



FEDERATION OF INTERNATIONAL  
POLO

THE INTERNATIONAL RULES  
FOR POLO

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## **THE INTERNATIONAL RULES FOR POLO**

### **A. TEAMS, PLAYERS, SUBSTITUTES AND EQUIPMENT**

#### **A.1 Teams and Players**

- a) The number of players is limited to 4 a side in all games.
- b) Players must be qualified to play under the Regulations and Rules of the host country of the event.
- c) Players shall play with the stick in the right hand.
- d) No individual shall participate as a player or official in any game, if under the influence of drugs, alcohol or any other substance which is prohibited by the World Antidoping Agency (WADA) A player who participates in any game under these rules consents, as a condition of participation, to blood, urine or other tests deemed appropriate by the host organization.
- e) The aggregate handicap of a team must fall within the limits specified for an event. No team whose handicap is higher or lower than the specified limits shall be permitted to participate. However, in the event of a player's inability to continue because of sickness or injury or the awarding of Penalty 9 or 10, a team may continue below the lower handicap limit of a tournament. Certain rules regarding eligibility and handicapping may vary from country to country and such rules must be obeyed when playing in that country.

#### **A.2 Substitution**

- a) Substitution will be limited to players qualified and properly nominated under the tournament rules; any combination of 4 players so qualified and nominated are eligible to start the game provided the team is within the handicap limits of the tournament and the players are named at least 24 hours prior to games; and any subsequent team change to sickness, injury or other, will be immediately notified to the tournament committee and the opposing team.
- b) Substitution during a game may only take place if a player becomes sick or injured. If a player becomes sick or injured he, and any other players on the team, can be substituted at that time during the chukker with the umpire's permission. With all substitutions the team must remain within the handicap limit of the tournament as provided in A.1 (e) and be properly qualified under the tournament rules. If in the FIP WPC if a team is playing above the limit, any substitution must bring it back to 14 goals. The

handicap of a team in any game shall be its highest total handicap on the field at any one time during the game.

- c) Certain rules regarding substitution and handicap alterations may vary from country to country and such rules must be obeyed when playing in that country.

### A.3 Equipment for Players

- a) Sharp spurs and protruding buckles or studs on a player's boots or knee guards are not allowed.
- b) Players must wear protective headgear with a chinstrap properly fixed.
- c) Teams must wear distinguishing colors. If the 2 teams in the opinion of the tournament committee or the umpires conducting the games are so alike as to cause confusion, the team with the lower handicap or if equal, lower in the draw or second named in a league, must play in some other color.
- d) Certain rules regarding equipment for players may vary from country to country and such rules must be obeyed when playing in that country.

## **B. PONIES, PONY EQUIPMENT AND PONY WELFARE**

### B.1 Ponies

- a) Ponies of any height may be played.
- b) A pony blind in an eye may not be played.
- c) A pony may not be played which is not under proper control or which shows a vice that is a danger to other ponies or players.
- d) A pony played by one team cannot be played by any other team in the same tournament.

### B.2 Equipment for Ponies

- a) Protection of ponies by boots or bandages on all 4 legs is compulsory.
- b) Blinkers or any form of noseband or other equipment which obstructs the vision of the pony, are not allowed.
- c) A calkin or stud must only be fitted on the last inch (2.5 cms) of the hind shoes.
- d) Shoes with an outer rim, toe grab, screws, studs with hard centers or frost nails are not allowed.
- e) Certain rules regarding the equipment for ponies may vary from country to country.

B.3 Welfare of Ponies

- a) Players must take all reasonable steps to ensure the welfare of their ponies.
- b) Any pony showing blood, whether from the mouth, flanks or any other part, shall be removed from the game.
- c) After the fall of a pony, it shall be trotted up sound and fit to play before the player remounts.
- d) Any pony that is lame shall be removed from the game.
- e) The umpires have the authority to order the removal of any pony from the game.
- f) Certain rules regarding the welfare of ponies may vary from country to country and such rules must be obeyed when playing in that country.

**C. DUTIES AND AUTHORITY OF TOURNAMENT COMMITTEE, UMPIRES, REFEREE, GOAL JUDGES, TIMEKEEPER, SCORER AND OTHER OFFICIALS**

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C.1 Duties and Authority of Tournament Committee

- a) In most events, the host organization will appoint 3 or more qualified individuals, who have little or no interest in the outcome of the event to form a tournament committee. The tournament committee will be charged with the responsibility of running the event, including providing the officials and all the equipment needed by the officials to conduct the event, scheduling of the game(s), the holding of the draw and the resolution of questions arising at any time other than when the umpires are in charge. The decisions of the tournament committee, subject to the authority of the national or international association responsible for the tournament or event, shall be final and may not be objected to by the teams.
- b) No team may appeal in any way against the appointment of any particular umpire or referee. Nor may a team appeal against the times or venue of a game.
- c) Alleged procedural irregularities by the tournament committee may be protested to the governing body, FIP. Such protests must be in writing, and made without delay.
- d) Any question regarding a player or a pony may be referred by the umpires to the tournament committee after the game.

