

PONY CLUB



RULEBOOK 2026



POLOCROSSE

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OBJECTIVES

Polocrosse provides The Pony Club with a team competition requiring courage, determination and all-round riding ability on the part of the rider, and careful and systematic training of the pony. It encourages a higher standard of riding throughout The Pony Club and to stimulate among the future generation a greater interest in riding as a sport and as a recreation. It is suitable for ordinary children on ordinary ponies and encourages a strong and unselfish team spirit.

Every eventuality cannot be provided for in these rules. In any unforeseen or exceptional circumstances or any other issue in connection with Pony Club Polocrosse, it is the duty of the relevant officials to make a decision in a sporting spirit and to approach as nearly as possible the intention of these rules. It is the competitors' responsibility to ensure that they are complying with the rules of the competition.

RULES

These Rules are made by the Pony Club Polocrosse Committee in conjunction with other Pony Club Committees.

Except where varied below, these competitions are conducted under the UK Polocrosse Association and International Polocrosse Council Rules, copies of these rules can be found at ukpolocrosse.co.uk

The Pony Club Office provides administrative support. Queries relating to these rules should be directed to the Polocrosse Chairman at pxchairman@pcuk.org and copied to the Office at polocrosse@pcuk.org.

NOTE: Rules which differ from those of 2025 appear in bold type and sidelined (as this note).

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PONY CLUB POLOCROSSE COMMITTEE

Chairman

- ▶ Iain Heaton (2028)
pxchairman@pcuk.org

Members

- ▶ Pam Drew (2026)
- ▶ Laura Scott (2026)
- ▶ Angela Fynn (2027)
- ▶ Jo Gale (2027)
- ▶ Anna Freeguard (2028)
- ▶ Natalie Harpin (2028)
- ▶ Karen Harris, Area Representative (2026)
- ▶ Eileen Hilleard, Area Representative (2027)

Sports Officer: polocrosse@pcuk.org

Health & Safety: safety@pcuk.org

The Pony Club

Lowlands Equestrian Centre, Old Warwick Road, Warwick, CV35 7AX

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Please see the Polocrosse pages of pcuk.org for details of training days and tournaments.

PART 1 – GENERAL RULES FOR PONY CLUB POLOCROSSE

1. SYNOPSIS OF THE GAME

As the name implies Polocrosse is a combination of polo and lacrosse. It is a team game on horseback and the aim is to score goals. The team that scores the most goals in a match is the winner.

a) Equipment – each player has a stick made up of a shaft which is attached to a head with a loose twisted-thread net in which the ball is carried. The stick is usually 1m to 1.2m (39" to 42") long, but there is no restriction in length. The ball is made of foam rubber, approximately 10cm (4") in diameter, and weighs approximately 142g (5 oz).

b) The Field – should be reasonably flat. It is 146.5m (160yds) long by 55m (60yds) wide, with goal posts 2.5m (8ft) apart at each end.

27.5m (30yds) from each end there is a line across the field which is called the penalty or 30 yard line and enclosed the goal scoring area. Directly in front of each goal there is a semi-circle of 10m (11yds) radius. A goal can only be scored if it is thrown from outside this semi-circle, but inside the goal scoring area.

c) Teams and sections – a section consists of three players and a full Branch/Centre team consists of six players. In a full team the two sections play alternate chukkas so that any time while the match is in progress three players are on the field of play and the other three are resting. There can be 4, 6 or 8 chukkas in a match.

Tournaments can also be played with sections of just three players, in which case it is usual to have three chukka matches. Also sometimes at a one day tournament there will be one or two chukka matches.

The members of each section are numbered 1, 2 and 3 and must wear shirts or tabards with these numbers clearly on them.

- ▶ No. 1 is attack, and is the only player that can score a goal for their section, and the only one that can play in their goal scoring area. They can play in the centre field, but may not play in the goal scoring area their team is defending.
- ▶ No. 2 may only play in the centre area between the two penalty lines.
- ▶ No. 3 is defence and plays in the centre area and the goal scoring area that they are defending.

Thus only the attacking No. 1 and defending No. 3 are allowed in the respective goal scoring areas.

d) Ponies – a player is allowed only one pony in a class, unless this rule is specifically altered for a tournament by the Pony Club Polocrosse Committee to allow multiple horses to be used.

e) The Start – the game is commenced in centre field, the players lining up in pairs side by side and one behind the other, each team standing closest to the goal it is defending. The No. 1's are in front, then the No. 2's and the No. 3's are at the back, all facing the umpire and at least 3m from him. The umpire throws the ball in overarm from the side line straight between the players. The ball should be thrown at a height between the players' shoulders and the maximum possible height of their sticks. This is so that it is catchable by all the players. The game recommences similarly after a goal is scored from alternate sides of the field.

Whenever an attempt at goal fails, No. 3 throws the ball back into play from just behind the 30 yd penalty line.

f) Play – players pick up the ball from the ground, or catch it in the net of the stick and carry it or throw it from player to player until the No. 1 (attack) is in possession of it in the goal scoring area, so as to be able to throw at goal. A player cannot carry the ball over the penalty line, but must bounce it on the ground, so that he does not have possession of it while crossing the line. However, he may throw the ball to another player across the line.

A player carrying the ball in his stick must carry it on his stick side, i.e. right-handed players carry it on the off side of the pony, left-handed players on the near-side. A player cannot carry it across his pony, but he can pick up or catch the ball on the non-stick side provided he brings the stick back to his stick side immediately.

Hitting at an opponent's stick, either to dislodge the ball or prevent him from gaining possession of it, is allowed in an upward direction only. Hitting down is not allowed as the pony might be hit.

"Riding-off" is allowed, but crossing, stopping over the ball, or elbowing are not allowed. The wedging or sandwiching of one player between two players "riding-off" simultaneously is dangerous play and not allowed.

g) Time – the maximum length of a chukka is 8 minutes but usually 6 minutes is normal, and there is a 2 minute change over time between chukkas. Each section of a team will play in the opposite direction in successive chukkas.

Matches can be of 2, 3, 4, 6 or a maximum of 8 chukkas.







2. DRESS

New equipment is not expected, but what is worn must be clean, neat, tidy and safe.

It is the competitor's responsibility to ensure their dress complies with the Rules. Contravention may incur disqualification.

a) Hats: Members must always wear a protective hat when mounted. Only hats to the following specifications are acceptable at any Pony Club activity. The Pony Club is consistent with fellow BEF (British Equestrian) Member bodies in its Standards for Riding Hats. Individual sports may have additional requirements with regard to colour and type. It is strongly recommended that secondhand hats are not purchased.

The hat standards accepted as of 1st January 2026 are detailed in the table below:

Hat Standard	Safety Mark
Snell E2016 & 2021 with the official Snell label and number	
PAS 015: 2011 with BSI Kitemark or Inspec IC Mark	
(BS) EN 1384:2023 with BSI Kitemark or Inspec IC Mark	
VG1 with BSI Kitemark or Inspec IC Mark	
ASTM-F1163 2015 & 2023 with the SEI mark	
AS/NZS 3838, 2006 with SAI Global Mark	

Note: Some hats are dual-badged with different standards. If a hat contains at least one compliant hat standard it is deemed suitable to

competition, even if it is additionally labelled with an older standard.

- ▶ No recording device is permitted (e.g. hat cameras) as they may have a negative effect on the performance of the hat in the event of a fall.
- ▶ The fit of the hat and the adjustment of the harness are as crucial as the quality. Members are advised to try several makes to find the best fit. The hat should not move on the head when the head is tipped forward. The Pony Club recommends you visit a qualified BETA (British Equestrian Trade Association) fitter.
- ▶ Hats must be replaced after a severe impact as subsequent protection will be significantly reduced. Hats deteriorate with age and should be replaced after three to five years depending upon the amount of use.
- ▶ Hats must be worn at all times (including at prize-giving) when mounted with a chinstrap fastened and adjusted so as to prevent movement of the hat in the event of a fall.
- ▶ The Official Steward/Organiser may, at their discretion, eliminate a competitor riding in the area of the competition without a hat or with the chinstrap unfastened or with a hat that does not comply with these standards.

