Throw** – A throw awarded to a player. The umpire marks the spot from which the ball is to be thrown. This throw must travel at least 10 yards in any direction.

**APA** – American Polocrosse Association; the officially sanctioned organization for polocrosse in the USA under the International Polocrosse Council.

**Bounce** – A technique for crossing the 30-yard line, the ball is thrown to the ground in a forward direction and retrieved on the other side of the 30-yard line.

**Chukka** – A timed period of play during a polocrosse game, lasting usually 6 or 8 minutes.

**Crossing** – A foul that occurs when one player crosses in front of or behind another player at such a distance that involves the possibility of collision or danger to either player or horse.

**The “D”** – A semi-circle with an 11-yard radius that is centered on the back line of the goal scoring area.

**Field** – A verb meaning to enter a team into a competition. –  
A noun referring to the entire 160 by 60 yard playing area.

**Forfeit** – A choice to not play a game or to deviate from the standards of play, resulting in an automatic loss registered in win/loss record.

**Foul** – An infringement of the rules usually resulting in the fouled side gaining possession of the ball, being awarded a free goal, or given an advantage in position when play is resumed.

## 7

**Game** – A match between two teams.

**Goaltenders** – A person who stands behind the goal posts and reports if a goal has been scored, as well as the position of the player's horse during his attempt at scoring a goal.

**Goal Scoring Area** – The area at either end of the field where the goal posts are positioned. It measures 30 yards long by 60 yards wide.

**Goals Scored** – Total of all goals scored by a team in all games played.

**Goals Scored Against** – Total of all goals scored against a team in all games played.

**Head to Head** – A comparison of two or more tied teams based on who has won or lost when playing directly against each other.

**Headstall** – An appropriate piece of tack fitted to a horse's head designed to control the head of the horse (i.e. Bridle, halter, etc).

**Line of the Ball** – Imaginary line that describes the players who have right of way over other players.

**Line-Up** – When the two playing sections form parallel lines facing the umpire on the sideline. The umpire throws the ball between the players to restart play.

**Mark, Mark-up** – A defensive move that consists of a player's horse making contact with an opponent player's horse in order to block or move the opponent.

## 8

**Midfield** – The part of the polocrosse field that is between the two goal scoring areas. It measures 100 yards long by 60 yards wide.

**Overtime** – In the case of a tie, the section who was off the field will continue the game until the next goal is scored on a chukka basis.

**Possession** – A ball being in a net of a player's racket.

**Referee** – An unmounted umpire on the sidelines that supports umpires during game play.

**Section** – One half of a standard 6 person team, consisting of a #1, #2, and #3.

**Time-Off** – A period during the game when the clock is stopped. The umpire calls all times-off. There are no scheduled times-off, such as after a goal or foul.

## **SECTION I: APA MEMBERSHIP**

The term “APA” when used herein refers to and denotes only the American Polocrosse Association. The rules of the APA shall take precedence over the rules in any other association, except in such cases of international test matches played in the U.S. and matches played in other countries to which the rules of that country and the rules of the International Polocrosse Council will be adhered.

### **1. PLAYER MEMBERSHIP IN THE APA PROVIDES:**

- a. Eligibility to participate as a player in tournaments and competitions sanctioned by the APA.
  - i. All players taking part in APA sanctioned events must be members in good standing of the APA or their home country.

### **2. MEMBERSHIPS LAST FOR A CURRENT CALENDAR YEAR AND EXPIRE ON DECEMBER 31.**

### **3. TYPES OF MEMBERSHIPS**

- a. Adult Membership – Adult Members are those individual members who are 18 years of age or older as of January 1 of that year.
- b. Junior Membership – Junior Members are those individual

members who have not reached their 18th birthday as of January 1 of that year.

- c. Family Membership – group membership for parents and their children, who must be under 18 years of age as of January 1 of that year.
- d. Student Membership – Individual members that are current college students and have not yet reached their 24th birthday as of January 1 of that year.

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### **4. TO BECOME A MEMBER, ONE MUST:**

- a. Complete the membership application;
- b. Sign the Liability and Code of Conduct forms;
- c. Provide payment to the APA.

### **5. CLUBS**

- a. Members who wish to band together to promote polocrosse may be called a club.
- b. Clubs will provide the Executive Administrator of the APA with a name, an up to date membership roster, list of officers and team colors.
- c. Clubs are eligible to host APA recognized tournaments, clinics and other events.

### **6. PLAYER REGISTRATION**

- a. A player may not be registered with more than one club at a time.
- b. A player is allowed to participate in a tournament with another club provided that the club in which the player is registered approves and both clubs agree.

### **7. PENALTIES FOR FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH APA RULES**

a. The failure of any player and/or club to comply with the rules of the APA and/or its Code of Conduct shall render either or both

liable to be penalized by either the APA or their club. b. The penalties are:

- i. Disqualification of any player and/or club from participating in any polocrosse tournament or game conducted by any affiliated club or the APA for a period of time determined by the Umpire Panel;
- ii. Any player assessed with a penalty under Section IV may appeal the penalty in writing to The Grievance Panel. The Grievance Panel will make a determination in writing within 30 days of receipt of the written appeal.

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### 8. FOREIGN PLAYER POLICY

- a. A foreign player is defined as a player that has not established a permanent United States domicile for 6 consecutive months
- b. A current APA membership does not nullify a player's foreign player status as being a foreign player
- c. Current APA members are eligible to compete in international competitions for the APA
- d. Current APA Adult members are eligible to vote in APA elections.
- e. A limit of one foreign player per team will be allowed to play at the APA national tournament provided that they meet one of the following requirements:
  - 1) They play at an APA sanctioned tournament during the 12 months prior to obtain a current APA rating, granting them eligibility to play in any division as deemed appropriate by the Nationals Committee
  - 2) Provide a written statement from their club president that states their current country assigned rating/handicap and the typical division in which they normally play in. This statement must be signed off by the president of the association in which country the player resides.

3) They play in the A grade.

- f. If the division is 3-man then one of those players can be a foreign player. If the division is 6-man then one of those players can be a foreign player. If a division changes from 3-man to 6-man before the start of the tournament the club must rearrange players and find a replacement if two of the sections had a foreign player.