## C.2 Umpires and Referee

- a) The rules shall be administered in a game by two umpires, who shall be mounted to enable them to keep close to play, and a referee who shall remain off the field of play in a central position. The tournament committee may decide that 1 umpire and the referee may be dispensed with. All decisions of the umpires shall be final. In the event that 2 are serving and they disagree, the referee shall decide which umpire's opinion is to prevail or call offsetting fouls, if each umpire called a separate foul and he agrees with both. If, after hearing the opinion of the goal judge, there is disagreement among the umpires as to whether or not a goal has been converted, the referee will grant the benefit of the doubt to the defending team.
- b) Discretion of Umpires. Should any incident or question not provided for in these rules or in the rules prevailing in the country where the game is being played arise in a game, such incident or question shall be decided by the umpires. If the umpires disagree, the Referee's decision shall be final.
- c) The authority of the judges begins when they enter the field and ends when they leave the field. During that period, any violation of field rules is a foul and the umpire may stop the game; but it will be left to the umpire's discretion not to do so to apply a penalty if the arrest of the game and the application of the penalty would be disadvantageous for the side against which the foul was committed.

## C.3 Goal Judges

- a) In important games, goal judges shall be appointed, each of whom shall give testimony to the umpire at the latter's request as to the goals scored or other points of the games near the goal, but the umpire shall make all final decisions.
- b) When the ball is hit across the back line, a goal judge should signal and then quickly place a new ball on level ground on the field where it crossed the line except that it must not be nearer than 4 meters from the goal posts or sideboards.

## C.4 Timekeeper and Scorer

An official timekeeper and scorer shall be employed at all games. Their authority must be subordinate to the final authority of the umpire.

C.5 Other Officials

Certain rules regarding Officials, their equipment and authority may vary from country to country and such rules must be obeyed when playing in that country.

**D. GAME FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT**

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D.1 Field of Play

- a) Ground. The ground is taken to be the enclosed area which includes the field(s) of play, the club house or similar facility, the pony lines, horsebox park and any practice areas.
- b) Field of play. The field of play is taken to be the prepared surface of the playing area and safety zone.
- c) Playing area. The full size playing area shall be 300 yards (275 meters) in length (goal posts to goals posts) by 200 yards (183 meters) in width if unboarded; and by 160 yards (145 meters) if boarded. The minimum length shall be 250 yards (230 meters).
- d) Safety zones. The safety zones are recommended to extend at least 10 yards beyond the sidelines/boards and at least 30 yards beyond the back line. Clubs should ensure that the safety zone is of sufficient length, width and texture so that a player going at speed can stop with safety. Any incident of the game which occurs in the safety zone shall be treated as though it occurred on the playing area.
- e) Goal posts. The goal posts shall be 7.3 meters (8 yards) apart (inside measurement). The goal posts shall be at least 3 meters (10 feet) high, and light enough to give way if collided with. Should a goal post be knock down then the umpires should allow play to continue until is neutral.
- f) Boards. The boards shall not exceed 28 centimeters (11 inches) in height. They may be curved at the ends.

D.2 Size of Ball

The size of the ball shall be 76 to 89 millimeters (3 to 3.5 inches) in diameter; the weight of the ball shall be within the limits of 120 to 135 grams (4.25 to 4.75 ounces).



### D.3 Run Off Area

- a) No person other than players and umpires is allowed in the run-off area during play; except a stick holder may cross the safety zone to hand a player a new stick. A player requiring a stick or other assistance from an outside person during play must ride to the boards, side or end lines to procure it, no person may come on to the field of play to assist.
- b) No pony is allowed within the run-off area during play except those being ridden by a player or umpire unless the designated area for changing ponies is in the run off area.
- c) Any incidence of the game, which occurs in the run-off area, shall be treated as though it occurred on the field of play.
- d) When the game is stopped the judge will allow the player's assistant to enter the field of play so that he can reach a player who needs to change his horse or assist him with his gear, in order not to unnecessarily delay the game. During the game, horses can only be changed at the team's pony lines. There shall be no horses parked anywhere else on the field.

## **E. DURATION OF GAMES, CHUKKERS, WINNING OF GAME; GOALS AND HANDICAPS**

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### E.1 Duration of Games

The standard duration of a game shall be 6 chukkers. The number of chukkers in a game may be varied by the tournament committee. There may not be more than 8 chukkers, not including extra time. In all games there shall be a half time interval of 5 minutes; all other intervals between chukkers will be 3 minutes. 5 minutes shall be allowed before the first chukker of extra time if it is to be played. In games of 7 or 5 chukkers, the interval will be after the fourth or third chukker respectively. With the exception of the said intervals, play shall be continuous.

### E.2 Duration of Chukker

- a) End of normal Chukker. In a normal chukker, except the last, the first bell will be sounded as a warning after 7 minutes of play. If the ball is 'out of play' when the bell is sounded, then the umpire will blow his whistle to end the chukker. If the ball is 'in play' however, play will continue until the umpire blows his whistle, the ball goes 'out of play' or

hits the boards or at the first sound of the second bell to signify that a further 30 seconds has elapsed. Any penalty awarded after the first bell will be taken at the start of the next chukker.

