

Polo Manual

By Sue Sally Hale



Sample Polo Manual
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To all those who want to be players. I hope this is a help in making you a safe, conventional, responsible member in the world of polo.

"To buy a trophy is not even the same rush of high as to lose to an equally good team as the one your were on" Duke Coulter

Polo is life, live it to the fullest, good, bad, and indifferent.

--Sue Sally Hale

PART II- Operations

Forward by Sue Sally Hale

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I. Horse Management

A. Horses Donated

1. Types

- Aged
- Leg Problems
- Mental Problems

2. Exercise

- Daily or a minimum of 4 week days
- Do not gallop -- slower miles & not too excessive
- Cold Water - legs & at night if necessary cold water wraps (sponge and polo wrap)
- If necessary can be played with a sponge and wet wrap.
- Exercise with out wraps so all leg parts & blood gets moving
- Check inside of ankle for sores (brushed by opposite foot - very painful). In this instance use gallop or angle boot to protect this can cause major lameness
- It takes at least 2 months to get a shred of fitness
- If you're aiming for a game - exercise rain or shine even if it's a long walk only
- Horses are not machines

B. CARE

1. Feet

- 6 weeks - blacksmith
- no caulks on hind shoes for arena
- Front feet are round and hind pointed
- pick and clean feet daily
- hooflex coronet band once a week
- use coppertox on thrush (when the foot stinks)
- Long toes, feet, cripple horses & cause falls

2. Backs

- Use mounting block -saves the back & withers displacing
- Check saddles for sharp areas and broken trees.
- Using more/thicker blankets can & does cause more wither pressure as saddles "Gullet" doesn't expand.
- Massage lightly (2 fingers & shake the area under each of your seat bones) These are usually sore areas caused by novice or poor riders, or heavy riders.

3. Girth Areas

- Lift front leg foreward to unwrinkle skin in and under the girth
- If sore, wrap girth use vaseline to lubricate

4. Worm and make sure teeth don't need floating. Have a regular schedule.

5. Miscellaneous

- When the season ends, don't just drop the horse
- Have a work down exercise plan
- Blood flow increases with fitness. The vessel wall also increase to carry the flow.
- Stopping exercise with no let down can cause bowing, etc. When the horse resumes work.
- The blood flow decrease much faster than the vessel wall --it can collapse, cutting off the flow to the feet, tendons & ligaments.

B. FEED

- -As much hay as possible
- -Skinny horse - free feed alfalfa molasses Feed quality and types vary indifferent areas

D Equipment

- Tack is also donated
- Check and make the repairs for safety
- Clean- keep clean, oiled - Mix Hexoil and Murphys/use horseman's one step.
- Clean once a week
- Bandages - hang & hose after use or wash in washing machine without soap (stick velcro flap to itself on each wrap to avoid the wraps sticking together and creating a tangled mess)

E. GAME DAY

- Clean Tack for the game
- Clean well - groomed horses
- Mallets laid out on a blanket
- Spit spot - this is polo tradition
- Manes clipped -- tails also
- Fetlock hair removed
- Do not bandage over mud. Clean the legs before wrapping.
- Pick the hooves

II. Players

A. Manners

- -How you behave is how you will be labeled in the polo world-No swearing
- No nasty remarks
- Boots clean
- Breeches /pants clean
- Every one has to help with all to make it work
- Rudeness is unacceptable

III. Unwritten - Polo Rules

- Respect your opponents
- Introduce yourself to the officials
- Be on time
- When trying horses ask if you can or should wear spurs or carry a whip-
Take care on your mounts
- Don't kill them off to be a hero in your own mind!-In practice - Practice - No
speed and make it short- the horse have a heavy load on game days.
- Do not argue with the umpire or make derogatory comments not matter what.
- Manners - horse concern opens doors - abuse does not!
- Ask what can be done, where and where not.

