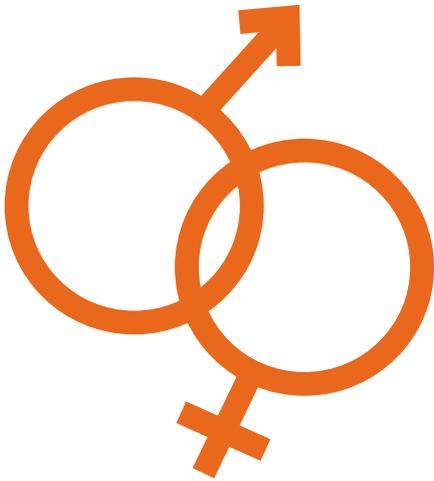
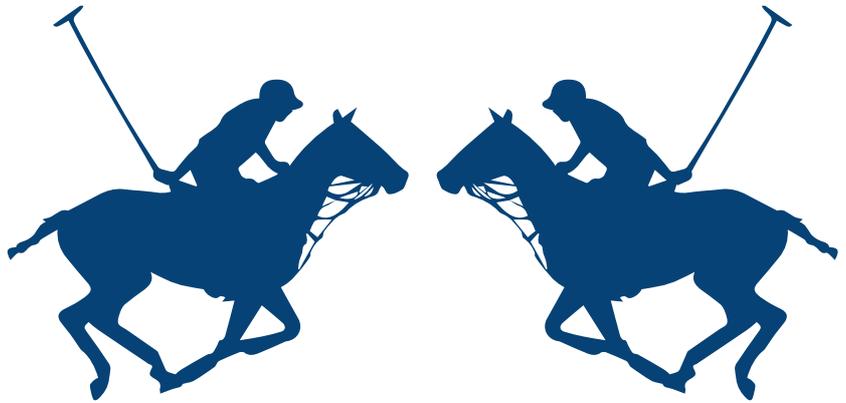


POLO AT A GLANCE



Polo is a unique sport in the sense that there is no rule against men and women playing together.



After each goal is scored, both teams line-up at the halfway line facing their opponent's goal and one of the umpires throws the ball between the two teams, and every player attempts to take possession. Throw-ins also occur at the start of every chukka (from the last position of the ball from the previous chukka) or as a result of a penalty when the two umpires cannot decide or after a Penalty 1 (which is quite unusual).



All players must play with the stick in their right hand: it is illegal to hold the stick with the left hand. Therefore players such as HRH The Duke of Cambridge, who are left-handed, must learn to play with their right hand.

-2 to 10

Polo players are rated using a handicap system, with beginners starting with a -2 handicap, and only the world's very best reaching the ultimate 10 goal rating.

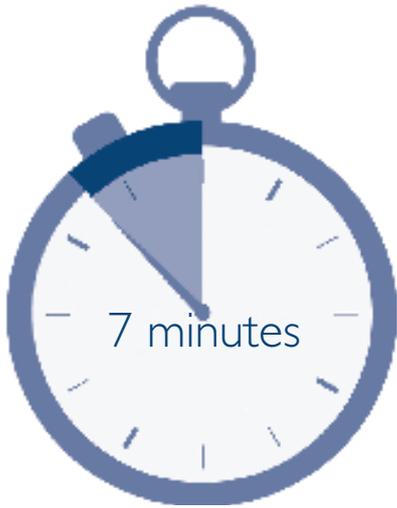


A polo stick is traditionally made out of bamboo while the head is made out of a wood called Tipa. Sticks come in many different lengths, weights, and flexibility and players can select the combination that suits them best. A common choice for a professional player would be a stick measuring 52 or 53 inches long.

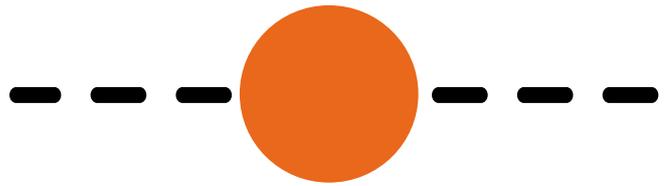
5



It is likely that each player will bring five horses or more for today's match. Most players credit their horses for at least 80% of their game. In order to compete against the best players in the world, you have to have the same calibre of horses as they do.