- b) End of Last Chukker. The last Chukker will end on the sound of the first bell unless the Tournament Conditions require a result and the teams are tied. In this event play will continue until either a goal has been scored or awarded or the second bell has been sounded. In the latter event extra time will be played.
- c) Penalty at End of Last Chukker (Five Second Rule). If a penalty has been awarded within the last 5 seconds of the last chukker, the Timekeeper must allow a further 5 seconds of play from the time the ball is hit or hit at. E.g. if there were 3 seconds left, the time keeper will allow 5 seconds from the time the penalty is taken; thus 2 seconds will have been added to the game. The bell will be rung if a goal is scored or when 5 seconds have elapsed unless another penalty is awarded in which case the process is repeated. If the whistle is blown and no penalty is awarded, then play shall continue for the time remaining before the whistle was blown.
- d) Should the score be tied at the end of the last regular chukker, the game shall be resumed with an extra chukker played under the same conditions as described in the above sections with intervals between chukkers as provided in Rule E.1 until one side obtains a goal which shall determine the game.
- e) Optional shootout procedure

At the discretion of the Committee, in the event of a tie at the end of the last regular chukker, or any overtime chukker, the game may be concluded by a "shootout" procedure, conducted as follows:

- i. Players shall remain on same horses as finished last chukker
- ii. The Umpire(s) will determine which goal to use. One Umpire will set up each ball, the other Umpire to serve as a second goal judge. Umpire to select balls used
- iii. Each player, in turn, and alternating teams, will attempt one hit from the 60 yard line at an undefended goal. All players not hitting to be behind, and not closer than 10 yards, from the ball.
- iv. The team to hit first shall be decided by lot.
- v. Each shootout goal to score 1 point. After all players have hit, the team with more points will be declared the game winner by one goal.

Should a tie remain after all players have hit, all players will hit again, the team which hit first, now hitting last, until a winner is produced.

#### E.3 Running and Stopping of Clock

- a) Only if and when the umpire stops the play with a whistle, shall the clock be stopped. The clock shall not be stopped when a goal is scored or the ball otherwise goes out of bounds unless the umpire blows the whistle.
- b) If a play is to be resumed by the umpire throwing the ball in between the teams, the clock (if stopped) does not resume running until the ball leaves the umpire's hand.
- c) If play is to be resumed by a team taking a hit, the clock (if stopped) does not start until the ball is hit or hit at.

#### E.4 Winning of Games: Goals

- a) The team that scores the most goals, including goals awarded on handicap and/or by penalty, wins the game. All games shall be played until a winner is determined unless stated otherwise.
- b) A goal is scored from play when the ball passes between the goal posts or the imaginary vertical line produced by the inner surfaces of the goal posts and across and clear of the goal line. The ball must go all the way over and across the goal line to be a goal. A ball on the line is still in play. A ball hit directly over the top of either goal post shall not count as a goal because it does not pass between the inner vertical lines produced. **If the ball lodges in a goal post, the umpire will blow the whistle and the game shall continue as if the ball had been hit over the back line.**
- c) If the two umpires are unable to decide as to whether a goal was scored or not, having consulted the goal judge, they must give the benefit of the doubt to the defending team without consulting the referee.
- d) No objection may be lodged after the game on a decision made during the game as to whether a goal was scored or not, or whether the recording of goals was accurate or not.

#### E.5 Handicap Calculation

In all games played under handicap conditions, the higher handicapped team shall concede to the lower handicapped team the difference in team handicaps, divided by 6 and multiplied by the number of chukkers of play in the game. All fractions of a goal shall be counted as "half a goal". Mistakes

in handicaps or in computing goal allowances must be challenged before the second chukker begins, and no objection can be entertained afterwards.

#### E.6 Order of finish

Tournaments may be played using the single elimination draw or knock out system or by league play.

The teams in a league with one or more divisions, shall be ranked per division, from top to bottom, according to their won/lost record of play calculated by 2 points for wins, 1 point for tie or 0 points for loss. Whenever a tie exists the following tests will be applied in order.

- i. In a tie, in which each team played each other team and in all games are played to determine a winner:
  - a) A tie between two or more teams with equal won/lost records in the division shall be decided by the won/lost records of the tied teams in games against each other.
  - b) If a tie remains, the tie-breaker shall be each team's net goals (the sum of the team's winning margins less losing margins in games against the remaining tied teams.
  - c) If a tie still remains, the tie-breaker shall be gross goals (the sum of all goals credited to the team including goals by handicap and Penalty No. 1) in games among the remaining tied teams.
  - d) If a tie still remains, the Committee shall determine the ranking by:
    - 1) a playoff game, 2) coin toss, or 3) other equitable test as determined by the Committee.
- ii. In a league in which tie games are permitted or in which teams do not all play each other but play the same number of games.
  - e) The winner shall be the team with best won loss record calculated by 2 points for wins, 1 point for tie or 0 points for loss.
  - f) A tie between two or more teams with equal won/lost records shall be decided by each team's net goals in all games played.
  - g) If a tie still remains, the tie-breaker shall be each team's gross goals in all games played.
  - h) If a tie still remains, the Committee shall determine the ranking by:
    - 1) a play-off game, 2) coin toss, or 3) other equitable test as determined by the Committee.

In leagues with 4 or more teams, if a team has lost all its games, the results of the games played against this team will not be considered in order to calculate the net goals or sum of goals.

**E.7 Withdrawal and Forfeiture**

Forfeiture is a game declared a loss by the Umpires or Tournament Committee as a result of a rules violation.

If a team is forfeited or withdraws from a scheduled game, the results of all games played by that team shall not be counted as to wins, losses, net or gross goals for the opponents.