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### 9. CODE OF CONDUCT

- a. Members of the American Polocrosse Association understand that they represent polocrosse and the APA and agree to adhere to its rules, guidelines, and Code of Conduct at polocrosse events.
- b. General Guidelines:
- Members will:
- i. Place horses' welfare above all other considerations. Animal abuse as identified by a doctor of veterinary medicine will not be tolerated.
  - ii. Respect the local and federal laws at the venue and respect the person and property of others. This includes refraining from threatening, destructive, or abusive behavior.
  - iii. Conduct themselves in a sportsmanlike manner.
  - iv. Adhere to rules and guidelines of the APA rule book and the rules established by the Event Organizer.
  - v. Abide by the APA Alcohol Policy.
- c. Members are expected to conduct themselves at all polocrosse events in a manner which is in keeping with the guidelines and the Code of Conduct of the APA and will not bring discredit upon the APA or the sport of polocrosse. d.

## Player's Code of Conduct

- i. Be a positive role model in behavior, feedback and interactions.
- ii. Play by the rules.
- iii. Be respectful to all participants and spectators.
- iv. Be a good sport, on and off the field.
- v. Play fairly. Do not bully or take unfair advantage of another competitor.

## e. Umpire's Code of Conduct

- i. Be a positive role model in behavior, feedback and interactions.
- ii. Place safety and welfare of participants above all else.

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- iii. Be impartial.
- iv. Operate within the rules of the game.
- v. Be in control of the game and accountable to it.





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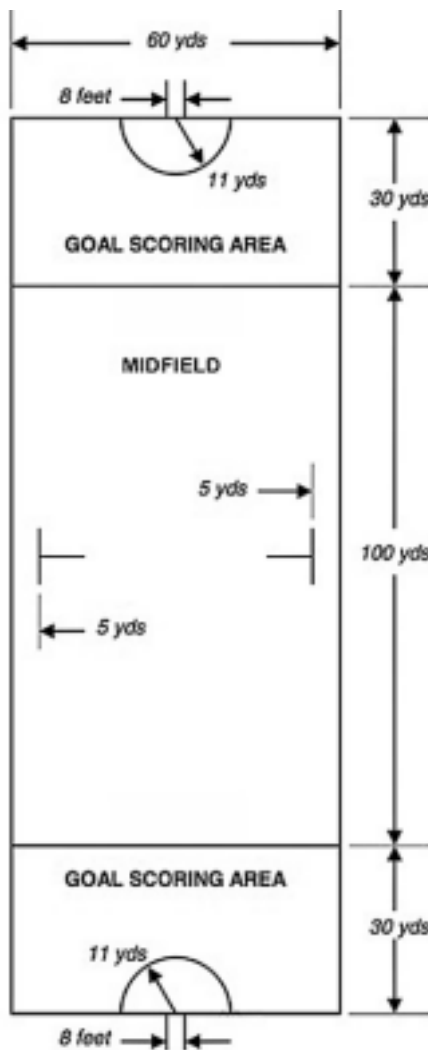


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## **SECTION II: STANDARDS OF TOURNAMENT PLAY**

The term tournament, when used herein,  
includes all tournaments and competitions

sanctioned by the APA.



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## 1. THE PLAYING FIELD -

Standard Size

Length: 160 yards

Width: 60 yards

Goal Scoring Area: 30 yards long from each end line

Midfield: 100 yards long

Goal Posts: 8 feet apart centered on back line and  
at least 10 feet tall

The "D": A semi-circle with an 11 yard radius centered  
on the goal posts

The "T": 5 yards in from the center of each side line

The goal posts must be light enough to break or be pushed  
over if over run to minimize injury to horse and rider.

All lines will be clearly marked so as to be readily seen by all  
players and umpires.

## **2. THE BALL**

- a. The ball is a thick-skinned sponge rubber ball, 4 inches in diameter and weighs approximately 6 ounces.

## **3. THE POLOCROSSE RACKET**

- a. May be any length.
- b. The inside string area cannot be larger than 8 ½ inches in length by 7 ¼ inches in width.
- c. Cannot have metal reinforcements or any protrusions.

## **4. HORSES**

- a. Any horse can be played if it conforms to the following criteria:
  - i. Is not a stallion;
  - ii. Has sight in both eyes;
  - iii. Is sound of limb and gait;
  - iv. Is under proper control;
  - v. Does not exhibit any dangerous behavior or disease;
- vi. Does not show a vice that is dangerous to rider, other players or horses.
- b. Only one horse is allowed for each player in any

one tournament.

- c. In the case of accident, sickness or injury to a horse, a substitute is allowed with permission from the Tournament Umpire in collaboration with the Horse Welfare Officer or the veterinarian on site if necessary.
- d. A period of up to 10 minutes is allowed for recovery or to get the substitute horse.
- e. A substitute horse MUST be of equal or lesser caliber in the estimation of the Tournament Umpire.
- f. The captain of opposing teams must be notified of the change at the time of substitution and the start of all games that follow.
- g. The captain of the affected side may immediately re-organize the players of the affected section.
- h. The original horse may be replayed if considered fit by a vet or the Horse Welfare Officer.
- i. The team forfeits if they have an illegal substitution. j.

A horse cannot play more than 54 minutes in one day.

## 5. TEAMS

### a. 6-Person Teams

- i. 6 players consisting of two sections of 3 players

each. ii. The sections will play alternate “chukkas” or time periods, and the total score of the two sections make up the final score.

b. 3-Person Team (Section)

i. 3 players consisting of one section.

ii. The sections will play “chukkas” separated by equal breaks between “chukkas”.

c. Nominations of Sections

i. The team captain will nominate the team, section order and the position of play to the score table immediately prior to any game and ride on from opposing ends (chosen by the toss of a coin if not in agreement).

d. Change of Players

i. Players within one section of a team may change positions during the course of a game provided that:

1. The change is done between chukkas;
2. The umpires, scorekeepers and opposing team captain are informed;
3. The player's shirt numbers are changed.

ii. When a substitute horse and/or player is played, such substitute horse and/or player must not be of a higher caliber than the horse and/or player they are replacing.

## **6. PLAYER POSITIONS**

a. Player #1 – The only player that can score a goal.  
Plays in the midfield and his goal scoring area.

b. Player #2 – Plays only in the midfield.

c. Player #3 – The only player that can defend the goal. Plays in the midfield and the opposing goal scoring area.

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## **7. PLAYER EQUIPMENT:**

- a. All equipment and gear must be sound and in good working order.
- b. Required Equipment
  - i. White pants, matching team jersey with their number clearly marked on the back, riding boots and equestrian approved helmet.
  - ii. Bridle or appropriate headstall with reins. Split or running reins shall be allowed. A running rein is defined as any attachment from hand through bit to saddle, girth, breastplate, etc., or anything which may be construed as a second rein. Regardless of the type of reins used, the collected reins when placed on the horse's wither should not fall below the level of the horse's elbow (length limitation).
  - iii. Saddle without a horn.
  - iv. Breastplate or breast collar.
  - v. Protective leg wraps and bell boots on all four legs of playing horses.
- c. Optional Equipment Safety Guidelines
  - i. All whips must have a flap on the end of at least 1 square inch total area.
  - ii. Bits with protruding sidebars are not allowed. All leverage action in bits must be partially incorporated within the main ring. The umpire shall have the right to determine the safety of all bits.
  - iii. Sharp buckles and hooks must be covered.