IV. Basic Skills To Be allowed to Play

A. Riding (Sunday Riders -Good Riders-Horsemen/Women)

- -Standing at walk, trot, canter.
- Sit trot/canter - no stirrups while not using the reins as a 3rd stirrup
- Ponying -1 horse or 2
- The quickest way to get a seat is by ponying horses

B. Mallet Work

- -1/2 shots -forehand, back hand, side.
- Work in circles (charts)-Pony a horse on left carry mallet in right hand -1/2 swings, back & forth continually
- Tap ball in circles, forehand, backhand and near-side -- no stirrups
- Practice penalties
- 1/2 shot is good
- Where the front of the elbow faces is where the mallet head faces is where the ball goes.
- Same for back shots, etc. (only back of elbow)
- It is not mandatory to stand & hit
- Sit use horse as a platform
- Hit forehands at stirrup iron
- Back shots -hit at hip or further back
- Roll on your seat bone (you can follow the ball with your eyes)
- All shots let out your air
- Hunker down into your waist rather than leaning out. This will keep horse straight and keeps riders more stabile.

C. Rules (Most Important)

- -Be parallel to the line on your side of the ball before you hook or ride-off (from horses poll to his tail dock)
- Do not ride on the balls line (ie into a back shot)
- There are 3 lines (see chart)
- A mallet may not (never) strike a horse or rider
- I may not meet two players
- Do not ride a player into the wall
- Do not stand on the ball-Learn about crossing
- Riding to score a goal-make a cut shots then turn left so as not to foul
- No full swings in line ups or in a group
- Remember to be good. Be a team player!
- You'll all make mistakes - So What!

Handy Hints - Beginners

1. How you practice is how you and your horse will play
2. Do not wear spurs
3. Learn to use your legs
4. Do not use the reins as a third stirrup
5. If tired or confused -stop reorganize (rider or horse)
6. Same for your horse -- The stop is a safe spot
7. Don't punish your horse for your mistakes -- The horse has to like it out there
8. Keep Checking reins to stay equal-mark them if necessary (tape)
9. Be under-mounted rather than over-mounted. This way you get to more plays.
10. High goal ponies don't make good beginners horses
11. In the beginning - sit & use your horse as a platform
12. Where the front or back of the elbow faces that's where the mallet head faces and the ball goes
13. No neck shots until very advanced
14. Don't rest the rein hand on the neck of the horse (reason: safety and control)
15. Do not take any shot that will hit a horse or rider
16. Rotate stirrup leathers
17. Off-side - (right or Polo side) - near-side (left)
18. Become as familiar with riding as possible
19. Do not let your temper rule hour riding
20. Command not demand of your horse
21. Use the horses abilities - not what you think he should be like
22. Establish lines of communication with a horse - your seat, legs hands, voice and patience.