**F. COMMENCEMENT, INTERRUPTION AND RESUMPTION OF PLAY**

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**F.1 Dead Ball**

- a) The umpire shall carry a whistle, which he shall blow when he wishes to stop the game. The ball is dead at the sound of the whistle and the time it is dead is not counted in the playing time of the period.
- b) If a whistle is blown for a foul at approximately the same time as the goal is scored:
  - (i) The goal will be disallowed if the foul was committed by the attacking team and the foul was confirmed.
  - (ii) The goal will be allowed if the foul was committed by the attacking team and the foul is over-ruled; or if the foul was committed by the defending team whether or not the foul is confirmed.
- c) If the whistle is blown for a foul at approximately the same time as the ball is hit behind the back line and the foul is over-ruled, the ball shall be hit in or a penalty 6 taken.

**F.2 Game Stopped**

Play shall be continuous until play and the clock are stopped by the umpire blowing the whistle.

**F.3 Start of the Game**

At the beginning of the game the 2 teams shall line up in the middle of the ground, each team being on its own side of the halfway line and behind the 'T'. The umpire shall bowl the ball underhand and hard between the

opposing ranks of players, from a distance of not less than 5 meters, the players remaining stationary until the ball has left his hand.

**F.4 Changing Ends**

Ends shall be changed after every goal except where a goal is awarded under Penalty 1. Ends shall also be changed if no goals have been scored by half time (in a 7 or 5 chukker game, after fourth or third chukker respectively), and play shall be re-started at a position corresponding to the change of ends. After a goal has been scored, the game shall be re-started from the middle of the ground as prescribed in Rule F.3 above. The players shall be allowed a reasonable amount of time in which to reach the middle of the ground at the speed of a slow canter and to take up their positions.

**F.5 Wrong Line Up and Offside**

- a) If the umpire inadvertently permits lining up the wrong way the responsibility rests with him, and there is no redress, but if at the end of the chukker no goal has been scored the ends shall then be changed and the game restarted with a throw in or hit from a corresponding spot in the other half of the ground.
- b) Player Offside. If a player is on the wrong side of the line up, he may not make a play until he is behind a member of his own team. Should he do so, a penalty 5a is to be awarded at the spot where he made the play.

**F.6 Attacker Hits Behind (Knock In)**

- a) The ball must go over and be clear of the back line to be out.
- b) When the ball is hit behind the back line by attacking team, it shall be hit in by the defending team from the spot where it crossed the line, but at least 4 yards from the goal posts or boards, when the umpire calls "play". None of the team not hitting in shall be behind the striker and shall not be within 30 yards of the back line until the ball is hit or hit at; the team hitting in being free to place themselves where they chose. During a hit in, an attempt to hit a ball is considered a hit ball. In such case the line of the ball will be in a direction of the attempting player's horse at the time of the attempt.

There will be no contact between players from the moment the ball crosses the back line until it is brought back into play.

- c) Attacking players shall have reasonable time to get into position and the hit in shall be done without unnecessary delay and after the order of the

umpire. The player shall hit the ball, or hit at it, in the first attempt; the striker is not allowed to go over the ball, or circle during the hit in.

- d) In the event the hitting team does not hit in promptly following the call of "play" or hits or hits at the ball before play is called, the umpire shall sound the whistle and throw the ball in underhand and hard, at the spot where the ball crossed the back line at right angles to it. For such a throw in, the team which failed to hit in at the proper time shall be on the side nearest the goal.

#### F.7 Defender Hits Behind

If the ball is hit behind the back line by one of the defending team, either directly or after glancing off his own pony, or after glancing off the sideboards or goal post, Penalty 6 shall be exacted. If the ball strikes any other object before going behind, it shall be hit in accordance with Rule F.6.

#### F.8 Ball Hit Out

- a) The ball shall go over and clear of the sidelines or boards to be out of play.
- b) When the ball is hit over the boards or side line, it must be bowled in underhand and hard, by the umpire into the field of play from a point just inside the boards or lines where it went out, on an imaginary line parallel to the two goals, and between the opposing ranks of players, each team being on its own side of the imaginary line. No player may stand within 5 yards of the umpire. Players must remain stationary until the ball has left the umpire's hand. A reasonable time must be allowed for players to line up. (See F.5 (b)).

#### F.9 Throw-In Resumption when the Ball was not out.

If for any reason other than for a penalty, the game has to be stopped without the ball going out of play, it shall be re-started in the following manner. The umpire shall stand at the spot where the ball was when the whistle was blown, facing the nearer side of the field of play, but not nearer the boards or side line than 20 yards. Both teams shall take up their positions, each team being on its own side of an imaginary line, parallel to the goal lines and extending through the umpire to the sides of the field. No player may stand within 5 yards of the umpire. The umpire shall bowl the ball underhand and hard, between the opposing ranks of players, towards the nearer side of the ground, the players remaining stationary until the ball has left his hand. (See F.5).

During a throw-in, there shall be no right of way created by the bowling in of the ball. Right of way will be established when a player hits the ball and creates a new line. Until such time, players must play the ball from any direction or angle providing they do so without creating danger or a risk of danger to themselves, other players or horses.

**F.10 Re-Starting after Interval**

On play being resumed after an interval, the ball shall be put in play in the normal manner which would have been allowed had there been no interval, i.e. in accordance with Rules F.4, 6, 7 and 9, as the case may be. The umpires must not wait for players who are late.