## **8. LEFT-HANDED PLAYERS**

- a. Left-handed players are permitted, but the umpire and opposing team must be notified before the start of each game.

## **9. SUBSTITUTE PLAYER**

- a. Except for 9 g., a substitute player can only replace an injured player.
- b. Play will be stopped for bleeding wounds for either horse or

rider. Play will not continue until the blood wound has been properly dealt with.

- c. If a player is injured, a period of up to 10 minutes may be allowed for recovery or to organize a substitute player to take their place.
- d. The injured player may take part again in the tournament when considered fit to play by the Tournament Umpire and/or Doctors Medical Release. In the event of unconsciousness, a Doctors Medical Release is mandatory.
- e. At the Tournament Umpire's discretion, the substitute player may play a substitute horse if the injured player does not give permission for the injured player's horse to be played.
- f. The substitute player must be of the same rating or lower than the injured player.
- g. If a member of a team is not able to participate in the earlier part of the tournament, if organized with the Tournament Committee in advance, another player of similar ability can fill in. In this case, the Tournament Umpire and Tournament Committee will make efforts to minimize any advantage gained by the player change.

## **10. DOUBLING UP OF PLAYERS**

- a. When only five players are available to play, the team is made up by one player playing two horses, one in each section.
- b. When doubling up occurs, the player that is playing on both sections must play at the #2 positions in one section.

## **11. CHUKKAS**

- a. The number and duration of chukkas played will be at the discretion of the Tournament Committee.
- b. The maximum duration of a game is 8 chukkas X 8 minutes with 2 minutes after each chukka. Each section will play alternate chukkas. Each section of the team will change over and play in the opposite direction in successive chukkas.
- c. No horse can be required to play more than a maximum total of 54 minutes in one day.



## 12. TERMINATION OF CHUKKA

- a. Each chukka will end at the expiration of the prescribed time and the ball is dead on the first sound of the bell.
- b. Foul at the end of a Chukka
  - i. In the event of a foul being committed before the expiration of time and insufficient time is available to execute the penalty, that penalty will be executed at the beginning of the next chukka.
  - ii. In the final chukka of the game, if a penalty is awarded to the #1 in their goal scoring area too late to be taken before the bell, time is extended to allow a shot at goal from that spot. The ball is dead after the attempted shot.

## 13. UMPIRES

- a. Umpire Duties:
  - i. Call the game in accordance with the current APA rules.
  - ii. Report any incidents to the Tournament Umpire.
  - iii. Report any horse and/or player substitutions to the scoring table for documentation.
- b. Two umpires will be appointed to each game and are responsible for running the game in accordance with the rules of the game as set forth in the most current APA rulebook.
- c. A game may be umpired by a single umpire if approved by the Tournament Umpire in situations where only one umpire may be sufficient.
- d. One umpire will throw the ball in and the second umpire will be behind the line-up. Umpires alternate throw-ins after a goal is scored.
- e. Umpires shall keep the players between them at all times with one attending the ball carrier and the other attending the back play.
- f. In the event of a disagreement between umpires, time will be called off to consult with the Referee. The Referee's decision

is final.

g. Umpire Dress and Equipment

- i. The umpire will dress in a professional manner wearing a striped or checkered shirt, white pants, riding boots and a helmet.
- ii. The umpire must have a racket and a whistle.

## **14. TOURNAMENT UMPIRES**

- a. A Tournament Umpire will be appointed by the Chief Umpire of the APA for every sanctioned tournament.
- b. The tournament umpire is strongly encouraged not to play in the tournament where they are acting in said capacity
- c. The Tournament Umpire has the authority to use his or her judgment in an unbiased manner to ensure that all teams are abiding by the APA Code of Conduct in its entirety (Section 1, #9). If this is deemed to not be the case, after consulting with the Chief Umpire or an APA Board Member, the Tournament Umpire has the authority to disqualify the team, resulting in a forfeit.
- d. Tournament Umpire Duties
  - i. Set the umpire schedule.
  - ii. Observe and support the umpiring of the games.
  - iii. Resolve conflicts if the game umpires disagree.
  - iv. Send the Umpire Report to the APA after the tournament.

## **15. REFEREES**

- a. The Referee is an unmounted umpire assigned to each game to support the game umpires.
- b. The Referee's duties:
  - i. Resolve disputes between umpires.
  - ii. Be available to umpires for rule clarification.
  - iii. Monitor and make corrections during the game to improve the overall quality of umpires.
- c. The Referee has the authority to call time off to consult with game

umpires only when play has stopped.

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## **16. UMPIRE RIGHTS**

- a. The umpire may call time-off for any reason that they consider necessary.
- b. Any foul recognized in the rules of play as dangerous must be whistled immediately and the appropriate penalty assessed.
- c. The umpire may suspend play until they feel that the field, spectators, horses, players, etc. conform to the rules and do not pose any obvious safety concerns.
- d. The umpire may determine the safety of all equipment and can disallow the use of anything they deem to be a hazard to other horses or players.
- e. Any infringement of the rules constitutes a foul and the umpire may stop the game by use of a whistle. If the umpire blows the whistle, the ball becomes dead and cannot be advanced.
- f. The umpire will restart the game with a line-up or by awarding an appropriate penalty.
- g. If any incident occurs that requires medical attention to player or horse, the Tournament Umpire is to refer the incident to the APA Chief Umpire for investigation.

## **17. RIGHT TO LODGE A COMPLAINT REGARDING AN UMPIRE**

- a. The captain of a section is the only person who may register a protest to the umpire during play, but will not enter into any discussion or argument whatsoever. The umpire's decision is final.
- b. Any registered club has the right to lodge a complaint, which must be in writing, about any umpire on the grounds of unfairness or incompetence, and the complaint will be sent to the Chief Umpire and President of the APA.
- c. The Umpire Panel will review and pass judgment on the complaint. The APA Board will confirm such Umpire Panel decisions.