Hat Checks and Tagging

The Pony Club and its Branches and Centres will appoint Officials, who are familiar with The Pony Club hat rule, to carry out hat checks and tag each hat that complies with the requirements set out in the hat rule with an Pony Club hat tag. Hats fitted with a Pony Club, British Eventing (BE) or British Riding Club (BRC) hat tag will not need to be checked on subsequent occasions. However, the Pony Club reserves the right to randomly spot check any hat regardless of whether it is already tagged.

Tagging is an external verification of the internal label and indicates that a hat meets the accepted standards. The tag does NOT imply any check of the fit and condition of the hat has been undertaken. It is considered to be the responsibility of the Member's parent(s) / guardian(s) to ensure that their hat complies with the required standards and is tagged before they go to any Pony Club event. Also, they are responsible for ensuring that the manufacturer's guidelines with regard to fit and replacement are followed.

For further information on hat standards, testing and fitting, please refer to the British Equestrian Trade Association (BETA) website: [British Equestrian Trade Association - Safety and your head \(beta-uk.org\)](https://www.beta-uk.org/)

b) Hair - Must be tied up and back (preferably in a hairnet) and securely, in a safe manner to reduce the risk of hair being caught and to prevent scalp injuries, other Sports may have additional rules.

c) Face Guards/Goggles/Gum Shields – the wearing of faceguards or goggles and gum shields is recommended. If worn, face guards must be fitted to a Pony Club approved hat, and gum shields should be properly fitted by a dentist.

d) Jewellery – wearing jewellery while handling or riding a horse or pony is not recommended. To reduce the chance of injury, **necklaces, bracelets** (except medical bracelets), and **large or dangling jewellery (including items attached to piercings) must be removed.** The following are allowed: a wristwatch, a wedding ring, a stock pin worn horizontally, and a tie clip. For cross-country, it is advised to remove stock pins. If a Member chooses to wear any other type of jewellery at a Pony Club event, it is at their own, or their parent/guardian's risk.

e) Breeches – white, cream beige or **black** jodhpurs, white or black riding trousers or white or black jeans must be worn. (Long boots, 1/2 chaps to be worn with trousers/breeches).

f) Spurs – may not be worn by a Pony Club member at a Pony Club activity or event unless that member has passed either the Pony Club C+ Riding Test or the Pony Club Spurs Test. **The competitor's hat must bear the Yellow Hat Tag to indicate eligibility to wear spurs.**

Spurs are not permitted to be used in the Mini's class.

Any misuse of spurs will be reported to the DC/Centre Proprietor, Area Representative and Training Chairman; any reported riders will be recorded and monitored.

Sharp spurs are not permitted. Only blunt spurs, without rowels or sharp edges, and spurs that have a smooth rotating ball on the shank may be worn. If the spurs are curved, the curve must be downwards, and the shank must point straight to the back. The Pony Club recommends a spurs length of no greater than 2.5cm - the measurement is taken from the back of the back of the boot to the end of the shank. No spurs with a length greater than 4cm are permitted.

Spurs must only be used to enhance the normal leg aids and allow for better communication from rider to horse.

Spurs must never be used to vent a competitor's anger or to reprimand the horse.

Use of the spurs which causes injury e.g. blood, broken skin or a weal, is always classed as misuse.

Misuse of the spurs anywhere at the event will result in disqualification.

g) Footwear – Only standard riding or jodhpur boots with a well-defined square cut heel may be worn. Plain black or brown half chaps may be worn with jodhpur boots of the same colour. Tassels and fringes are not allowed. No other footwear will be permitted, including wellington boots, yard boots, country boots, “muckers” or trainers. Boots with interlocking treads are not permitted, nor are the boots or treads individually.

Stirrups should be of the correct size to suit the rider’s boots (see the Stirrup rule). Laces on boots must be taped for Mounted Games only.

h) Knee pads – if used must be made of soft fabric or leather and must be pliable.

i) No player may wear buckles or studs on the upper part of his boots or knee pads in such a way as could damage another player, their boots or breeches or their horse.

j) Numbers – shirts or tabards numbered 1, 2 and 3 must be worn to indicate the position of the player. The number should be clearly visible on the back of the shirt, and on the sleeve if desired. The only other writing permitted is the name of the Branch/Centre and the logo on the front pocket. Teams should be in matching colours and wear matching tabards.

k) Body Protector Rule

A body protector is compulsory for all Pony Club Cross Country riding (including Arena Eventing) and Pony Racing activities whether it be training or competition. A body protector for these activities must meet BETA 2018 Level 3 Standard (blue and black label).

For general use, the responsibility for choosing body protectors and the decision as to their use must rest with Members and their parents. It is recommended that a rider’s body protector should not be more than 2% of their body weight. When worn, body protectors must fit correctly, be comfortable and must not restrict movement. BETA recommends body protectors are replaced at least every three to five years, after which the impact absorption properties of the foam may have started to decline.



Air Jackets

If a rider chooses to wear an air jacket in Cross country or Pony Racing, it

must only be used in addition with a normal body protector which meets BETA 2018 Level 3 standard (blue and black label). Parents and Members must be aware that riders may be permitted to continue after a fall in both competitions and training rides for Cross Country and / or Pony Racing if the First Aid provider has no concerns about their welfare. In the event of a fall, an air jacket must be fully deflated or removed before continuing, the conventional body protector must continue to be worn. Air jackets must not be worn under a jacket. Number bibs should be fitted over the air jacket loosely or with elasticised fastenings.

3. SADDLERY

Ponies must be turned out with well-fitting and properly maintained black/brown tack. New equipment is not expected, but what is worn must be clean, neat, tidy and safe.

It is the competitor's responsibility to ensure their tack complies with the Rules. Contravention may incur disqualification.

The Chief Umpire has absolute discretion to forbid the use of any bit, gadget, spur or boot which he considers cruel or misused. Any misuse of the bit/bridle will be reported to the District Commissioner/Centre Proprietor, Area Representative and Training Chairman. Any reported riders will be recorded and monitored.

Any equipment not covered in these rules must be referred at least two weeks in advance of the competition to The Pony Club Office to allow time for the Chairman of the Polocrosse Committee to be consulted.

Buckled saddlery is strongly recommended. Any clips on tack must be taped for safety reasons. Tack officials have the final say.

a) Saddles – stock saddles are by no means required, but may be used (without a roping horn) in the Junior and Senior classes. Open ended stirrup bars are recommended, with any safety clips in the down position, but if stirrup leathers are attached permanently to the tree then caged stirrups are recommended. All saddles should fit the horse correctly and all saddles and leathers should be in a safe and sound condition.

Humane Girths pose an increased risk as many common designs may have complete girth failure if a single strap was to break. Humane girths are not permitted in any Sport, whether during training or competition.

b) Stirrups - should be of the correct size to suit the rider's boots. They must have 7mm ($\frac{3}{4}$ ") clearance on either side of the boot. To find this measurement, tack checkers should move the foot across to one side of the

stirrup, with the widest part of the foot on the tread. From the side of the boot to the edge of the stirrup should not be less than 14mm.

There are now many types of stirrups marketed as 'safety stirrups'. All riders must ensure that their stirrups are suitable for the type of footwear they are wearing and the activities in which they are taking part and that the stirrup leathers are in good condition.

There are no prescribed weight limits on metal stirrups, however with the advent of stirrups of other materials, weight limits are frequently given by manufacturers. Any person buying these stirrups, should comply with weight limits defined on the box or attached information leaflets. Neither the feet nor the stirrup leathers or irons, may be attached to the girth, nor the feet attached to the stirrup irons.

It is strongly recommended that the design of the stirrup chosen allows the foot to be released easily in the event of a rider fall.