**F.11 Damaged Ball**

If the ball is damaged or trodden into the ground, the umpire shall stop the game and re-start it with a new ball, in the manner described in Rule F.9. The game shall be stopped and the ball changed when the damaged ball is in such a position that neither team is favored thereby. Until the game is stopped, the larger part of the broken ball is the one considered to be in play; if the ball breaks when a penalty is being taken and it affects the free hit, the penalty shall be taken again with the new ball.

**F.12 Carrying the Ball**

A player may not catch, kick or hit the ball with anything but his stick. He may block with any part of his body but not with an open hand. He may not carry the ball. If the ball becomes lodged against a player, his pony or its equipment, in such a way that it cannot be dropped immediately, the umpire shall blow his whistle and re-start the game in accordance with Rule F.9 at the point where it was first carried.

**F.13 When the Game is not stopped**

It shall be within the discretion of the umpire not to stop the game or briefly delay stopping the game for the purpose of inflicting a penalty, if the umpire deems it to be in the best interest of the game.

**F.14 Unfinished Game**

Once a game has started it shall be played to a finish unless stopped by the umpire for some unavoidable cause which prevents a finish the same day, such as darkness or weather, in which case it shall be resumed at the point



at which it has stopped, as to score, period and position of the ball, at the earliest convenient time, to be decided upon by the committee conducting the tournament.

## **G. FIELD RULES**

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### G.1 Foul Called.

Any infringement of the rules constitutes a foul and the umpires may stop the games unless interrupting the game and awarding a penalty rs in a disadvantage to the team fouled.

### G.2 Crossing.

No player shall cross another who is riding parallel with the line of the ball, meaning this line its path and length, except at such a distance that not the slightest risk of collision or danger to any player is involved. There shall be no change of line of the ball when it is unexpectedly deflected and for a short distance.

### G.3 Line of the Ball and Precedence

- a) The line of the ball (LOB) is the reference for deciding precedence as between players and is taken as the extended path along which the ball has travelled or is travelling. This includes when it has been kicked by a pony or has hit a players or umpires pony or any other impediment on the field of play. If a player has a free hit but misses the ball, the BOL is taken as that direction in which the player was riding.
- b) Two players on the line of the ball riding toward the ball or bumping each other, have the right to it over all other players.
- c) The player parallel to and with the line of the ball on the offside of his pony has the right to it over the other players, except when meeting two players as described in subsection b).
- d) No player shall enter the line of the ball in front of the player who is on the line, except at such a distance that not the slightest risk of collision or danger to any player is involved. If a player duly enters the line and gains control of the ball, an opponent must not ride into him from brhind, and must play the ball on his near side.
- e) When two or more players ride in the general direction of the line of the ball, the player riding at a lesser angle to the line of the ball has precedence. If the players are at equal angles, the player that has the ball

on his right has the right to the line of the ball. The same rule applies in the case of players meeting the ball.

- f) Any player riding in the general direction of the ball at an angle with its path, has right of way over any other player who is also riding at any angle to the line, but in the opposite direction.
- g) No player will be considered to have precedence because he was the last to hit the ball.
- h) The player, who hits the ball on the right side of his horse (offside), has the right to the ball. If a player is positioned to hit the ball on his left side (nearside) and endangers any other player, he loses the right to the ball and must give way to the player who plays the ball on his right side (offside) and positions himself in a manner not to endanger another player.
- i) Two players riding in opposite directions, must hit the ball on the right side (offside) of their ponies.
- j) A player with the ball on the offside, may not move his pony to the nearside to avoid a legitimate play by an opponent.

#### G.4 Right of Way

- a) If one or more players are riding on the line of the ball and for any reason it is unexpectedly deflected, creating a new line, if they continue in the original line for a short distance, they have the right of way. If any of the players involved in a play or another player takes the new line, the players on the previous line have right of way and they cannot hit the ball.
- b) If a player in possession of the ball suddenly changes its direction, toward an opposing player, this opponent has the right to clear the right of way and may not play the ball without this constituting a foul. The opposing player must be granted the necessary time to clear the new right of way.
- c) A player clearing the Right of Way may make no offensive or defensive play in so doing and must take the most effective way to clear that Right of Way.
- d) If in the process of clearing the Right of Way a pony kicks the ball, this is not considered making a play.
- e) A player in possession of the ball on his offside may move the ball at any angle to the left, and the trailing opponent must play the ball on his nearside.
- f) In the event that a player advances the ball passing the opposing player, on the same line and at the same speed, the opponent is allowed to hit a

backhander on the right (offside), provided he does not make a cross: the original player can only play the ball again on the nearside.

- g) Two players, when riding in the same direction on the exact Line of the Ball, either following or meeting the ball, and simultaneously making a play against each other, have the Right of Way over a single player coming from any direction
- h) The player following the ball, nearest to its exact line and taking it on his off-side, is entitled to the Right of Way over all other players, except against 2 players as defined in G.4.g) above and in G.4.i) below where a player is meeting the ball on the exact line
- i) As between 2 players, when one is following the ball and the other meeting the ball:
  - (i) Regardless of their respective angles, a player following the ball has the Right of Way over an opponent meeting the ball, other than an opponent meeting the ball who is on the exact line of the ball with the line of the ball on his offside. An opponent meeting the ball in this fashion has the Right of Way over a player following the ball at an angle.
- j) As between 2 players, when both are following or both are meeting the ball:
  - (i) The player riding parallel to or at the lesser angle to the line of the ball whether on the offside or nearside of the line, has the Right of Way over the opponent riding at the greater angle to the Line of the Ball.
  - (ii) In the rare case of 2 players on opposite sides of the Line of the Ball riding in the same direction and at exactly equal angles, the player with the line of the ball on his off side has right of way.
- k) Turning and Play on the boards. The first player to the ball may not turn in front of a player on the LOB but if the player following checks or reduces speed the first player may then turn the ball in either direction providing that he maintains speed and continues the play. If the play is on the boards, the player, once he has turned must keep going in his chosen direction.