Handy Hints - Intermediate Level

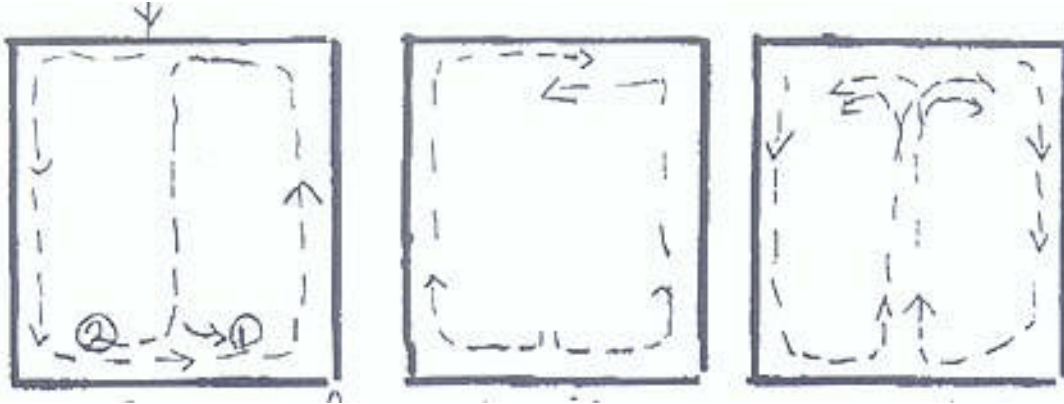
1. How you practice is how you play
2. Hit always to a specific - Never just hit
3. There are 2 types of games - hit hard, run or hit and control
4. Where the front or back of the elbow faces is where the mallet faces and where the ball goes
5. This is a game of team work. We all make mistakes
6. Grip mallet handle tightly
7. Be sure- mallet handle is right size and mallet is right weight.
8. The polo twos (there are more)
 - Sit and hit
 - hit late
 - -Stand and hit - hit early
 - Hit a long ball and play a running chase hit shorter and play a control game.
9. Shorter stirrups - reasons -safety-better hitting support
10. Be on correct lead -less falls of horse & rider
11. Hitting on wrong lead- hit late
12. Spurs don't belong on new players
13. Your rein hand isn't a stirrup
14. Don't rest rein hand on neck (safety and control)
15. Where one shot stops -other shot starts
16. Kiss the ball - don't kill it
17. Think back shot - no neck shot
18. Travel at the speed the ball travels, only.
19. Learn to lengthen & shorten horses stride not go faster or slower
20. Man-Line-Ball - take man first establish the line second and then hit the ball
21. Use two hands on reins between shots (first 2 fingers of mallet hand on right rein)
22. Never stop trying to improve your riding
23. Work on the things you don't do well
24. To keep making the same mistake in games is disrespectful to the game
25. Safety comes first -respect for players and horses

Handy Hints - Advanced Level Both Grass and Arena

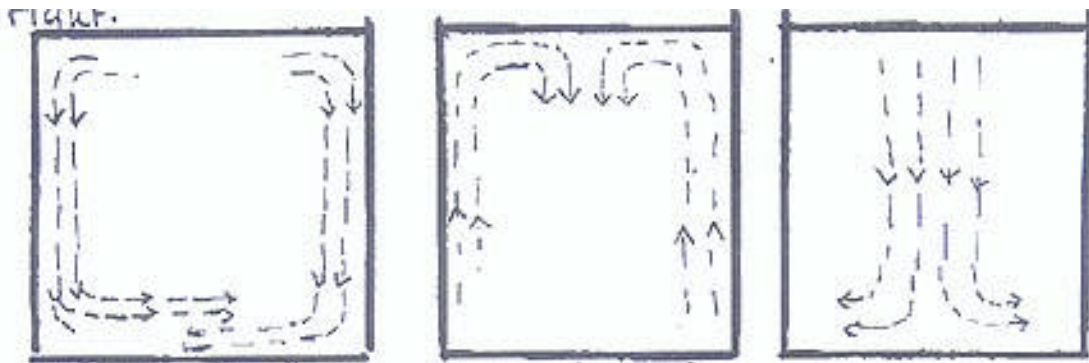
1. How your practice is how you and your horse will play
2. Use your horse as a hitting platform
3. Always hit to a specific - don't just hit
4. Hear distances - don't turn to look
5. Man-Line-Ball
6. Travel at the speed of the ball
7. Never make a shot that will hurt a horse or rider
8. Low goalers should not wear spurs
9. Reins are not a third stirrup
10. Use two hands on reins between shots for safety and staying straight when hitting
11. Do not rest your rein hand on your horse's neck (safety and control)
12. Warm up as you practice
13. Know at all times where everyone is on the field and how long until they run you over
14. It is your responsibility to check out the field for hazards
15. Never look back if you don't know where the ball is
16. Extra protective gear
 - Shin guards
 - Under knee pads
 - Elbow pads
 - mouth piece
 - face mask
 - protective goggles
17. Captain only may speak to umpire
18. Hit away from players (safety)
19. Learn to shoot penalties
20. Short shots when near goal
21. Where one shot stops another starts
22. There are three lines-yours, the balls and your opponents
23. Hurry up to wait
24. Don't just hit the ball, hit it correctly. If you don't you'll lose the next or several plays
25. Fighting is never on the polo grounds
26. Learn to hear distances (players) around and behind looking up or back causes missed balls

Polo Drill

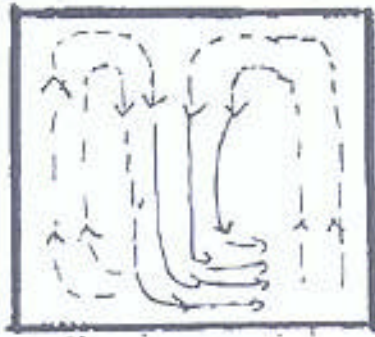
To learn control, observation, responsibility. "To get outside of your horse."