Particular focus should be on ensuring that the boot and stirrup are the correct size for the rider taking part and used in line with the manufacturer's guidance.

For the avoidance of doubt, at Pony Club events:

- ▶ stirrups which connect the boot and the stirrup magnetically are not allowed
- ▶ Interlocking boot soles and stirrup treads are not allowed

Stirrups that equipment could become caught in, such as open sided stirrups, will not be permitted.

Peacock stirrups with rubber band or leather strap (pictured below) are not allowed.



- c) **Bridles** – plain black or brown leather bridles only may be used.
- d) **Breast plates** – are to be worn at all levels and should be fitted to a plain black/ brown saddle.
- e) **Blinkers** – are not allowed, nor is any form of noseband or cheeks that obstructs the vision of the pony. Eye protection is allowed provided it

doesn't restrict the horse's vision.

f) Numnahs, Saddle Cloths, Blankets – any solid colour is permitted. Contrasting piping is permitted. Branch logos are allowed when competing for the Branch; logos must not exceed 200 sq. cm.

This does not preclude the wearing of clothing for horses or riders that has been presented by sponsors of the Championships in the current or previous years.

g) Market Harboroughs and running, draw or check reins of any kind are forbidden.

h) The use of string, twine or cord in or around the horse's mouth is forbidden.

i) Martingales – standing or running martingales are permitted. Standing martingales may be attached only to a cavesson noseband or the cavesson portion of a flash noseband fitted above the bit.

j) Nosebands – only one noseband may be worn unless using a standing martingale with a combination, kinton, drop noseband or similar in which case the addition of a cavesson is allowed. Nosebands must be correctly fitted and should not cause discomfort. Chain nosebands are not permitted. Rope or rawhide nosebands are permitted but leather nosebands are recommended.

k) Bits – bits with cheek pieces that protrude below the ring that the rein is attached to are not permitted. In all cases the mouthpiece must be smooth. In the opinion of the Chief Umpire and the Tack Officials, bits deemed to be excessively thin in the mouthpiece will not be accepted.

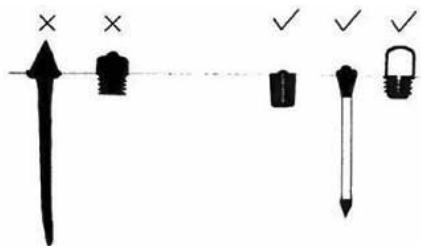
l) Reins – to be of black or brown leather, or white, black or brown cotton. No bridge reins allowed.

m) Boots and Bandages – ponies' legs must be correctly bandaged with gamgee type material protecting the fetlock and pastern, or properly fitting polo bandages, or have suitable boots which protect the fetlock.

Over-reach boots, both in front and behind, are compulsory, **except in Mini's grades where only front over-reach boots are compulsory. This is to minimise the risk of small ponies kicking or bucking due to hind over-reach boots.** Hoof boots, without buckles or protrusions, are permitted.

n) Studs

- i. Only one recognised stud without a hard centre of $\frac{1}{2}$ inch (13mm) cubed can be fitted to the outside of each hind shoe within 1 inch (25mm) of the heel. The studs should not be placed at the widest part of the shoe. This is the recommended method.
- ii. Road nails with a hardened tip are allowed on the outside of each hind shoe. Frost nails and screws are not allowed.
- iii. Ponies found with the incorrect studs will not be allowed to play until the studs are removed.



o) Whips – must not be longer than 1.1m (44") including a flap not less than 50mm (2") long and 25mm (1") wide at the end.

At all times, the whip must only be used:

- ▶ For a good reason, as an aid to encourage the horse forward.
- ▶ At an appropriate time, namely when the horse is reluctant to go forward under normal aids of seat and legs.
- ▶ In the right place, namely down the shoulder or behind the leg but never overarm.
- ▶ With appropriate severity.
- ▶ No more than twice for any one incident.

The following are always considered excessive and will result in immediate elimination:

- ▶ Use of the whip to vent a competitor's anger.
- ▶ Use of a whip which causes injury e.g. Broken skin or a weal.
- ▶ Use after elimination or retirement.
- ▶ Use on a horse's head, neck etc.
- ▶ Using the whip from the ground after a rider fall or dismount.
- ▶ If the rider's arm comes above the shoulder when using the whip.

p) Electronic Devices – (i.e. headphones, mobile phones etc. enabling another person to communicate with the rider) are not allowed whilst the rider is competing. No recording device is permitted (e.g. head/bridle cameras etc.).

- q)** Competitors using saddlery and gadgets which are not allowed in the competition may be eliminated, except that lungeing in side reins, but NOT bearing, check or balancing reins, is permitted.
- r)** No item of tack may be used for any other purpose, or in any other way than that for which it was designed and intended, e.g. running martingales may not be used as standing martingales.
- s)** Badly fitting or unsafe tack, or saddles that are down on the withers when the rider is mounted, will result in the disqualification of that competitor, unless the tack can be changed to the satisfaction of the Chief Umpire before the start of the game. The Chief Umpire has absolute discretion in ruling on these matters.
- t)** **Prize Giving** – only tack that falls within the rules of the competition should be allowed for prize giving. All teams should be dressed in full riding gear.

4. INSPECTION

Riders and ponies will be inspected in the clothing and saddlery in which they are to ride, and these will not be changed thereafter without reference to the Chief Umpire. Tack Stewards will report any rider whom they think may be overweight for their pony to the Chief Umpire. Team Managers must accompany their team and ensure they are presented at the appointed time for their tack inspection, ready to play.

5. ACTION AFTER A FALL

Any competitor who has a fall or sustains a serious injury anywhere at the competition site MUST see the medical personnel on the day and be passed fit to ride before riding that horse in a further chukka or before riding any other horse.

6. HEAD INJURIES AND CONCUSSION

If a person is diagnosed with a concussion, they must not ride or take part in any Pony Club organised activity that involves close contact/handling or riding of horses or ponies for 21 days. This may need to be extended if symptoms persist, on the advice of the treating doctor. All concussion must be reported to Head Office using the online accident report form or by email if it occurred outside of The Pony Club. Concussion advice should be followed without exception.

Head injuries and concussion can be very serious and life changing. Serious head injuries are usually obvious, but concussion can be very subtle. It may

not be immediately apparent but should be taken very seriously. Recovery from concussion should be managed carefully.

This rule should be read in conjunction with:

- ▶ [The Pony Club Concussion Advice](#)
- ▶ [UK Government Concussion Guidelines](#)

Please contact safety@pcuk.org for further support and advice.

7. MEDICAL SUSPENSION

If a Member has been suspended from taking part in any activity/competition/sport for medical reasons, this suspension must apply to all Pony Club activities until such time the Member is passed fit by a medical professional to take part. It is the Member and parent/guardian's responsibility to ensure this rule is adhered to.

Medical letters are required, following a suspension for medical reasons, to allow a Member to take part in any activity again. The letter should be issued by either the hospital or specialist(s) involved in treating the injury, where appropriate.

8. UNSEEMLY BEHAVIOUR

Unseemly behaviour on the part of riders, team officials, or team supporters will be reported as soon as possible to The Pony Club Office. Offenders may be penalised by disqualification of the Branch or Branches concerned for a period up to three years. Any competitor who in the opinion of the Official Umpire or Organiser, has been extremely rude or aggressive towards any officials at a competition, or who has behaved in an aggressive or unfair manner to their horse, may be disqualified.

9. PERFORMANCE-ENHANCING DRUGS

All performance-enhancing drugs are strictly forbidden and The Pony Club supports 100% clean sport.

a) Equine – Controlled Medication

It is essential for the welfare of a horse/pony that appropriate veterinary treatment is given if and when required. Some medication, however, may mask an underlying health problem so horses and ponies should not take part in training or competition when taking such medication and any Therapeutic Use Exemptions (TUE) should be confirmed in writing by a Vet.