#### G.5 Checking

- a) No player may check or pull up either on or across the Right of Way if by so doing he runs the slightest risk of collision with any other player entitled to it.
- b) A player may check and play the ball at a reduced speed provided any other players following on the Right of Way have time to adjust and there is no risk of a collision.
- c) If a player enters safely on the Right of Way, an opponent must not ride into him from behind, but must take the ball on the near side of his pony.
- d) Delay of Game: A player in possession of the ball, marked by approximately 2 horse lengths by an opposing player must keep moving. Should the player in possession of the ball either stop or reduce their speed to a walk or walking speed, the player (and or any member of the player's team) will have 5 seconds to either hit away or run with the ball. An infraction of this rule will result in a penalty against the team in possession of the ball.

#### G.6 Dangerous Riding

A player may not ride in a manner which creates danger to another pony, player or official or which places the welfare of his own pony at undue risk. A player must be traveling at a similar speed to the opponent and all ride-offs must be shoulder to shoulder. In particular a player may not:

- a) Ride off at too great an angle.
- b) Ride off at a speed that is not compatible with the speed of the opponent.
- c) Ride into an opponent behind the saddle.
- d) Ride an opponent across or into the Right of Way of another player at an unsafe distance.
- e) Ride off an opponent who is already being ridden off by another member of the team (sandwiching). However, it is not a foul for a player to hook or strike an opponent's stick whilst the opponent is being ridden-off by a teammate of the player hooking or striking.
- f) Continue to ride off another player over the goal line, thereby endangering to a goal judge.
- g) Ride his mount up the line of the ball from behind and into the stroke of an opponent making a full forehand shot.
- h) Ride his mount up into the backhand stroke of another player from behind.
- i) Zigzag in front of another player in such a way as to impede his progress within his Right of Way or cause the latter either to have to check his pace or risk a fall.

- j) Pull across or over a pony's legs either in front or behind in such a manner as to risk tripping either pony.
- k) A player who rides at an opponent in such a manner as to intimidate and cause him to pull out or miss his stroke, although no foul or cross actually occurs, shall be penalized as if it had.
- l) A ride off, from the same side that the ball is being hit, is allowed unless the player initiating the ride off creates danger by difference of speed or angle.

#### G.7 Use of the Whip/Spurs

- a) Whips and/or spurs may not be used unnecessarily or excessively.
- b) Polo clubs and umpires must ensure that, save for exceptional circumstances, whips are not used to strike ponies on the field of play except when the ball is in play.
- c) Umpires should at least start the game with a Penalty 5 (b) if a player strikes a pony on the field of play after the umpires have ridden on to the field of play and before the ball is in play.
- d) A player must not strike another player or his pony with his whip.

#### G.8 Rough or Abusive Play

- a) No player may seize with the hand, strike or push with the head, hand, arm, or elbow, but a player may push with the arm above the elbow, provided the elbow is kept close to the side.
- b) No player may physically abuse another player or the player's own or another player's pony.
- c) A player deliberately striking another player or another player's pony with hand, whip or stick should be ejected from the remainder of the game with no substitution in accordance with Penalty 10 and the incident shall be reported by the umpire to the appropriate Disciplinary Committee.

#### G.9 Misuse of the Stick

- a) A player may only hook an opponent's stick if he is on the same side of the opponent's pony as the ball, or in a direct line behind, and his stick is neither over or under the body or across the legs of an opponent's pony, nor may any player hook or strike at an opponent's stick unless all of the opponent's stick is below the opponent's shoulder level. The stick may not be hooked or struck unless the opponent is in the act of striking the ball.

- b) No player may reach immediately over and across or under and across any part of an opponent's pony to strike at the ball, nor may he hit into or amongst the legs of an opponent's pony.
- c) No player may intentionally strike another player or his pony or another player's pony with his polo stick.
- d) No player may use his stick dangerously, or hold it in such a way as to interfere with another player or his pony such as:
  - (i) Taking a full swing at the ball from the throw-in or in a melee in such a way as to endanger other players or ponies.
  - (ii) Striking at the ball in the air in such a way as to endanger other players or ponies.
  - (iii) Taking a full swing under a pony's neck in such a way as to endanger another player or pony riding alongside.
  - (iv) Striking an opponent's stick in such a way as he may cause injury to that player or his pony.
  - (v) Striking the ball after the whistle.
  - (vi) "Windmilling" or "Helicoptering"

#### G.10 Loss or Breakage of Equipment

- a) If a player loses his headgear the umpire shall stop the game as soon as an opportunity occurs that favors neither team.
- b) In the event of broken tack or equipment:
  - (i) The game shall be stopped immediately if the breakage presents a risk to player or pony such as:
    - i. Broken girth
    - ii. Broken martingale
    - iii. Broken rein, if single.
    - iv. Broken or loose bit.
    - v. Loose bandages or boots.
- c) The game should not be stopped immediately, but as soon as an opportunity occurs that favors neither team for breakage of a non-dangerous nature such as:
  - (i) Lost or broken stirrup leather or iron.
  - (ii) Lost or broken curb chain.
  - (iii) Lost bandages or boots.
- d) When time is given for lost or broken equipment, the player may, with the permission of the Umpire, return on another pony.

