

GENERAL *Rules* OF POLO

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The object of the game is to move the polo ball down-field, hitting the ball through the goal posts for a score. Polo teams then change directions after each goal in order to equalize field and wind conditions. A team is made up of four polo players.

A polo match is usually played outdoors. A polo field is 300 yards long and 160 yards wide, the largest field in organized sport.

A polo match lasts about two hours and is divided into six timed periods called chukkers. Each chukker runs 7 ½ minutes long. A bell or horn is sounded at the 7 minute mark to let the players know 30 seconds remain. If the ball goes out of bounds or is scored during that time, the chukker ends.

Play begins or resumes with a throw-in of the ball by the umpire at the opening of the chukker and after each goal.

During half time, spectators are invited to go onto the field and participate in a tradition called “divot stomping” to help replace the divots created by the horse’s hooves.

Penalty shots are given depending on the severity and location of the foul.

Most of the rules of polo are for the safety of the ponies and their polo players. The basic concept is the line of the ball, a right-of-way established by the path of a traveling ball.

Polo players are ranked yearly by their peers and the USPA has a scale of -1 to 10 goals (10 being the best). Team play is handicapped on the basis of ability.

Two mounted umpires do most of the officiating, with a referee at midfield having the final say in any dispute between the umpires.

Players change horses after each chukker due to the extreme demands placed on the polo pony.