For more information, please refer to the Welfare of Horses and Ponies at Pony Club Activities Policy, available on The Pony Club website.

b) Human

Performance-enhancing drugs are forbidden. The Pony Club supports the approach taken by the UK Anti-Doping Agency in providing clean sport. The Pony Club disciplinary procedures would be used in cases where doping may be suspected including reporting to the UK Anti-Doping Agency.

c) Testing

All competitors should be aware that random samples may be taken for testing from both themselves and/or their horse/pony. The protocol used will be that of the relevant adult discipline.

Competitors and their horses/ponies at national or international level may be subject to blood tests in line with the Sports Council Policy on illegal and prescribed substances. All young people competing at these levels should be made aware of this

Reporting

- i. Anyone who has reasonable grounds for suspecting that a Member is using or selling an illegal substance must report their concerns to the District Commissioner/Centre Proprietor as soon as practicable. If there is an immediate risk to the health, safety or welfare of one or more Members then the Police must be informed as soon as possible. The person reporting their concerns must ensure that any material evidence is retained and should not influence any police investigation.
- ii. Upon receiving a report of suspected use or selling of an illegal substance, the District Commissioner/Centre Proprietor should carry out an immediate investigation of the incident and the circumstances in which it occurred, and then decide upon the appropriate action to be taken. This will include:
 - ▶ Informing the Member's parents/guardians
 - ▶ Informing The Pony Club Area Representative who in turn will inform The Pony Club Office
 - ▶ Informing the Police
 - ▶ Suspending the Member concerned while investigations are completed

- ▶ Awaiting the completion of Police investigations and actions

Disciplinary Action

The normal disciplinary procedure should be followed in cases relating to alcohol or drugs, which can be found in The Pony Club Handbook.

10. DISQUALIFICATION

The Chief Umpire may disqualify a competitor at any stage of the competition:

- a. for dangerous riding, or
- b. if, in his opinion, the horse is lame, sick or exhausted, or
- c. for misuse of whip, spur or bit, or ill-treatment of the horse, or
- d. for any breach of the rules, or
- e. for unseemly behaviour, including bad language

11. SPONSORSHIP

In the case of competitors and horses, no form of advertising, and this includes a sponsor's name, may appear on the competitor's or horse's clothing and equipment at any Pony Club competition. This does not preclude the wearing of clothing for horses or riders that has been presented by sponsors of the Championships in the current or previous years.

Sponsors at tournaments must not be business competitors of the main sponsor of the sport and must be approved by The Pony Club Office. Any advertising material that is used by sponsors, whether it be in the form of display banners or programme material, must be tasteful and not inappropriate to the image of The Pony Club.

12. INSURANCE

The Pony Club 'Public and Products Liability Insurance' Policy includes cover for all the official Area Competitions and the Championships. Details of this insurance are available on The Pony Club website.

In the event of any accident, loss or damage occurring to a third party or to the property of a third party (including the general public and competitors) no liability should be admitted, and full details should be sent at once to The Pony Club Office.

The following statements should be included in all event schedules:

13. HEALTH AND SAFETY

Organisers of this event have taken reasonable precautions to ensure the health and safety of everyone present. For these measures to be effective, everyone must take all reasonable precautions to avoid and prevent accidents occurring and must obey the instructions of the organisers and all the officials and stewards

14. LEGAL LIABILITY

Save for the death or personal injury caused by the negligence of the organisers, or anyone for whom they are in law responsible, neither the organisers of this event or The Pony Club nor any agent, employee or representative of these bodies, nor the landlord or his tenant, accepts any liability for any accident, loss, damage, injury or illness to horses, owners, riders, spectators, land, cars, their contents and accessories, or any other person or property whatsoever. Entries are only accepted on this basis.

15. SPECTATOR AREAS

Horses/ponies are not allowed in any designated spectator only areas at Tournaments. Signs to this effect, e.g. 'No horses' should be erected. It is important to have clearly defined areas where horses/ponies can be worked.

PART 2 – RULES FOR THE PONY CLUB POLOCROSSE CHAMPIONSHIPS

16. ELIGIBILITY

a) The District Commissioner/Centre Proprietor is required to certify that both horse and rider are eligible to compete under the rules of The Pony Club. Should a breach of eligibility subsequently be discovered, then the Sport Committee may disqualify the offending team or individual.

b) Players – All competitors entered must be active members of the stated Branch or Centre to be eligible to compete at the Qualifiers and at the Championships. All competitors are expected to have attended a qualifier event to be eligible for the Championships.

c) Ponies – must be sound and in good condition, well shod or with their feet properly dressed. They must not kick or show dangerous vices. No stallions are allowed.

Horses must be **4 years of age or over** to play in tournaments. In their first eligible year, they must NOT be less than 48 months old (4 actual years old). Thereafter, a horse or pony shall be deemed to reach the age of 5 on the 1st of January and shall be deemed to become a year older on each successive 1st January.

e.g. A horse born on 1st August 2020 is 4 years of age on 1st August 2024. From this date, they may then attend pony club events. They will be deemed 5 years of age on 1st January 2025.

Any horse that is sent off for a dangerous vice will not play at another Pony Club Polocrosse tournament until after it has completed the Dangerous Vice Process laid out in Appendix C. If a horse that is sent off for the same dangerous vice at two Pony Club Polocrosse tournaments within a period of three years it will be banned for life.

A player is allowed only one pony in a class. A substitute pony can only be used in the event of lameness or injury or if a pony is sent off due to dangerous behaviour. If a different pony is used for any reason other than injury to a pony or because a pony is sent off, then the team who has played the new pony automatically becomes HC in terms of the competition.

In the event of there being spaces at the Championships for members who have not attended a qualifying event then the Pony Club Polocrosse

Chairman can use their discretion to invite other members to compete, providing they are satisfied that the members are of an appropriate standard to play safely in the relevant grade.

d) Vaccinations

A valid passport and vaccination record:

- ▶ must accompany the horse/pony to all events
- ▶ must be available for inspection by the event officials
- ▶ must be produced on request at any other time during the event

All ponies/horses must be compliant with the current Pony Club minimum vaccination requirements - please see the website for the current rule.

Note: Events that are held at other venues may be subject to additional specific rules. For example, any horse/pony entering a Licensed Racecourse Property must comply with the Vaccination requirements as set by the British Horseracing Authority. Similar restrictions apply in the cases of certain polo venues. If you are intending to compete under FEI Rules you will need to ensure you are compliant with those Rules.

17. MIXED/AREA TEAMS/SECTIONS

When Branches and Centres are unable to raise a team or section from amongst their own Members, or have excess players, the team manager/individual should apply to the organiser who will, where possible, arrange a mixed Branch/Centre team.

Any Area team or section must initially be approved by the relevant Polocrosse Area Co-ordinator. In the event of the Area not having an allocated Polocrosse Area Co-ordinator then the team/section must be approved by The Pony Club Polocrosse Chairman. Final ratification of any Area team/section remains with the tournament organisers.

18. BRANCH/CENTRE/AREA MANAGERS

An adult Manager should be named with the entry. They are responsible that the members are presented for inspection and ready to play at the appointed time. They must report the team's/section's arrival to the Organiser and confirm names and positions of players.

19. CHAMPIONSHIP CLASSES

Branches may make entries in any of classes 2, 3 or 4, but no rider or pony may compete in more than one team in the same class. A rider may

compete in two classes, providing they are eligible, but not on the same pony.

Class 1 – The Malden Championship

The Malden Championships trophy is presented to the Branch or Centre that is the most successful across all classes at the Championships. This trophy was designed to encourage Branches and Centres to develop members of all ages and encourage them to support each other over the Championships.

Teams do not enter the Malden Championships but instead should enter Class 2, 3 or 4 and the organisers will use the placings achieved by all members of the Branch / Centre over the weekend to calculate the overall winner of the trophy.

Class 2 – The Charles Mason Senior Championship

Horses 138cm and over. Open Sections of 3 players of any age.