<p>Single file around arena Number off -1-2, etc. Upon reaching where started turn down center line-at end #1's to the left #2's to the right.</p>	<p>Up the sides when meet (middle) of short side of arena pass right hand to right hand.</p>	<p>When meet at other end up center line in 2's at end 1st 2 left and 2nd 2 (pair) right , etc., etc.</p>
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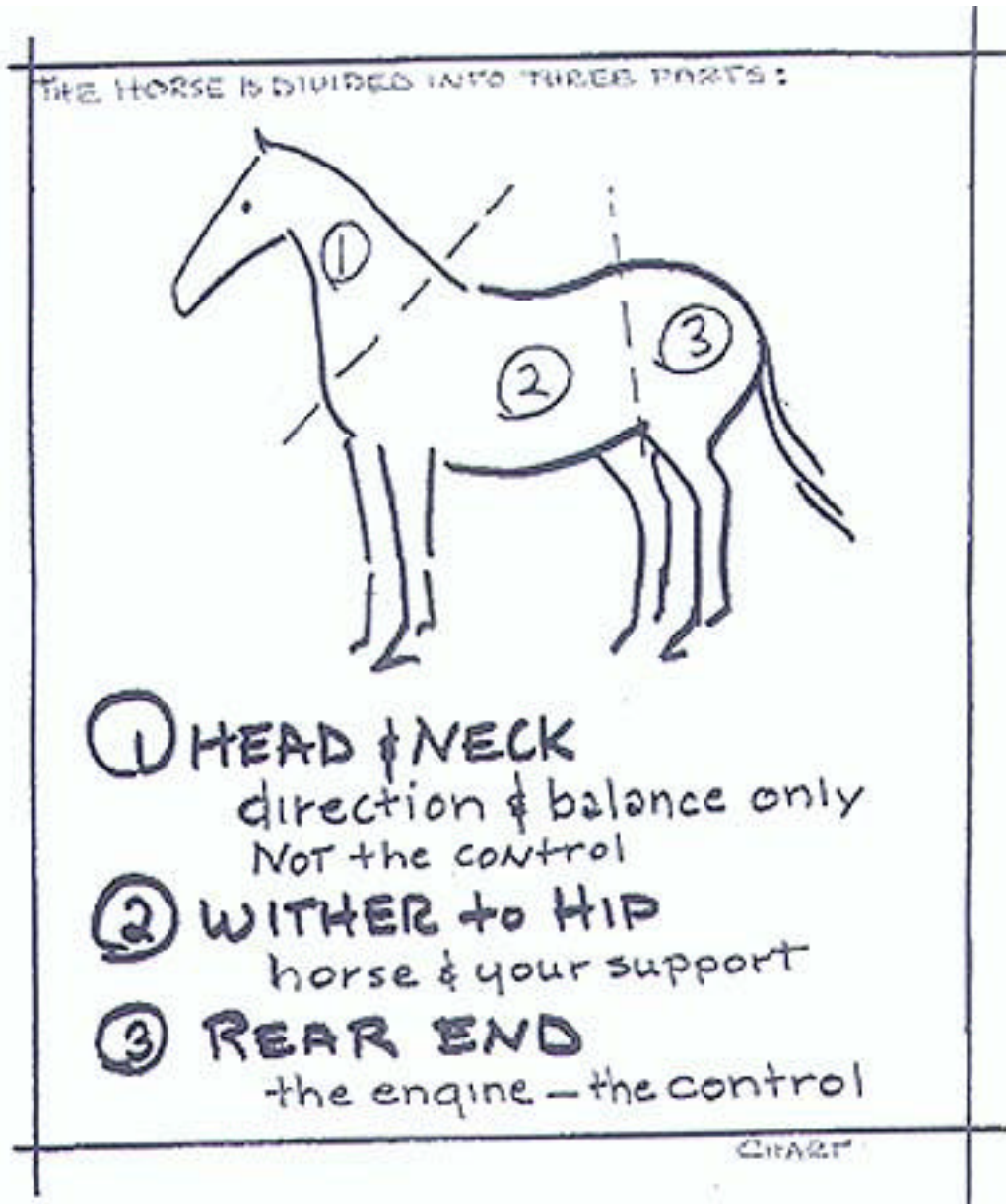
<p>Up the sides in 2's when meet pass right hand to right hand.</p>	<p>Up the sides when meet down center line in 4's.</p>	<p>At end of center line split - 1 pair left - 1 pair right.</p>
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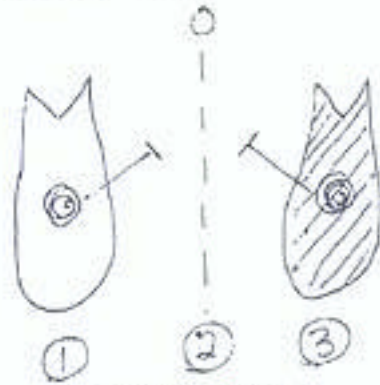
<p>Up the side, meet and come down in 4's -at end of center line 1st 4 left and 2nd 4 go right.</p>	<p>Up sides with 4's meet pass right hand to right in 4's.</p>	<p>Down sides meet & up center line in 8-- at the count of 3 halt.</p>
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Start this drill at a walk or trot - carry mallet when organized and safe do at canter. Good for green or problem horses as well as green riders.