4 Chukkas in today's matches.
Each chukka lasts for 7 minutes with 30 seconds of overtime.



Two of the most important elements of polo are the line of the ball and the right-of-way. When the ball is hit, the direction it is travelling in automatically creates a 'line'. If a player is following the line of the ball they have the right of way, and if another player crosses the line this is a dangerous foul. When two players are approaching the ball from different angles to the line, the player approaching at the smallest angle to the line of the ball has the right of way.

4 IN SNOW POLO THERE ARE FOUR PLAYERS ON EACH TEAM



1

Most attacking player and goal scorer. Often marks opposing Number 4



2

Mid-attacking position. Often marks opposing Number 3



3

Mid-defending position. Often marks opposing Number 2



4

Most defensive player. It is beneficial if they have a good, strong backhand. Often marks opposing Number 1

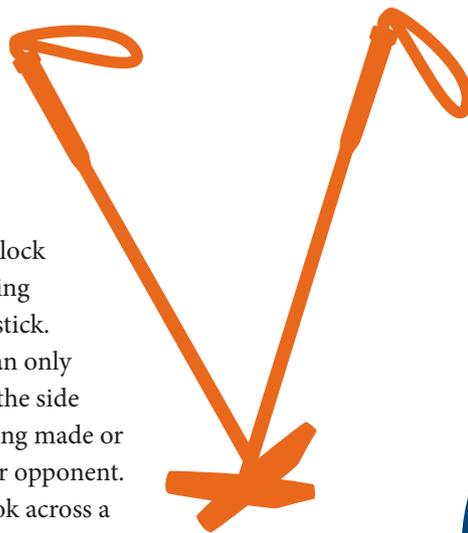


Every polo game is monitored by two mounted umpires. The two umpires must come to an agreement on each foul in order to award the correct penalty. If they do not, they will refer to a 'third-man' who will be positioned on the sidelines.



The first recorded game of polo is believed to have taken place in 600BC. The sport was originally introduced as a cavalry training exercise – surprisingly the game has changed very little since then.

One of the most common defensive plays is hooking, when a player can block their opponent's swing by using their own stick. However a player can only hook if they are on the side that the swing is being made or directly behind their opponent. A player cannot hook across a pony or above shoulder height.



Polo isn't just played on horses. The World Elephant Association was reportedly formed in 1982 by Mr A.V. Jim Edwards after a few drinks in St. Moritz. Camel, yak and donkey polo also exist.



A ring of the bell signals that the first 7 minutes of the chukka have passed. Another 30 seconds of play will follow unless the ball comes into contact with the boards lining the sides of the ground, a goal is scored or a foul occurs.



When one of the umpires thinks a team has committed a foul he will blow his whistle. The clock is stopped until play restarts.

Unlike outdoor polo where after each goal the teams 'change ends', in St. Moritz, there is a coin toss at the beginning and the winning team has the choice of scoring direction to start, after this the teams usually change ends after each chukka. The reason for this is to increase the fairness and negate the impacts of environmental factors, such as wind.

Sir Winston Churchill, a championship polo player himself, once famously said, "A polo handicap is a **PASSPORT** to the world." Churchill's love of the sport developed whilst serving in India in the late 1890s – he continued playing until he was 52-years-old.



The average cost a top player will pay for a high-class polo pony.

Penalties

- 1 A rare penalty where the offensive team is awarded an automatic goal with a throw-in 15 yards from the goal.
- 2 A hit 30 yards from the opposition's goal. Defenders cannot defend this penalty.
- 3 A hit 40 yards from the opposition's goal. Defending players may run from the sides of the goal and try to stop the travelling ball.
- 4 A hit 60 yards out from the opposition goal. The player taking the penalty must only take one shot at goal. Opposing players can defend the goal but must be at least 30 yards from the ball.
- 5a A hit from the spot where the foul was committed. Opposing players must be at least 30 yards from the ball.
- 5b A free hit from the centre of the field. As with a penalty 5a, opposing players must be at least 30 yards from the ball.