Class 3 – The Stoneleigh Junior Championship

Players 15 years and under, horses any height. Sections of 3 players who have not attained their 16th birthday by 1st January in the current year.

Class 4 – The Brookes Mini Championship

Players 12 years and under and horses 138cm and under. Sections of 3 players who have not attained their 13th birthday by 1st January in the current year.

In the event of sufficient entries and entered teams consisting of a range of abilities then the classes can be split into Novice, Intermediate and Open levels. Branches, Centres and Areas can request to be entered in a particular level. The Organising Committee has final say as to which sections enter each level, based on each section's respective grading.

The Organising Committee can also insist that a player plays a particular position, for example where a section has two novice level players and one open level player they may insist that the open level player plays a number 2.

In all Classes in the event of a Branch/Centre losing a section member for whatever reason that section must fill the vacant place from other eligible Members from the same Branch/Centre before looking to another Branch/Centre for replacements. The Organising Committee has the final say on team/section composition when sections are mixed.

20. ENTRIES

a) Entries for sections/individuals who have qualified for the Championships should be made via the online entry system as per the schedule.

Competing Branches/Centres are to supply one Steward per section to be named on the entry. Furthermore, Branches are to supply the services of one Umpire and one horse, trained to stick and ball for the Umpires. Branches/Centres unable to supply an Umpire will be allocated one by the Umpire co-ordinator, but must still supply suitable horses and pay the expenses of the allocated Umpire.

NO LATE ENTRIES will be allowed, but eligible substitutions will be allowed at the discretion of the Organiser.

21. WITHDRAWALS (for all Competitions)

If a Branch or Centre withdraws a team or individual prior to the closing date for a competition, a full refund of entry and stabling fees will be made, less an administration charge. Withdrawals after the closing date for a competition will not be refunded.

22. ABANDONMENT (for all Competitions)

In the event of a competition being abandoned, for whatever reason, a refund of 50% of the entry fee will be given. In such an instance the refund process will be communicated and must be followed.

23. MEASUREMENT OF PONIES/HORSES

If an objection to the height of a pony/horse is raised during the course of the Championships, then the Jury of Appeal may request that the animal is subsequently measured according to the rules of the Joint Measurement Board Ltd.

In reaching their decision as to whether to refer the pony/horse for official measurement, the referees may request the advice of the tournament veterinary surgeon, and it is a condition of entry that the owner, or his representative, will allow that veterinary surgeon to measure the pony/horse on the ground at the time of the tournament. The measurement by the tournament veterinary surgeon will be used for advice only and will remain confidential to the referees and owner and will not be available to the official measurer of the JMB or any other person.

The fee for the official JMB measurement will be the responsibility of the

animal's owner. However, The Pony Club may reimburse part or all of the measurement fee should the animal prove to be within the correct height of the competition. Any additional expenses will be the responsibility of the owner.

Any prizes or awards won by the team, which includes the pony subject of the objection, will be forfeit if the animal is proved to be of the incorrect height.

24. OBJECTIONS AND PROTESTS

Apart from the Chief Umpire, Area Representatives and officials of the competition, only District Commissioners/Centre Proprietors or their nominated representatives are entitled to lodge protests or objections which must be made in writing and addressed to the organiser of the competition or secretary of the championships. They must be accompanied by a deposit of £50 which is forfeited unless the Jury of Appeal decides that there were good and reasonable grounds for them. Protests or objections must be made not later than half an hour after the incident concerned or publication of scores. The Official shall give his decision in the first instance. If this is not accepted, the Jury of Appeal shall give their decision after investigation and this decision is final.

25. TACK AND TURNOUT

There will be a Tack and Turnout competition with rosettes for 1st, 2nd and 3rd placed teams in each class, provided an adequate standard is achieved. Members are expected to dress for the parade as per tack check as the winners are judged on their initial turnout.

PART 3 – PLAYING RULES

These Playing Rules are a simplified version of United Kingdom Polocrosse Association's Rule Book. For anything not covered here, and for more detailed explanations, reference should be made to that Rule Book. In the event of any contradiction or confusion between the below summary and the UKPA rule book then the UKPA rule book is considered to be the definitive source for playing rules. Umpires and Instructors should be in possession of a copy.

a) Stick Side – the ball may be picked up or caught on either side of the pony, but must be returned to the stick side immediately. It can be carried or thrown. Left-handed players must declare to the umpire before the first throw-in. The umpire will inform the opposing players. The ball can be thrown in any direction and the stick and ball can be taken across the centre line of the pony in the action of throwing or catching, but AT NO OTHER TIME, i.e. the stick must not cross the centre line of the pony to evade a tackle.

b) Tackles – a player with the ball in his net may have his stick hit 'upwards' one swing at a time only. When tackling, a player may not cross his opponent's centre line of pony, but may cross his own centre line. To hit a stick 'downwards' is a foul (as it might hit the pony).

Any swing of the stick not upwards is very dangerous and must be penalised immediately. The advantage rule cannot apply here.

Any wild swinging of the stick is a serious foul.

A player must not hit his or any other pony with the stick. Any hit to the horse is penalised by a free goal being awarded against the player who committed the foul.

c) Intimidation – any play which, in the opinion of the umpire, is, or may be, intimidating MUST immediately be penalised. This rule will be strictly enforced when there is an obvious variance in size of ponies.

d) Boundary Lines

- ▶ A ball on a side line or base line is 'out'.
- ▶ A pony's foot touching a side line or base line while the player is in possession of the ball means the ball is 'out'.
- ▶ A player must not deliberately throw the ball out over the side line, nor ride out with it in his stick. If he is ridden off and his pony is about to be pushed over the side line he must try to throw the ball back into the field of play.

e) Penalty Line

- ▶ Only attacking No. 1 and defending No. 3 may play across the penalty line.
- ▶ The ball may not be carried over the line. No. 1 or No. 3 may throw the ball, let it bounce and pick it up again. They must not have the ball in their sticks when crossing the line. The ball may be thrown across the line between two players without having to bounce.
- ▶ A player not allowed to play in the goal scoring area may ride over the line, but must not interfere in any way with play and must leave the area immediately.
- ▶ A ball at rest on the penalty line is in the centre playing area and must be picked up from that side without the pony's foot going onto or across the line.
- ▶ A pony's foot touching the penalty line while the player is in possession of the ball is a foul.

f) Goal Scoring Area

- ▶ No. 1 only may score goals from within the goal scoring area, and outside the 10m semi-circle.
- ▶ It must be a definite attempt at goal.
- ▶ If No. 1 throws at goal and the ball touches No. 3 or his pony, yet goes between the goal posts, it is a goal. Likewise if the No. 3 intercepts and catches the ball being thrown at goal and his pony's foot crosses the line between the goal posts, while the ball is in his net, it is a goal.
- ▶ If No. 1 throws at goal and misses, the defending No. 3 restarts the game by throwing the ball in from just behind the penalty line, at a position in a direct line from where the ball crossed the base line, the ball must travel 10 metres into the midfield.
- ▶ If the ball goes out of play over the base line off the No. 1, either as a failed catch or pick-up, there is a throw in from behind the base line by the defending No. 3. Likewise if the No. 3 causes the ball to go out there is a throw-in by the No. 1. If neither player can be held responsible for the ball going out, there is a neutral umpire throw- in between the No. 1 and the No. 3.

g) Line of Ball and Riding Off

- ▶ A player following the line of direction of travel of the ball has absolute right of way over a player moving in any different direction.
- ▶ A player may not stop or turn on the line of the ball, thereby causing another player to alter course or slow down to evade.
- ▶ A player may join the line of ball in front or behind a player already on the line providing it is absolutely safe and he does not obstruct the first

player.