**18. GOALTENDERS**

- a. There must be at least one goaltender at each goal.
- b. Wear a safety vest.
- c. Watch to be able to report whether the ball goes through the goalposts.
- d. Watch the horse's hoof to report whether the player is in the "D" when shooting the goal.
- e. Raise a racket above their head to signal a good goal or wave it below the knee to signal a missed goal.
- f. Stand at a distance behind the goal posts so as not to interfere with the ball before it passes through the goalposts.
- g. In all cases, the umpire will have the final decision.
- h. See Goaltending Guidelines for additional helpful instructions at the end of these Standards of Play

**19. TIMEKEEPERS & SCOREKEEPERS**

- a. Keep official time and score.
- b. Report the state of the game as requested by the umpire.
- c. Keep record of players and positions.
- d. Document any horse and/or player substitutions.
- e. Each competing team has the right to have an official representative with the timekeeper and scorekeeper.
- f. Players/teams may not lodge a complaint unless they have an official representative at the score table.

**20. VARIATIONS FROM APA STANDARDS OF PLAY**

- a. If there is an APA sponsored event for a specific purpose, there can be variations to the standards of play to accommodate different objectives and must be outlined in all event information put out to the participants.
- b. Any other deviations from the APA standards must be approved by the Chief Umpire in advance and announced by the Tournament Committee at least 30 days prior to allow time for participants to back out without losing any registration fees. The deviations should be outlined in all event information put out to the participants.



### **SECTION III: RULES OF PLAY**

#### **1. HOW TO WIN A GAME**

- a. The team that scores the most goals wins the game.
- b. In the case of a tie, the section off the field will continue the game until the next goal is scored on a Chukka basis. "Overtime"

#### **2. HOW TO WIN A TOURNAMENT**

- a. If the format calls for a final, the team that wins that final will be declared the winner of that division.
- b. If the format calls for a round robin, the team with the most number of total wins will be declared the winner of that division.

- c. Should there be a tie in win/loss record between two or more teams, the first tie breaker will be "head to head".
  - i. Should this still result in a tie, then the second tie breaker will be "goals scored".
  - ii. Should this still result in a tie, then the third tie breaker will be "goal scored against".
  - iii. In the unlikely event that there is still a tie, then a coin flip will determine the winner.

### 3. FORFEITS

- a. Should a team choose to forfeit a game, regardless of the reason, said team will be considered ineligible for any placings in the tournament.
- b. Should a team choose to forfeit a game, any games that said team plays will be eliminated from any calculations necessary for tie breakers and placings in the tournament.

### 4. EQUIPMENT

- a. All equipment and gear must be sound and in good working order. **(Penalty 1, 2, 3)**
- b. Players and horses will wear and maintain appropriate safety equipment for the entirety of the game as defined in the required equipment section. **(Penalty 1, 2, 3)**

### 5. LINE-UP

- a. Every game starts with a 6-person line-up from the sideline closest to the timekeeper.
- b. A line-up occurs at the center field "T" after each goal is scored, on the side opposite the most recent line-up.
- c. A reasonable amount of time will be allowed for players to line up. Players are expected to return at least at a trot.
- d. After a reasonable amount of time, a team that is not lined up properly or gains advantage through improper position will be penalized. **(Penalty 1)**
- e. Players must line up behind the "T" with equal advantage.



- f. Players will line up in two parallel lines, knee to knee facing the umpire.
- g. Each section must line up side by side, on the side of the field nearest the goal it is defending.
- h. Players must line up in order; #1 first, #2 second, #3 third.
- i. The umpire will throw the ball in by hand with an overhand throw high above the player's shoulders, between the opposing ranks of players, and within reach of the player's rackets.
- j. In the event of a ball not being thrown in correctly, the umpire is to blow the whistle and repeat the throw.
- k. No player may make any move for advantage until the ball has left the umpire's hand. **(Penalty 1)**
- l. During a line-up, if the ball is deflected out of bounds before clear possession is established, the ball will be thrown in again at a line up. Possession is defined as a ball being in a net of a player's racket.

## 6. GOAL SCORING AREA

- a. Only the #1 and the opposing #3 players may play in a goal scoring area.

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- b. A player who is not allowed to play in the scoring area may override the 30-yard line provided that the player clears the area immediately so as not to interfere in any way with the play in the area.
- c. Any player who should not be in the goal scoring area, and whose team gains an advantage because of their presence there, will be penalized. **(Penalty 2,3,4)**
- d. A player not permitted in the goal scoring area may not swing at the racket or interfere with a player in the goal scoring area. **(Penalty 2,3)**
- e. If a player is pushed into the goal scoring area, the player pushing them must allow them back into the midfield area

immediately. **(Penalty 2,3)**

## **7. RIDING THROUGH THE GOALPOSTS**

- a. Players may not ride through the goalposts during game play. **(Penalty 4)**
- b. Definition of “riding through the goalposts”: all four feet of a horse pass through the goalposts.
- c. A player will be penalized if he/she intentionally rides another player through the goal posts. **(Penalty 5)**

## **8. SCORING GOALS**

- a. Goals can be scored only by the #1.
- b. The ball must be thrown and then pass between the goal posts at any height.



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- c. The #1 must be in their goal scoring area between the 30-yard line and the “D”.
- d. A goal is considered good if the ball is thrown by the #1 and hits, in passing, the opposing #3 or their horse, and passes through the goal posts even if the opposing #3 is within the “D”.
- e. A goal is considered good if the #3 catches, deflects or causes by deflection off their horse, the ball to miss the goal while their horse’s hoof/hoooves are on or outside the back line and between the posts.

## **9. MISSED GOAL**

- a. Any of the following shall be deemed a missed goal:
  - i. A legitimate throw at the goal results in the ball going out of bounds without passing between the goal posts;
  - ii. A goal thrown while inside of the “D”
    - 1. A player will be deemed to be inside of the “D” if one or more of their horse’s hooves are on the ground on or inside the “D”;
  - iii. The #1 throws both racket and the ball between the goal posts;
  - iv. When attempting a shot at goal, if the ball is deflected by the #3 player or his horse, then goes out of bounds, without passing through the goalposts.

## **10. GAME RESTART AFTER MISSED GOAL**

- a. Should a shot on goal fail, the defending #3 will be awarded a 10-yard throw from a central point on the 30-yard line.
- b. The ball in this instance must be thrown at least 10 yards in a forward direction.
- c. At the time of the throw, the opposing #1 is the only player allowed within 10 yards of the spot from where the throw is to take place. The #1 player of the opposing side must follow the #3 out but no closer than the nose to hip and in such a position as to not interfere with the throw by the #3.