The Horse Is Divided Into Three Parts:



THE THREE LINES



CORRECT



1.



2.

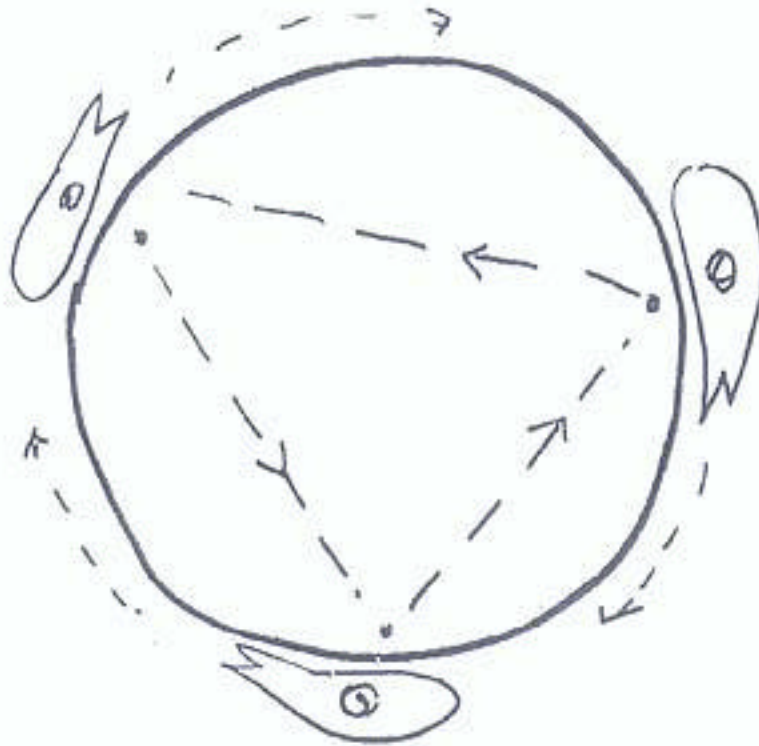


3.



4.