**G.11 Accident or Injury to Player or Pony**

- a) If a pony falls, causing the player to dismount, or goes lame or appears injured, the umpire shall stop the game immediately.
- b) If a pony throws a shoe, the player may be given time out to change the pony when the game is next stopped.
- c) If a player falls off his pony the umpire shall not stop the game until the ball is in a neutral position, unless he is of the opinion that the player is injured or is liable to be injured. What constitutes a fall is left to the decision of the umpire.
- d) A dismounted player may not interfere with the game in any way.
- e) When the game has been stopped in accordance with **Rules G.10 or G.11** above, the umpire shall re-start the game in the manner laid down in Rule F.9, directly when the player concerned is ready to resume play. The umpire shall not wait for any other player who may not be present.
- f) If a player were injured, a period not exceeding 10 minutes shall be allowed for his recovery. If the injured player is unfit to play after 10 minutes, the game shall be re-started with a substitute in place of the injured player. If, however, the injured player subsequently recovers he may replace the player who was substituted in his place, but the highest handicap of the two players shall be taken into account in accordance with Rule A 2.

**H. SELECTION OF PENALTIES**

H.1 There are degrees of dangerous play and unfair play which give the advantage to the team fouling. The penalty to be inflicted is left to the discretion of the umpires and shall only be referred to the referee in the event of the umpires disagreeing on the penalty. Under no circumstances shall the team fouled be put in a less advantageous position by the award of a penalty than they would have been had no penalty been awarded. Further no penalty less than a penalty 4 shall be awarded for a foul by the defending team within the 60 yard line of their goal.

H.2 Personal fouls involving unsportsmanlike conduct such as, but not limited to:

- Disrespect towards the officials.
- Arguing with the umpires or other officials.
- Fouled or abusive language to anybody on the field.
- Appealing for fouls verbally or with a stick.

Must, at a minimum, be penalized progressively as follows:

- Penalty for first offense.
- A more severe penalty if a penalty has been previously awarded.
- Penalty 10 (a) will be awarded with a player being excluded from the remainder of the chukker.
- Penalty 10 (b) or (c) will be awarded with a player being excluded from the remainder of the game.

H.3 If in the opinion of the umpire, a player commits a dangerous or deliberate foul in the vicinity of goal in order to save a goal Penalty 1 (goal) will be awarded.

## **I. TAKING OF PENALTIES**

- I.1 Except for Penalty 2 hit from the spot, Penalties 2, 3, 4 and 6 shall be carried out in only one hit. Consequently the player taking the penalty may not take a preliminary dribble for himself or for a teammate and after the initial hit at the ball neither the hitter nor any teammate may hit or hit at the ball unless either it is hit or hit at by a defending player or the ball is going behind the back line. However, teammates of the hitter may play the ball on a penalty 4 or 6 if they are within 10 yards of the backline when they first hit the ball-
- I.2 Teeing up. Building a tee is not allowed; only one player may position the ball and once the umpires have called 'play', the ball may not be repositioned.
- I.3 In all free hits it will be considered that the ball is in play from the moment it has been hit or tried to hit and missed. It should be understood by hit or hit at to the action intended to put the ball in play. The player shall hit the ball, or hit at it, in the first attempt; the striker is not allowed to go over the ball, or circle during the final approach, or do an excessively long preparation run or delay the game.
- I.4 "Behind the ball" should be interpreted as being behind the line parallel to the back line and running through the point from which the penalty is being taken.

## **J. Specific penalties**

### **Penalty 1- Penalty Goal**

If, in opinion of the umpires, a player commits a dangerous or deliberate foul in the vicinity of goal in order to save a goal, the team fouled shall be awarded one



goal. The umpire should instruct the goal judge to wave his flag to indicate that a goal has been awarded. The game shall be restarted with a throw in from the spot 10 yards from the center of the goal of the team that fouled towards the boards, with the right side of the umpire nearest to the back line.

**Penalty 2-30 Yard Hit - Undefined**

One hit at the ball from a spot 30 yards from the goal line of the team fouling, opposite the middle of the goal or, if preferred, from where the ball was when the foul occurred (the choice to rest with the Captain of the team fouled).

The fouling team must be behind the back line, but not between the goal posts, and they may not defend the penalty conversion attempt. None of the team fouled to be nearer the goal line or back line than the ball is at the moment it is hit or hit at. The team fouled may hit or hit at the ball only once. If the ball fails to clear the backline, the defending team will be awarded a free hit from the spot where the ball stopped. Should the spot be within 4 meters of a goal post, the ball shall be placed 4 meters either side of the nearest goal post for a free hit by a defending player.

In the event of the Captain of the team fouled elects to take the penalty from the spot where the ball was when the foul occurred, the defending team must be behind the backline and not within 30 yards of the ball until it is hit or hit at, however they may defend the penalty shot so long as none of the defending team rides out between the goal posts or crosses the right of way of the hitter. The hitting team is not restricted to one hit in the event it elects to take a Penalty 2 from the spot, but only one player can take the penalty.

