



POCKET POLO GUIDE



What You'll See

One Umpire - stationary on the South side of the field.

Two Referees - on horseback.

Two Goal Judges - one stationed between the goal posts of each goal.

Four Members of each team numbered 1 through 4.

MANY different horses! Each player uses a "fresh horse" for each of 6 chukkers.

Incredible equestrian skills, lots of galloping and major league action!

How It Works

Generally, the game is governed by two basic concepts; 1. polo is a team sport with each of the 4 team mates playing a specific position yet supporting the entire team in both offense and defense, and 2. the "line of the ball."

The line of the ball is created once the ball is struck and does not change until it is struck again, sending the ball in a different direction. The line of the ball is used in many ways, most importantly to act as an imaginary buffer to avoid collisions when two or more players ride to the ball for strike. The players must hit the ball to their right side (the "off side") and may not cross the line of the ball if doing so would cause a hazardous situation.

Scoring & Fouls

A score is achieved when the ball crosses the goal line between the goal posts of the opposing team.

Fouls are given for infractions of the rules governing field of play, usually for hazardous riding or improper use of the mallet. The umpire can award anything from a free goal to a free hit from a determined distance when a foul is called.

What You Can Do:

The half time "champagne divot stomp" is a MUST for all spectators and a long standing tradition!

Cheer the teams and ponies on, start "the wave" and just have a GREAT time!

Basic Polo Terminology

The following are some basic definitions to help spectators enjoy watching a polo match.

- appealing - claims by players for a foul, expressed by the raising of mallets above the head.
- back shot - backhand swing, changing the flow of play by sending the ball in the opposite direction.
- bowl in - when the umpire starts or resumes a polo match by rolling the ball down the center of a lineup of players, same as throw in.
- bump - when a player directs his pony into the side of an opponent's pony.
- check and turn - to slow the pony and turn safely.
- chukker - term used for period of play in polo, seven and a half minutes long, there are six chukkers in a polo match.
- flagman - an unofficial goal observer appointed to signal by waving a flag over the head if a goal is scored, or under the waist if no goal.
- field - usually 300 yards long by 160 yards wide and outlined by sideboards.
- goal - anytime the ball crosses the line between the goal posts, regardless of who (including ponies) knocks it through.
- handicap - team play is handicapped on the basis of ability. A team's handicap is the total of its players' goal ratings. The team with the lower handicap is awarded the difference in goals at the start of the match.
- hands - unit of measure for the height of a horse, one hand equals about four inches.
- hook - catching an opponent's mallet in swing below the level of the horse's back, to leave or turn the ball for a teammate.
- knock in - after the ball crosses the back line, the defending team knocks the ball back into play from their own back line.
- leave it - to ride past the ball so that the teammate behind can hit it.
- line of the ball - the imaginary line produced by the ball when it is hit or deflected.
- made pony - a polo pony that is well trained for polo and has been played for some time.
- mallet head - the part of the mallet used to strike the ball, the wide face of the head is used to strike the ball.
- nearside - the left hand side of the polo pony.
- neck shot - hitting the ball under the horse's neck.
- officials - two mounted umpires do most of the officiating, with a referee at midfield having the final say in any dispute between the umpires.
- offside - the right hand side of the polo pony.
- pass - to hit the ball forward or laterally to a teammate.
- penalty - numbered from 1 to 10, a free hit is awarded to the fouled, from a set distance determined by the severity of the foul committed.

Basic Polo Terminology... Continued

- pony goal - when a polo pony causes the ball to go through the goal posts.
- positions - there are four players on a team, numbered 1 through 4, each with different responsibilities.
- ride off - two riders may make contact and attempt to push each other off the line to prevent an opponent from striking the ball.
- safety - also known as Penalty 6, a defending player hits the ball over his own back line.
- sideboards - short boards along the sidelines of the field to help keep the ball in play.
- stick - the polo mallet.
- stick and ball - personal practice time.
- sudden death - overtime play when the score is tied at the end of the last regular chukker, the first team to score wins.
- swing - hitting at the ball with the mallet using one of four basic shots: forehand, backhand, neck, and tail.
- tack - all the equipment used on a pony.
- tail shot - hitting the ball behind and under the horse's rump.
- third man - the referee sitting at the sidelines, if the two umpires on the field are in disagreement, the third man makes the final decision.
- throw in - when the umpire starts or resumes the match, he rolls the ball down the center of a lineup of players and horses.
- time out - an umpire may call a time out when a foul is committed, an accident occurs, or at his or her discretion, a player may only call a time out if he has broken tack or is injured.
- turn - to backhand hit the ball away from the goal being defended.
- umpires - two mounted officials, one for each side of the field.
- USPA - United States Polo Association is the governing body of polo.
- wraps - the protective bandages the polo ponies wear on their legs