- d. No player shall attempt to touch the ball or interfere with the player taking the throw until the player and ball have traveled more than 10 yards or the player has attempted to take possession after the throw, whichever comes first.
- e. The player taking the throw shall have first attempt at the ball provided the ball remains accessible from the player's line of travel.
- f. Should the throw not travel 10 yards, the umpire shall throw in from the nearest sideline in midfield; 5 yards from the 30-yard line.

## **11. CROSSING THE 30-YARD LINE**

- a. A player may not cross the 30-yard line while in possession of the ball. **(Penalty 1)**
- b. A player carrying the ball up to the 30-yard line may bounce, lob, or throw the ball such that it hits the ground in the area into which they are traveling and may then recover it so that the player does not have possession while their horse is crossing the line.
- c. The ball will be deemed to have been carried over the 30-yard line when one or more of a player's horse's hooves are on the ground on or over the 30-yard line while they are in possession of the ball.
- d. A ball resting on the 30-yard line is deemed to be in midfield and may be picked up by players in midfield only.
- e. If a foul is committed by a player carrying the ball over the 30- yard line, the penalty will be marked at the spot at which the ball crossed the line.

## **12. OUT OF BOUNDS**

- a. If the ball or hoof of the horse of the ball carrier is on the side or end lines, the ball is deemed to be out of bounds.
- b. The player will be judged in or out of bounds by the position of their horse's hoof or hooves, NOT the position of the ball relative to the boundary line.

- c. A player will be penalized if the ball is in a player's possession and is carried out of bounds. **(Penalty 1)**
- d. Excluding attempted shots on goal or line-ups, the last person to touch the ball before it goes out of bounds will be penalized. **(Penalty 1)**
- e. A ball that comes off a horse and is deflected out of bounds shall be thrown in to a line-up from the spot at which the ball went out. f. A player may not run their horse over the ball to intentionally cause it to go out of bounds. **(Penalty 1)**

### **13. RIDING OFF THE FIELD**

- a. Any player deliberately riding outside the boundary of the field, or any player being ridden off and forced outside of the boundary of the field, must safely re-enter the field of play less than 10 yards from their point of exit and within the same field area. The opposition must let the player safely back on the field. **(Penalty 1)**

### **14. CROSSING AND RIGHT OF WAY**

- a. The term "line of the ball," is defined as "the imaginary line that describes the players that have right of way over other players." b. No player may cross in front or behind another player except at such a distance as does not involve the possibility of collision or danger to either player or horse. **(Penalty 1,2,4,5,6)**
- c. Any player leaving the field has no automatic right of way when returning to the field.
- d. Any player in possession of the "line of the ball" shall have right of way over others.
- e. If a player is not in possession of the ball, the player closest to the ball who is riding in the direction the ball was traveling will be considered to be in possession of "the line of the ball" and shall have right of way.
- f. A player possessing the "line of the ball" has right of way over any other player riding to meet the ball if the other player approaches at an angle that intersects the ball's line of travel and produces an unsafe crossing for the speed of travel.

- g. If no player holds clear “line of the ball,” and the ball is moving, the player who assumes “line of the ball” first or holds the least angle to the line shall have right of way.
- h. Players may neither stop in front of nor turn back into the players with the “line of the ball”. **(Penalty 2,4,5,6)**
- i. If no player possesses the “line of the ball,” and the ball is not moving, the player closest to the ball shall have right of way and first call on the ball.

## **15. DANGEROUS RIDING (Penalty 4,5,6)**

- a. No player shall ride dangerously.
- b. No player shall intentionally lose contact with the reins during play.
- c. Two players may not wedge a player between them so as to cause a dangerous situation.
  - i. This foul will be observed when rider and horse are in physical contact with riders on both sides and pushing to create a wedge.
  - ii. The player causing the wedge will be penalized.
- d. No player may seize with the hand, or push with the head, forearm, or elbow, another rider.
- e. A player may push with their hip, shoulder, or arm above the elbow, provided that the elbow is kept to their side.
- f. A player shall not allow their horse’s head to contact another player

A stylized silhouette of a polocrosse player on a horse, colored in a gradient from red to yellow. The player is holding a mallet with a yellow ball. The background features a blue sky with white clouds and green pine trees.

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## g. Riding Off and Pushing

- i. Riding off is allowed, provided that contact is made with the horses facing in the same direction and pushing shoulder to shoulder.
- ii. No player shall use their horse to push or bump another horse in a manner dangerous to either horse or player.
- iii. When horses are stationary and facing opposite directions, pushing is allowed sideways provided that horses are kept parallel and either player does not push across the other horse's loins or back or under the opposing horse's head.
- iv. No player shall bump with sufficient force to dislodge a horse from its line of travel.

## **16. WRONGFUL USE OF WHIPS, SPURS, & RACKETS (Penalty 2,3, 4,5,6)**

- a. No player is allowed to hit a horse intentionally with his or her racket.
- b. No player may use whip, spurs, or racket to intimidate or injure any horse or player.
- c. No player may use their whip more than 3 consecutive times in a single occurrence.
- d. The umpire may, after ordering a player to remove spurs or whip for injury to their horse, prevent them from using any spurs or whips for the remainder of the game or tournament.

## **17. CARRYING THE BALL**

- a. Any player carrying the ball must carry it on their racket side and not cross the centerline of their horse. **(Penalty 1)**
- b. It is permissible to pick up or catch the ball on the non-racket side, provided that the racket and ball are brought back to the racket side immediately.
- c. A player's racket with the ball in it may pass over the centerline of the horse without constituting a foul or penalty provided the player is in the act of throwing the ball.
- d. A player may not switch carrying sides during the middle of the match. **(Penalty 1)**

- e. Two-handed throws are not allowed. **(Penalty 1)**
- f. A player in possession of the ball may not throw or pass their racket with the ball in it to another player. **(Penalty 1)**
- g. No player shall deliberately throw their racket either at their opponent's racket or at the ball. **(Penalty 1,2,3)**
- h. A player may not catch or hit the ball with anything but their racket.
- i. A player shall not carry the ball other than in their racket. **(Penalty 1)**
- j. A player may not hold the ball in his racket by use of his body, or that of their horse. **(Penalty 1)**
- k. In the event that a ball lodges against a player, horse, or equipment; it must be dropped immediately. **(Penalty 1)**