When a technical foul is given as well as Penalty 2, if the goal is scored the game should be started with a 5 (b); if the original shot fails, another Penalty 2 should be awarded for the technical foul.

**Penalty 3-40 Yard Hit - Defended**

One hit at the ball from a spot 40 yards from the goal line of the team fouling opposite the middle of the goal. All the team fouling must be behind their back line until the ball is hit or hit at, but not between the goal posts, nor when the ball is brought into play may any of the team ride out from between the goal posts; none of the team fouled must be nearer the goal line or back line than the ball is, at the moment it is hit or hit at.

In carrying out Penalty 3, if the free hit would, in the opinion of the umpire have resulted in a goal, but is stopped by one of the team fouling coming out from between the goal posts, or crossing the back line before the ball was struck, such

shot is to count as a goal to the team fouled. If the player who stopped the ball did not infringe these rules, but another member of his team did, Penalty 7 (a) shall be exacted.

**Penalty 4-60 Yard Hit**

One hit at the ball from a spot 60 yards from the goal line of the team fouling opposite the middle of the goal; the team fouling shall be behind the 30 yard line, the team fouled being free to place themselves where they choose.

Clarification:

60 and Corner (Safety) – First shot must be a genuine strike at goal. If the first shot is a miss-hit the attacking team may continue to hit or hit at the ball using only a half-swing (below the shoulder) and may not take a full swing at the ball until the ball has been hit or hit at by a defender.

**Penalty 5(a)-Free Hit from the spot**

A free hit at the ball from where it was when the foul took place, but not nearer the boards or sidelines than four yards. None of the team fouling to be within 30 yards of the ball, nor behind the ball, the team fouled being free to place themselves where they choose. (Rule Q (d)).

**Penalty 5(b)-Free hit from Centre**

A free hit at the ball from the centre of the ground, none of the team fouling to be within 30 yards of the ball, nor behind the ball, the team being fouled being free to place themselves where they choose. (Rule Q (d)).

**Penalty 6-60 Yard Hit Opposite where Ball Crossed Back Line (Defenders hit the ball behind)**

One hit at the ball from a spot 60 yards distant from the back line, opposite where the ball crossed it, but no further than 30 yards from the center of the field on the 60-yard, line, such spot being marked on the field by an X. All the team fouling to be behind the 30-yard line, the team fouled being free to place themselves where they choose. (Rule Q (d)).

**Penalty 7 – Violation of Penalties or the Hit In**

**Penalty 7(a)- Another Free Hit**

If the team fouling fail to carry out Penalty 2, 3, 4 or 6 correctly the team fouled shall be allowed another free hit at the ball, unless a goal has been scored or awarded.

If the team fouling fails to carry out Penalty 5 correctly, the umpire shall advance the ball by 30 yards for the re-hit.

If both sides fail to carry out Penalty 2 or 3 correctly, another free hit shall be taken by the team fouled, irrespective of the result of the previous free hit.

**Penalty 7(b) - Fouled Team Failure to Carry Out**

If the team fouled fails to carry out a Penalty 2, 3, 4 or 6 correctly in accordance with Q (a) through Q (d) the umpire shall award a penalty 5a against the offending team from the spot where ball was placed for the previous penalty.

**Penalty 8(a) - Blind Pony Disqualified**

For infringement of Rule B.1 (b), the pony blind of an eye must be reported by the umpire in writing to the Committee conducting the tournament who shall take all steps necessary to ensure that it shall not be played again in any tournament.

**Penalty 8(b) - Pony Disqualified.**

For Infringement of Rule B.1 (c) and (d): the pony must be ordered off the ground by the umpire and disqualified from being played again during the game or match.

**Penalty 8(c)-Pony Ordered Off**

For infringement of Rule B.2, the pony must be ordered off the ground by the umpire and disqualified from playing again until the offense has been removed.

**Penalty 9-Player Ordered Off**

For infringement of Rule A.3, the player must be ordered off the ground by the umpire and disqualified from playing again until he has removed the offense.

**Penalty 10-Player Excluded**

- a) Flags. A Player should be awarded a flag for unsportsmanlike conduct or persistent breach of the rules. A flag will be in addition to any other penalty and may increase the severity of any penalty awarded, except that a penalty 1 shall not be awarded as a result of a yellow flag. A player shall normally be awarded a yellow flag. A player shall normally be awarded a yellow flag for the first offence but may be awarded a penalty 10a or 10b for a first or second offence. A penalty 10a shall be automatic if it is the

second yellow flag and a penalty 10b automatic if a Penalty 10a has already been awarded. The player shall be sent to the pony lines where he will remain for the duration of his penalty. The umpires must:

- (i) Agree that a player should be awarded a flag and if not in agreement the referee must be asked to decide.
- (ii) Obtain the acknowledgement of the player(s) awarded a flag and their teams captain(s).

b) Penalty 10a: Sent off for 2 minutes of Playing Time (Yellow Flag). This may run across two chukkas. The referee will fly a yellow flag at the start of any 2-minute suspension which he will lower when the two minutes of play has been completed. When his time is up, the sent off player must re-join the game.

c) Penalty 10b: Sent off for the rest of the match (Red Flag). The sent off player may be substituted but only by a qualified player of the same handicap or less after 2 minutes of playing time as above. A player awarded a Penalty 10b will be suspended for the next match of the tournament. This may be increased by a disciplinary hearing.

**NOTES**