- ▶ One player may ride another player off the line of the ball but he:
 - i. must not come in at an angle that could be dangerous
 - ii. must not cause the player being ridden off to be moved laterally at the moment of contact
 - iii. must not come in front of opponent's pony's shoulder
 - iv. must not come in behind opponent's saddle
 - v. must not use his elbows against the opponent
 - vi. must not cause a sandwich (i.e. must not come in if there is another pony on the far side)
 - vii. must allow a player whom he has ridden off over a boundary line to return immediately to the field of play
 - viii. must not be dangerous in any way
- ▶ A player must not criss-cross in front of another player's pony, nor ride into another pony's quarters.
- ▶ A player wishing to change direction at speed may only cross behind another player so that his pony's nose is well clear of the other pony's tail.
- ▶ A player ridden off the field must return within 10 metres of the point he left it and not ride outside the boundary line. He must return to the same area of the field as that which he left.

h) Line Outs

At the start of the game and after each goal the players will line up at the T in midfield. The players should line up side by side facing the umpire at the head of the T. The number 1's from opposing teams should stand at the front just behind the head of the T, the number 2's behind them and the number 3's at the back of the line out. The players should stand within a metre of each other and contact is allowed. However, players can stand further apart if they and their horses are more comfortable doing so. This may well be the case with younger or more novice players and umpires should allow them to do so and ensure other players are not acting in an intimidating manner which might cause players or horses problems in the line outs.

If a player cannot get their pony fully into the line out and is stood further apart or at angle then the umpire can still throw in the ball providing they don't feel that the player is gaining advantage from their position. The aim of the umpire should be to achieve smooth, relatively quick line outs to keep the game moving.

If after throwing in the umpire feels a player who was noticeably out of

position has gained advantage they can always stop play and line up the players again or give a free throw to the other team. That is preferable to a player struggling to line up perfectly straight and getting more frustrated.

Outside assistance is not permitted from spectators to try and physically help players line up their ponies. Umpires also should not try and physically aid the lining up of ponies but can verbally help players who are struggling to line up.

i) Bad Language

The Umpire shall stop the game and warn the offender; if this continues he shall award a penalty, or, if necessary, send the player off the field.

j) Penalties

Penalties usually take the form of a free throw which must travel at least 10 metres. Other players must be at least 10 metres from the spot where the throw is to be taken. The player taking the free throw may either attempt to pass the ball to a team mate or they can throw the ball and then re-gather it themselves once it has touched the ground. If they opt to do this then they must be given first chance to reclaim the ball and must be given a clear opportunity to do so without interference from opposition players. If they make an attempt to re-gather the ball and fail or the ball travels more than 10 metres then other players may attempt to gather it.

If the player taking the throw plays the ball before it has travelled close to 10 metres, or the ball fails to travel close to 10 metres, or the throw fails in some other way, the umpire shall throw in from the nearest side-line.

In the event of any doubt then the benefit of the doubt should be given to the player taking the penalty throw, in order to allow them the advantage the penalty throw is meant to gain them.

Penalty throws can be given:

- i. From the place at which the foul was committed.
- ii. From the next penalty line (normally where the team already had possession and was fouled and so to actually give them advantage the penalty throw is moved up the field).
- iii. From directly in front of the goal.

For serious or repeated fouls a penalty goal can be awarded or the player sent off the field for a specified time.

The Umpire decides on the severity of the foul and awards the penalty accordingly. If a foul is not dangerous then the advantage rule may be

applied, i.e. if the fouled team would be penalised by being given a penalty, the umpire need not stop play. If, during a multi-chukka game, a penalty throw is awarded so near the end of the chukka that there is not enough time to take the penalty throw during that chukka then the throw will be taken at the beginning of the next chukka (and therefore by the other section).

If the game is a single chukka one, or the chukka is the last one of a multi-chukka game, and a penalty throw has been awarded at the end of the chukka in the goal scoring area, then enough extra time will be allowed by the umpires to enable the throw to be taken but no further play to ensue, i.e. a throw directly at goal from the spot indicated by the umpire will be permitted.

ANY PLAYER PLAYING DANGEROUSLY OR PERSISTENTLY FOULING SHOULD BE ORDERED OFF THE FIELD BY THE UMPIRE.

k) Ball Out of Play

The ball is out of play if it touches the boundary line or if, while carrying the ball, a player's horse's hoof touches the boundary line.

i. Over the side line

If the ball is thrown, carried or caused by a player's stick to go over the side line the opposing team will restart play with a penalty throw from the spot where the ball left the field. The ball must travel at least 10 metres in any direction. The throw is to be taken from just outside the field, the player may be moving. All other players to be on the field at least 10 metres from where the throw is to be taken. Other rules pertaining to penalty throws also apply here.

ii. Over the base line

- ▶ If the ball is thrown, carried or caused by a player's stick to go over the base line, but is not an attempt at goal by the No. 1, the opposing player will restart play with a penalty throw from the spot where the ball left the field. The ball must travel at least 10 metres into the field. The other rules pertaining to penalty throws apply here.
- ▶ Should an attempt at goal fail and go out of play, either directly or deflected off the "Defence" No. 3, the "Defence" No. 3 will be given a clearing throw on the penalty line at a position directly in line from where the ball crossed the back line. The ball must be thrown at

least 10 metres in a forward direction.

The “Attack” No. 1 player of the opposing side must follow the “Defence” No. 3 out of the area and should start just behind the No. 3 and to one side, so their horse’s nose is level with the No. 3’s horse’s hip.

iii. Off a horse

Where the ball goes out off a horse accidentally, the umpire will restart play with a line-up from where the ball crossed the line.

l) Outside Assistance

No one may enter the field of play during a chukka to assist a player, e.g. to pick up a dropped stick.

In the event of a bandage coming loose or undone, or if tack breaks during the game, the Umpire will stop play. The pony must leave the field and will not be allowed to return until it has been securely re-banded or the broken tack replaced. The Umpire will hold play for a reasonable time for this to be effected, and will then re- start play with a penalty throw for the opposite team.

While cheering on a team is to be encouraged, specific instructions during play are not allowed.

The Umpire may award a penalty against the team concerned for outside assistance.

m) Reduced Contact in Novice Grades

In order to aid the development and welfare of novice players and ponies contact between players and horses in all novice grades is to be reduced in the following two ways:

- i. No double marking – players without the ball can only be marked by a single player at all times. If in the opinion of the umpire two opposition players are marking up, riding off or blocking a player who is not in possession of the ball they will stop play and award a free throw against the team committing the infringement. Physical contact between players is NOT required for the umpire to decide that two players are marking up an opponent. Depending on which team had the ball at the time of the infringement this free throw will either be from the spot that the infringement took place (if the infringing team had the ball) or the next penalty line (if the team that was infringed against had the ball).**

- ii. **When the ball is in either goal scoring area there will be no marking of any players in midfield. This includes for 30 yard line clearing / penalty throws until the ball is passed into midfield. Any marking of players when the ball is in a goal scoring area will result in a penalty throw being awarded against the team committing the infringement. Depending on which team had possession of the ball and which goal scoring area the ball was in at the time of the infringement the penalty throws will be taken from the following locations:**
- ▶ **Team with the ball in their offensive goal scoring area was fouled against – free shot at goal**
 - ▶ **Team with ball in their defensive goal scoring area was fouled against – free throw from the 30 yard line on their defensive goal scoring area**
 - ▶ **Team with ball was fouled against while they were taking a 30 yard clearing / penalty throw from their defensive goal scoring area – free throw from the 30 yard line going into their offensive goal scoring area (i.e. the free throw is moved up the pitch to the next penalty line as they were already taking a free throw from the defensive goal scoring 30 yard line)**
 - ▶ **Team without ball is fouled against when the ball is in a goal scoring area – free throw from the spot the ball was at within the goal scoring area (this also applies if neither team had the ball)**