## **18. SWINGING AT AN OPPONENT'S RACKET**

- a. A player may swing their racket at their opponent's racket, but only in an upward direction to dislodge the ball or to prevent the opponent from gaining possession of the ball. **(Penalty 2,3,4)**
- b. No player shall be allowed to swing at an opponent's racket while coming from behind, until the player's body is level with the opponent's horse's hip and no further forward than the horse's shoulder for a backward swing; but at all stages players must be within reach of an opponent's racket before attacking the racket. **(Penalty 2,3,4)**
- c. The defending player's full body and horse must be on the ball carrier's racket side before swinging. **(Penalty 2,3,4)**
- d. A player may not swing at an opponent unless the opponent is in the act of gaining possession or has possession of the ball. **(Penalty 1,2,4)**
- e. A player may not reach across or under an opponent's horse's centerline in order to dislodge the ball from the opponent's racket or prevent the opponent from gaining possession of the ball by hitting the opponent's racket or person. **(Penalty 2,4)**

- f. Once a player has possession of the ball, an opponent may not reach across the ball carrier's horse with their racket or person. **(Penalty 2,3,4)**
- g. No player may swing their racket wildly so as to intimidate or injure horse or rider. **(Penalty 4)**
- h. Any swing that, in the opinion of the umpire, constitutes a wild or vicious swing, or makes contact with a player's head, body or horse, will be penalized. **(Penalty 4,5,6)**
- i. The swinging of a racket in more than one consecutive circle, while trying to dislodge the ball from an opponent, constitutes dangerous play. **(Penalty 4,5,6)**

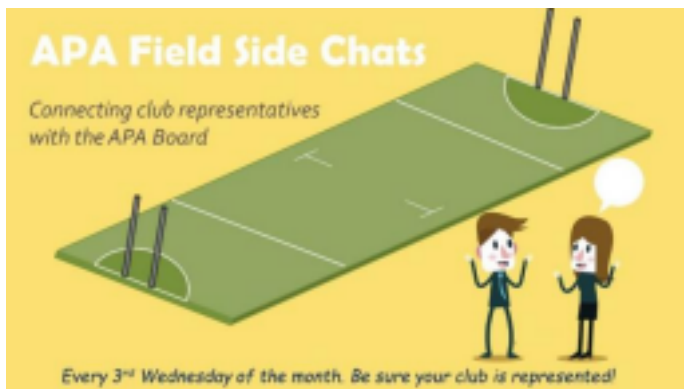
## **19. ASSISTANCE TO PLAYERS**

- a. No dismounted player shall interfere with the ball or game in any way. **(Penalty 2,3)**
- b. No player who is dismounted away from the ball may be obstructed from remounting or moving away from play. **(Penalty 1,2,4)**
- c. A player will be penalized if they receive outside assistance (assistance from anyone other than section teammates) while on the field. **(Penalty 1,2)**

## **20. "TIME-OFF"**

- a. If a horse falls or a player or horse is injured, the umpire shall stop the game immediately. In the absence of a penalty, the umpire will restart the game in a way that does not take advantage away from either team.
- b. If a player becomes dismounted, the game is stopped only if a dangerous situation is created.
- c. Any incident that results in a need for medical care will be reported to the Chief Umpire of the APA for further investigation.

- d. If there is a fall of the horse or rider where the shoulder or head of the horse or rider hits the ground, they must be evaluated by the HSR before returning to the field
- e. The umpire shall stop play for loose leg wraps / bandages and / or saddle pads that are lost or in danger of coming off (Penalty 1, 2, 3).
- f. The umpire shall use his / her discretion regarding when to stop play for any other broken or loose tack / gear. Once the broken tack / gear has been addressed/replaced, play shall recommence with a 10 yard throw to the team in possession, in a way that does not take advantage away from either team. In the event of neither team having possession, play shall recommence with a lineup.
- g. The umpire shall not stop play for a broken or dropped racket unless it was the result of a penalty by the opposing team. However, once the ball is dead, the umpire shall then stop play and allow the player a reasonable amount of time to retrieve / remove the dropped racket or exchange the broken racket.
- h. No player shall intentionally leave their dropped or broken racket in the field of play.
- i. Jostling or bumping during time off is not permitted. (Penalty 1, 2)



## 21. DEADLOCK

- a. In the event of a deadlock (two opposing players unable to make progress on the ball) lasting more than ten seconds, the umpire shall stop the game and throw the ball in from the nearest boundary line.
- b. In the event that the #1 is alone in the goal scoring area with the ball, that player must attempt a shot on goal within 15 seconds.  
**(Penalty 1)**
- c. In the event that the #3 is alone in the goal scoring area with the ball, that player must move the ball across the 30-yard line within 15 seconds. **(Penalty 1)**

## 22. CONDUCT PREJUDICIAL TO THE GAME (PENALTY 4,5,6)

- a. The following behaviors will be recognized as conduct disruptive to the safety or spirit of the game and will be penalized:
  - i. Using abusive, insulting, threatening or obscene language towards or in relation to an umpire, official,  
or another player
  - ii. Disputing a decision of an umpire, undermining the authority of the umpire or purposely delaying the game
  - iii. Striking another person, or physical abuse of any official or player;
  - iv. Dangerous riding to cause injury to horse and/or player  
(reckless and/or intentional)
  - v. Failing to leave the playing field when directed to do so by  
the umpire
  - vi. Any act which, in the judgment of the umpire, is disruptive to the safety or fairness of the game.

## 23. QUESTIONS NOT PROVIDED FOR

- a. Should any incident or question not provided for in these rules arise, the Tournament Umpire or Chief Umpire shall be the final judge and their decision is final.

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### SECTION IV: PENALTIES

These penalties are to discourage illegal and/or dangerous behavior. In the event a penalty is not an advantage to the fouled side, the penalty should be escalated to the next higher penalty if appropriate. The umpire has the discretion to increase the severity of a penalty.


#### **PENALTY 1:**

- 1.1 For the side that is fouled, a 10-yard throw from the spot at which the foul was committed.
- 1.2 The ball must travel at least 10 yards in any direction. No player shall approach closer than 10 yards from the spot where the throw is to be taken. If this throw is not accepted as a pass, the ball must hit the ground before the thrower can touch the ball.
- 1.3 A 10-yard throw shall not be executed by a player until directed to do so by the umpire.
- 1.4 The player may throw from a stationary position or moving, provided the throw is executed from the spot marked by the umpire.
- 1.5 The 10-yard throw shall be executed within a reasonable amount of time.
- 1.6 The player taking the 10-yard throw has first call on the ball at 10 yards.
- 1.7 Failure to execute the penalty properly will result in a throw in from the nearest sideline.

#### **PENALTY 2:**

- 2.1 A 10-yard throw advanced to a central spot on the next 30-yard line to give advantage to the team fouled.
- 2.2 Sub-sections 1.2 to 1.5 of Penalty 1 applies.



