

Horse polo rules and strategies essay



With horse-based polo now more accessible than ever, more and more players are becoming interested in getting involved.

The game seems prohibitive at first, since you have to be a proficient rider before you can even begin thinking about playing polo. But in fact, learning to ride is the hard part. The game itself is relatively simple, similar in nature to games like soccer and hockey. Game setup There are two teams in a polo match, each comprising four members on the field at a time. Player positions are numbered: the number 1 position is the main scorer; numbers 2 and 3 are the midfielders, assisting in both defense and offense; and the number 4 specializes in defense. These positions are the basis of polo strategy.

The basic equipment for a polo game is a ball, about 3.25 inches in diameter, and a mallet with a rubber-wrapped grip. Players also wear protective gear such as shin-guards and helmets. Then, of course, there is also all of the riding gear, as well as the cushions that go around the horses' lower legs.

Scoring and play In competitive play, teams enter a match with a handicap that is added to the scoring before the game starts. When the game is underway, a point is scored whenever a player hits the ball across the line between the goal posts of the opposing team. In a game, teams typically score anywhere between two and ten goals. Polo games usually have eight periods, with each period lasting seven minutes. The periods, which are also known as chukkas, are short due to the rigorous nature of the game for the horses. Horses generally need several breaks during the races, and players often switch to back-up horses between chukkas.

During the breaks between chukkas, players are usually given around three minutes to adjust horses and discuss strategy with teammates and coaches. Two of the most common moves in polo are the hook and the bump. The hook is when one player uses his or her mallet to catch the mallet of another. In order to perform this move, the hooking player must be on the side where the other player is swinging. In other words, it's not permitted to reach across a horse.

A bump, meanwhile, is when one player uses his horse to veer another player's horse away from the ball.