26. INSTRUCTIONS FOR GOAL JUDGES

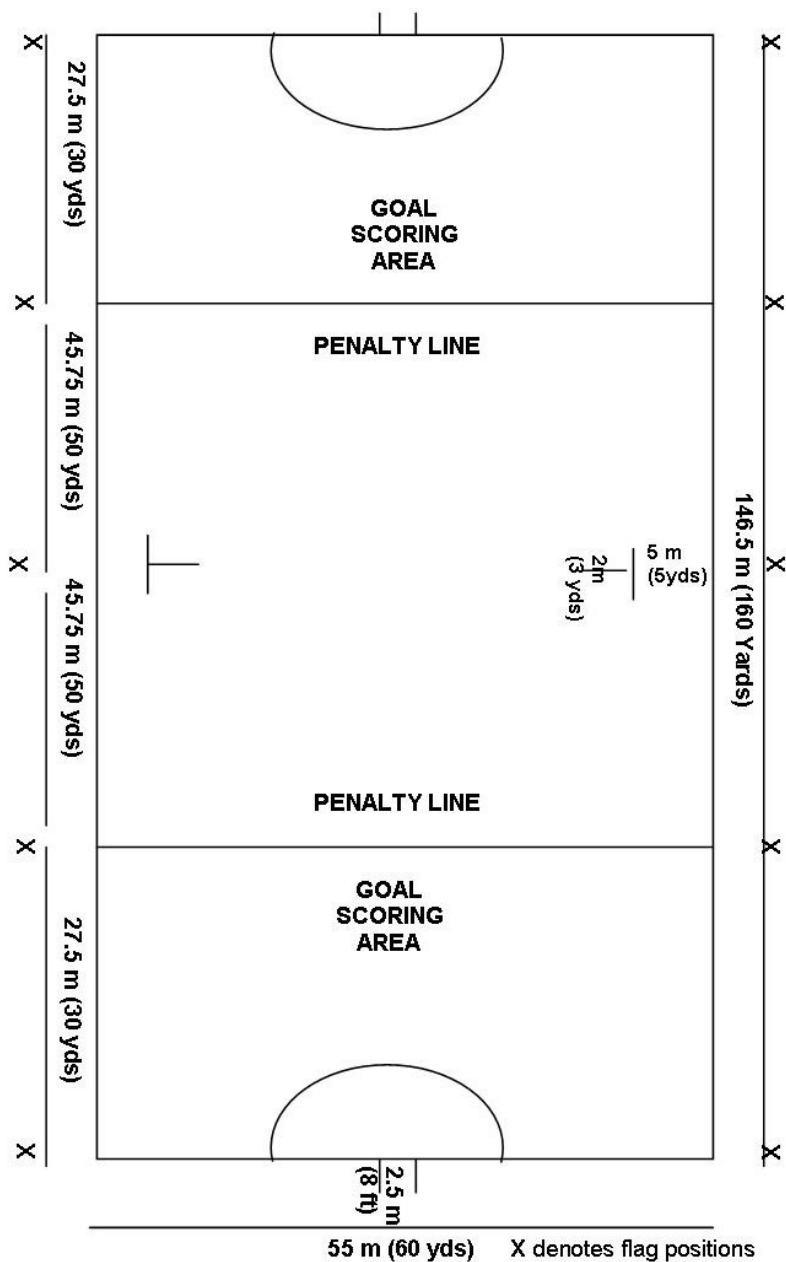
- ▶ Goals can only be scored by the No. 1.
- ▶ Ball to go between the goal posts AT ANY HEIGHT.
- ▶ The No. 1 must be inside the goal scoring area and outside the D semi-circle in front of goal when throwing ball.
- ▶ It must be a deliberate throw at goal.
- ▶ If in doubt tell the Umpire what happened. The ultimate decision is theirs.
- ▶ If goal is scored wave the flag or your hand above your head. If goal is missed, wave the flag or your hand below knee level.
- ▶ Signal a no goal if No. 1 is inside D when throwing.
- ▶ Watch base line and hold flag up, keeping it still, if horse steps on or over baseline while player has ball in his stick.

Only two approved Goal Judges are to be behind the goal posts, preferably wearing high visibility jackets/waistcoats and hard hats. The area is to be kept clear of spectators at all times.

Station yourself between the goal posts and a few yards back. For high balls

it is necessary to imagine lines extending upwards from the goal posts, and to decide whether the ball passed between these lines. To do this Goal Judges should be ready to move to be in line with the oncoming ball. It is virtually impossible to judge a fast, high ball correctly otherwise.

27. POLOCROSSE FIELD

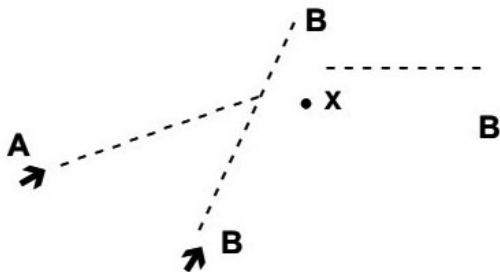


28. EXAMPLE OF FIELD RULES

Example 1

Crossing

A throws the ball to X.



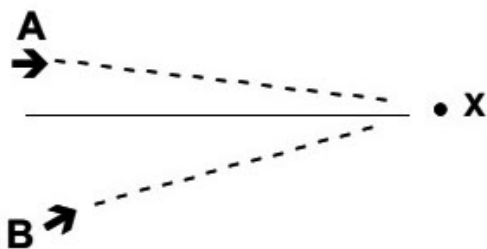
If B can unquestionably reach the ball at X without causing A to check to avoid a collision, then B is entitled to possession and can pick up the ball.

If there is reasonable doubt, then it is B's duty to swerve towards B' (the line of the ball) and attempt a near-side pick up, but if in doing so his horse crosses the line of the ball in the slightest degree then a "cross" is incurred.

Example 2

Crossing

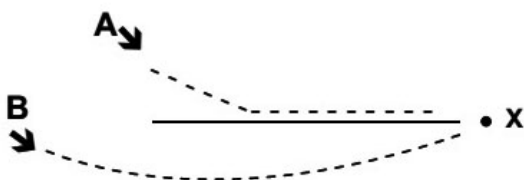
The ball has been thrown to X. Neither A, nor B have thrown it there.



If A and B start riding towards the ball and a collision seems probable, B shall give way to A because A has followed more closely the line on which the ball has travelled.

Example 3

B on the ball throws to X and swings around in a semi-circle. A is following the line of the ball.



A collision at X is imminent.

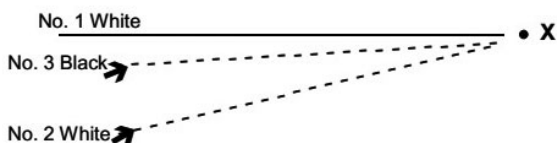
Although B threw the ball, he loses possession because A has ridden on a line closer and more nearly parallel to the line on which the ball has been travelling.

A is entitled to possession of the ball and must be given way to.

Example 4

Crossing

No. 1 WHITE in possession of the ball throws to X.