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**PENALTY 3:**

- 3.1 An awarded shot on goal from a central spot immediately outside the "D".
- 3.2 The ball must be shot on goal.
- 3.3 The #3 may defend the shot on goal from a stationary position at least 10 yards from the spot of the throw.

**PENALTY 4:**

- 4.1 The side fouled is awarded one goal.

**PENALTY 5:**

- 5.1 The umpire excludes a player from a portion of the match in addition to any other penalty.
- 5.2 A substitute player may not be played during the period the player is excluded.
- 5.3 The excluded player shall not re-enter the playing field until such time as indicated by the umpire.
- 5.4 The player should stand off the sideline with his or her horse at a spot indicated by the umpire.
- 5.5 The penalized team has the right to reorganize the affected section to best advantage.
- 5.6 The sidelined player must return onto the field in the vacant position.
- 5.7 In all instances, the player sent off shall be the subject of a written report by the Tournament Umpire to both the Chief Umpire of the APA and the Executive Administrator of the APA.

**PENALTY 6:**

- 6.1 A player is excluded from the remainder of a game or the tournament, in addition to any other penalty.
- 6.2 The penalized team may reorganize when the player is sent off.
- 6.3 In all instances, the player sent off shall be the subject of a written report by the Tournament Umpire to the Chief Umpire and Executive Administrator of the APA.

**PENALTY 7:**

- 7.1 The umpire may order a horse off the field and disqualify the horse from playing again during the game or tournament if the horse is deemed in violation of the "Horses" section.
- 7.2 A substitute horse may be played but must be of equal or lesser caliber in the estimation of the umpires and approved by the Tournament Umpire.
- 7.3 The Tournament Umpire will include details of the incident in the Tournament Report to the Chief Umpire for review.

UMPIRE'S SIGNALS



Successful  
goal

Unsuccessful  
attempt at  
goal



Racket  
crosses

# UMPIRE'S SIGNALS



Successful  
goal

Unsuccessful  
attempt at  
goal



Racket  
crosses  
center line  
of horse

Player  
crossed  
penalty  
line



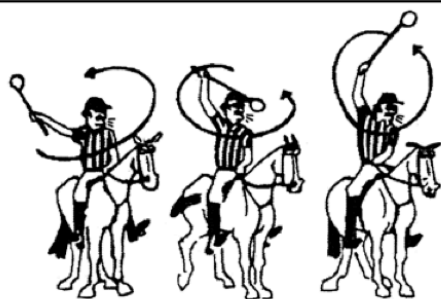
## UMPIRE'S SIGNALS



**Dangerous  
cross**

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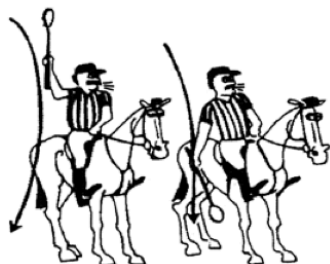
**Player hitting  
horse with racquet**



**A wild or  
dangerous  
swing**

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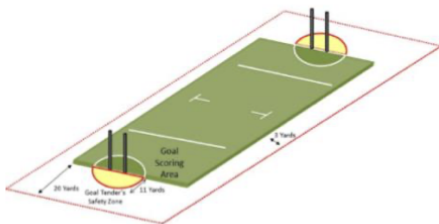
**Player hitting  
down**



## Goaltending Guidelines

When attending a tournament, you might be asked to be a goal judge for a game. It is simple, fun, and a great way to watch your favorite team or rider play.

Playing Field Safety Zones



1. Show up before the game starts.
2. Have a racquet and wear safety vest (if you need one, ask the table).
3. Make sure there is a game ball at your goal.
4. Let the umpire know if you are new to Goal Judging.
5. Watch the game at all times (do not get distracted).
6. It's easier if you have one other person to help you. No more than two people are allowed in the goaltending area (especially in A Grade games). It can get dangerous with too many people hanging around. Sometimes the horses don't get stopped at the line and need to run out the back. If there are too many people there the horse has no safe place to go and could run over someone.
7. Safety is a concern! Watch for horses running out the back. It is usually best for you to stand still behind the goal, within the Goal Tender's Safety Zone and let the rider(s) steer the horse(s) around you.
8. It is your job to look at every shot on goal and determine if the ball passes through the goalposts. The shot can be very high and still be a goal. Imagine that the goal posts go straight up indefinitely, then determine whether the high shot would have been through the uprights. A shot that passes directly over a goal post is no good.

9. It is your job to make sure that the horse was NOT in the "D" when the rider released the ball while making a shot on goal. The horse's feet should not touch or cross the line before the ball is released. Watching for release time is a great job for the second person goal judging. One of you should watch the goal, the other watch the "D".
10. Immediately after the shot, signal to the umpires whether the shot was good or no good. It is incorrect to catch or chase the ball instead of making a signal. Make the signal to indicate if the goal was scored or missed first.
11. Lift the racquet straight in the air to signal a GOAL.
12. Cross the racquet back in forth in front of you to signal NO GOAL. Tell the umpire if it was a no goal because the rider was in the "D".
13. Throw your extra ball back to the umpire, then go retrieve the ball that was thrown on goal. Ensure the other person is still watching the goal, especially in a fast-paced game.
14. You should watch the back line of the field. The umpire may not be in a position to see the back line at all times. If a ball crosses the back line or the ball carrier steps on or across the back line, you should signal the umpire by crossing your racquet back and forth in front of you just like a missed shot on goal. The umpire will then know that the play went out of bounds.
15. The umpires on the field have the final say in all of the calls. You are there only to assist them. Do not be upset if they make a different call than you. They see things from a different position and they do appreciate your help.
16. Stay in your position for the entire game. If the tournament is in sections (3-man teams), make sure you stay for all 4 or 6 chukkas.
17. Most of all, have fun and enjoy the game.

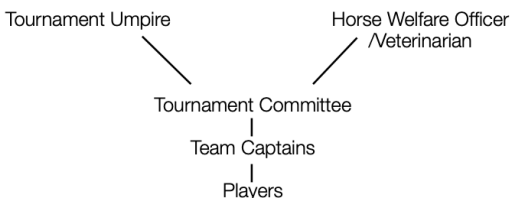
# THE HORSE WELFARE POLICY

**This policy is affective upon arrival at the tournament venue.**

**Horse Welfare Officers** are selected by the tournament committee to oversee the safety of horses, both playing and umpiring. Horse welfare is everyone's concern. This policy is intended to be educational and is intended to ensure our playing partners are humanely cared for.

Please read the guidelines and bring any breaches of code to the attention of the Horse Welfare Officer.

## ***Schematic of chain authority for the welfare of horses at tournament!***



## ***Penalties for Infractions of Horse Welfare***

**Action 1 – Education:** At the first infraction the Horse Welfare Officer speaks to the offending rider/owner and forms a plan of action to correct the problem.

**Action 2 – If the plan of action is not being followed:**

A) If the rider/owner did not understand the plan of action the Horse Welfare Officer will review it with them.

OR

B) If there has a deliberate failure by the offender to correct the problem the rider/owner will be ejected from tournament play until the corrective plan is in place and working.

**Action 3 – Emergency:** If a player is about to start a game on a horse that for some reason (colic, heat exhaustion, poor condition, injury, etc.) should not be on the field the Horse Welfare Officer will explain the problem to the rider/owner and pull the horse from play until the problem is resolved.

**Action 4 – Repeat infractions:** If a player continually breaks the welfare policy (unfit horses; horses left without water; pens insufficient to restrain horses; inhumane treatment of horses on the field; etc.) the APA board will hold a meeting with the offender and after hearing evidence from both sides of the complaint will determine a suitable course of action. The penalty assessed may include fines or ejection from the APA, depending on the severity of the complaint.

**Action 5 – At Horse Welfare Officer's Discretion:** The Horse Welfare Officer has the right to stop a horse from playing or umpiring when continued use is not in the best interest of the horse (behavioral issues, etc.). Appropriate penalties may be assessed later.

(3-10-2012)



## HORSE WELFARE GUIDELINES

Horses must not be **hit with a polocrosse racquet** on any part of the body. This also applies to practice/training sessions.

No **excessive use** of spurs or whip. This also applies to practice/training sessions.

If a rider has caused a **spur related injury** to his or her horse, their spurs must be removed.

No horse may compete or umpire if **lame**.

Horses should have **proper hoof care**.

No horse should be played or umpired on if more than **120 days pregnant**.

No horse may compete if showing signs of **extreme exhaustion**. This may be exhibited by inability to recover to a safe heart and respiration rate, or a loss of coordination and inability to sweat. Any horse excused from play for this condition may not return to play for the duration of the tournament.

Any horse that bleeds from both nostrils (possible **Exercise Induced Pulmonary Hemorrhage**) must be examined by a qualified veterinarian. If there is not a vet available the horse must be removed from competition. The affected horse may not return to play until the rider/owner is able to provide proof of an examination by a vet stating that the horse is fit to play. If a horse has more than one episode of EIPH it will be banned from playing polocrosse.

Any horse suspected of **"Tying Up"** must be examined by a qualified vet. If a vet is not available the horse must be removed from competition. An affected horse may not return to play for the duration of the tournament unless the owner/rider is able to provide proof of an examination by a vet stating that the horse is fit to play.

No horse showing signs of a **contagious disease** or illness may be played. Any horse showing signs of illness must be isolated from other horses and removed from premises.

**Pens or stalls** should be large enough (12' X 12' recommended) to allow a horse to lie down and get up safely. The stalls and pens must be secure, and regularly cleaned out.

Horses must have access to **clean water** at all times.

Horses must have adequate **feed** available during each 24 hour day.

All horses should be **fed and exercised** properly for the level of polocrosse they will be playing.

Horses must be **properly cared** for at the end of each game – for example; hosed of or blanketed, etc.

**Tails** must be unbraided, at least from the dock down, between games, unless the owner is able to provide adequate protection from flies with either fly spray and/or fly sheets.

The tail must be **completely unbraided** at the end of play each day.

All horses must be outfitted with **equipment** as stated in section 8 of the APA Rule Book.

Horses must have **leg wraps** removed between games. (Bandages for injuries are exempt from this rule.)

**Bell boots** must be removed after the end of play each day.

If weather is cooler than **40 degrees**, clipped horses must be blanketed.

If the **ambient temperature** on the day of competition is greater than 95 degrees, a committee consisting of the Horse Welfare Officer, the Tournament Committee and the Tournament Umpire will determine whether it is safe to continue play.

No horse may play more than a total of **54 minutes** per day.

**Rest time between games** – Based on level of play, it is strongly recommended in the upper levels that if the game is 4 chukkas of 6 or 8 minutes, a horse should have 2 hours between games. If the game has 6 chukkas of 6 minutes a the horse should have 3 hours between games.

**Fields must be safe** for competition. If there is any doubt, then a committee comprised of the horse welfare officer, tournament veterinarian (if attending), club and/or team captains, elected umpires (i.e. zone, state) and the host tournament committee will assess the field/s.

(3-10-2012)

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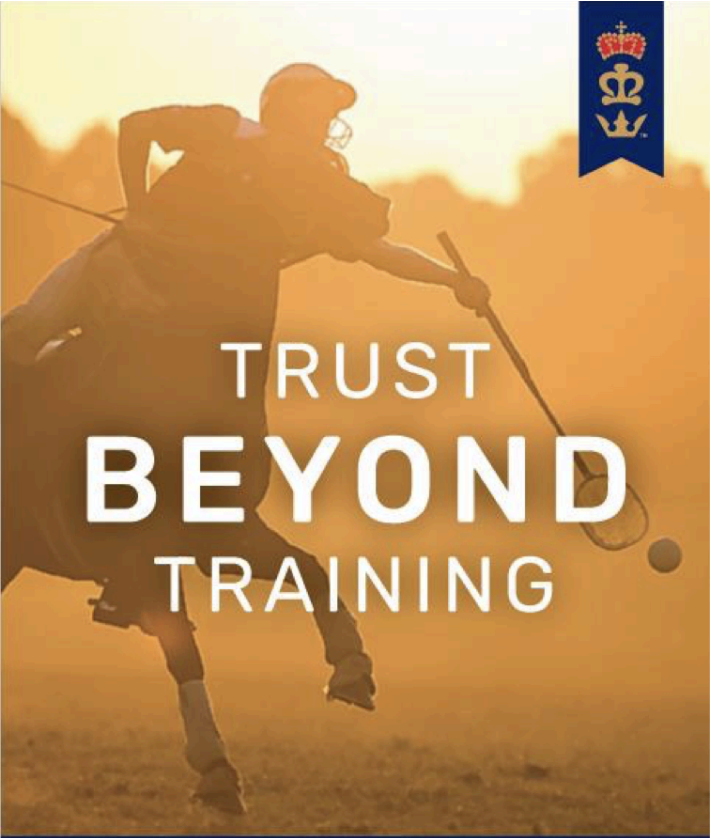
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