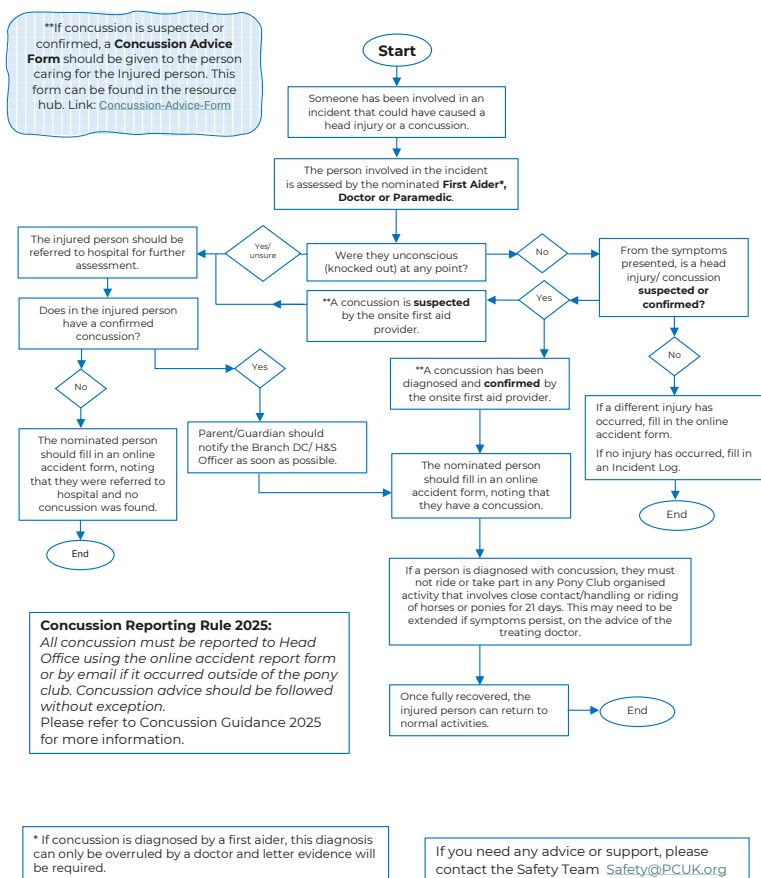


All three players ride for the ball, No. 2 WHITE riding off the No. 3 BLACK all the way and a collision between the three is imminent at X.

No. 1 WHITE is entitled to possession. A dangerous foul should be given against No. 2 WHITE if he causes No. 3 BLACK to cross No. 1 or if he causes the Defence to pull up so as to avoid a collision with No.1.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A – HEAD INJURY AND CONCUSSION FLOWCHART



Dec 2024 Rev 001

APPENDIX B – SUGGESTED KEY FOR LEAGUE TOURNAMENTS

4 Sections 6 chukkas	4 Sections 6 chukkas	6 Sections 15 chukkas
A v B C v D 10 min gap A v D B v C 10 min gap A v C B v D	A v B C v D E v A B v C D v E A v C B v D E v C D v A E v B	A v B E v C C v D D v F E v F E v A B v C B v D A v F F v C D v E B v E C v A D v A B v F
9 Sections 36 chukkas	8 Sections 28 chukkas	7 Sections 21 chukkas
A v B G v D C v D F v H E v F C v J G v H A c E J v B B v F A v C D v H D v F G v A E v G J v F H v J B v D A v D G v C B v E H v E C v F J v D G v J A v F H v A B v G B v C C v H D v E E v J F v G J v A H v B C v E H H	A v B F v H C v D B v G E v F A v D G v H C v F A v F H v E B v E B v D C v H F v G D v G A v C F v B B v H A v E E v G C v G D v F D v H A v H A v G B v C C v E E v D	A v B G v D C v D A v E E v F B v F G v A G v C C v B A v F D v E D v B F v G G v E A v D C v A B v E G v B C v F E v C D v F

APPENDIX C – DANGEROUS VICES - GUIDANCE AND PROCEDURES FOR PLAYERS, COACHES AND UMPIRES

Introduction

Horses are at the heart of our game, and their welfare - alongside the safety of players, officials, and spectators - is paramount. One of the most significant risks to this safety is the presence of dangerous vices in horses.

This guidance note sets out clear definitions, responsibilities, and step-by-step procedures for coaches and players in the event a horse exhibits a dangerous vice.

What is a dangerous vice?

Dangerous vices are behaviours exhibited by horses which threaten the safety of other horses, riders, or officials. No horse shall play with a dangerous vice, such as:

- ▶ ▶ Kicking
- ▶ ▶ Biting
- ▶ ▶ Rearing / Bucking (if occurring in close proximity to other horses and to a height or in a manner where dangerous contact with other horses could occur)
- ▶ ▶ Not in sufficient control

Other behaviours which may be considered dangerous include charging at other horses, persistent aggression, and acts which disrupt the safe conduct of play.

While overt acts such as biting or kicking another horse are easily identified, the subtler manifestations of potentially dangerous vices may be harder to assess. For instance, a horse that kicks at an high height, making contact with another horse or rider, demonstrates a level of intent and force that elevates the risk of injury clearly needs to be addressed. However, ponies may exhibit discomfort with bandages or over reach boots that heighten reactions such as stamping or stomping hind legs but are not actually kicking at other horses. Equally, ponies may buck due to a number of causes but this may not always pose a risk to other players and horses. These are still reactions that need to also be addressed but with different actions to the DVR process.

It is crucial for players, coaches, and umpires to recognise these nuances and take appropriate action, as prompt intervention can prevent more severe incidents.

Dangerous Vices in a competitive environment

Umpires have the ability to stop the game if they witness a horse displaying a dangerous vice during a match and will undertake the following steps:

1. Stop play immediately if a dangerous vice is observed.
2. The umpires can request the presence of an additional umpire to review the situation.
3. The horse will be sent off the field, or in the event of biting play can be held while a flash strap is fitted (see point 6)
4. The umpires must fully complete the Dangerous Vice Record (DVR) paperwork detailing:
 - Key Information (date, time, location, ownership)
 - Incident description (details of what happened, circumstances, involvement of other horses)
 - Horse identification (colour, gender, height, brands, markings, scars)
5. The DVR form needs to be completed twice;
 - One copy given to the owner of the horse
 - Second copy to be given to the tournament organiser for logging centrally.
 - A note of the DVR needs to be captured on the scoresheet.
6. A horse which bites may continue to play with a tack attachment (e.g., Flash noseband) which prevents it from biting. At all future practices and tournaments, the tack attachment shall be used.
7. For the horse to be eligible to play again, it must be assessed via the following procedure.
 - The horse shall be played at three polocrosse training sessions / rallies run by the Pony Club or the UKPA. These training sessions should be under the supervision of a coach / coaches on the Pony Club coaching database or a UKPA recognised coach (if they are UKPA Club practices). Details of the practices shall be recorded on the DVR form and signed by the coach. Each practice shall include at least 30 minutes of play with other horses in game type exercises..
 - Once the horse has failed to show the vice during three practices in a row the owner/player shall notify the PC Polocrosse Chairman of the first

tournament that they intend to return to compete. At that tournament at least two games shall be monitored by a separate ground mounted umpire or other person approved by the PC Polocrosse Chairman. Details of the games shall be recorded on the DVR.

8. If the horse does not show the vice the DVR shall be updated as such and the horse is free to compete without further specific monitoring. However, if it is sent off for the same Dangerous Vice within a period of three years then it is banned from polocrosse for life.
9. If the horse shows any sign of vice again the horse shall be removed from the field and competition. The horse shall be banned from polocrosse for the rest of its life. A note is to be made on the DVR.
10. The DVR must be updated and logged with the PC Polocrosse Chairman.

Disagreeing with DVRs

- ▶ A written appeal must be provided to the PC Polocrosse Chairman within 72 hours of the horse being sent off.
- ▶ The PC Polocrosse Chairman will form an appeals committee with at least two Umpires (different from those involved in the initial assessment) from independent branches to that player/horse owner and a PC Polocrosse Committee member.
- ▶ The appeals committee will review the DVR and the appeal and a decision will be made on whether the DVR stands or is to be revoked. A majority in the committee must be reached. The DVR will stand until the player/horse owner has been officially notified in writing of the outcome by the UKPA. .

Sharing Dangerous Vice data and information between Pony Club Polocrosse and UKPA

The Pony Club and UKPA will exchange DVR details, as ponies and horses may participate in activities governed by both organisations. A DVR issued by either body will be recognised by the other.

Engaging with impacted parties

When a Dangerous Vice Record (DVR) is issued, it is natural for people to feel upset and concerned about the situation. Players and parents are encouraged to remain calm, collaborate respectfully with umpires on the incident details, and uphold the decision for the safety of all involved.

Reporting and Documentation

- ▶ All incidents must be recorded accurately and promptly, ensuring transparency and accountability.
- ▶ Retain copies of DVRs for reference and future risk assessment.
- ▶ All communications and decisions should be documented, including discussions where no formal DVR is issued.



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