OFFSIDE BACKHAND



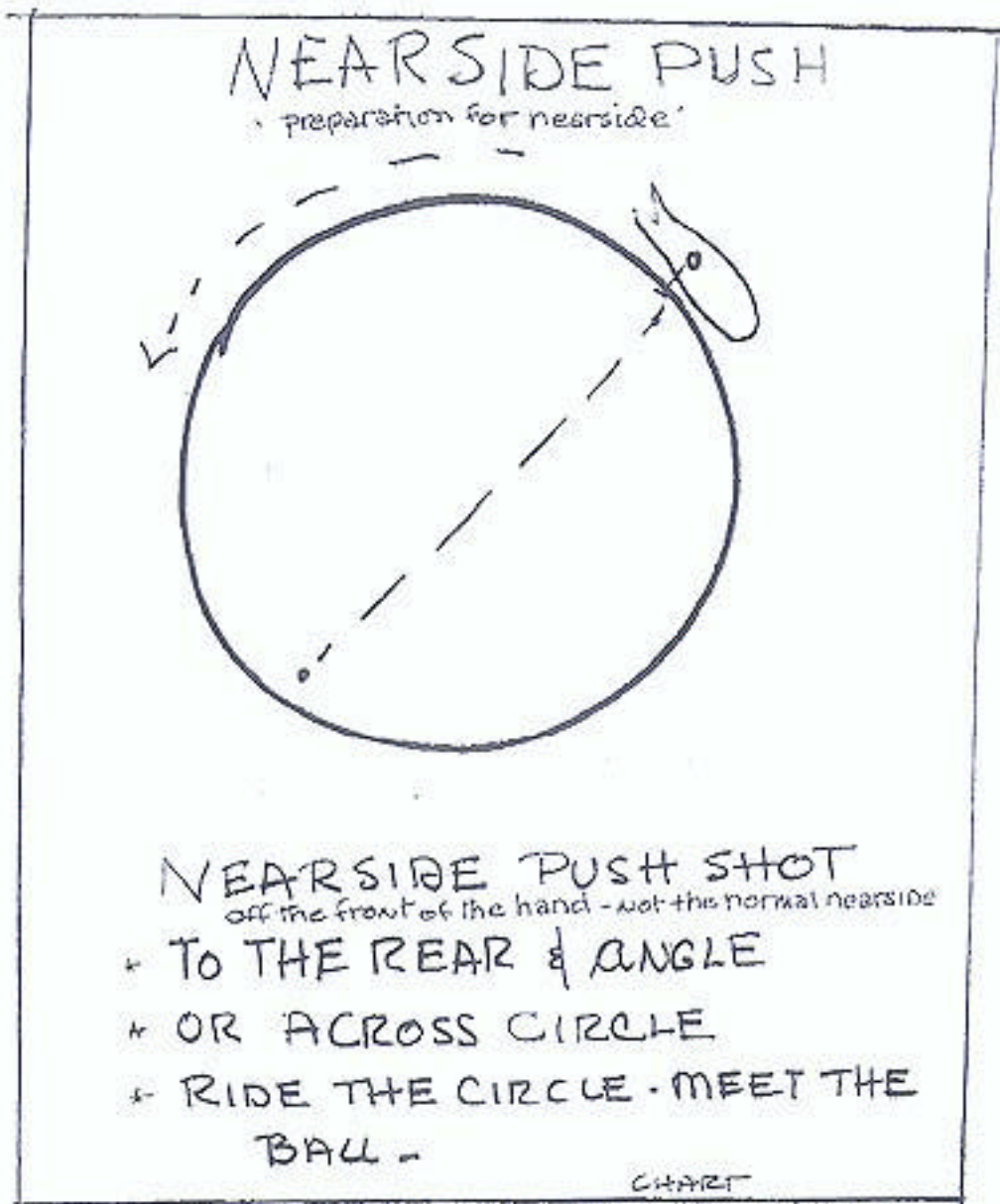
OFFSIDE BACKHAND
HIT AT HORSES HIP OR LATER
HIT AT ANGLE - ACROSS CIRCLE

CHART

GOOD FOR AS LONG AS YOU PLAY

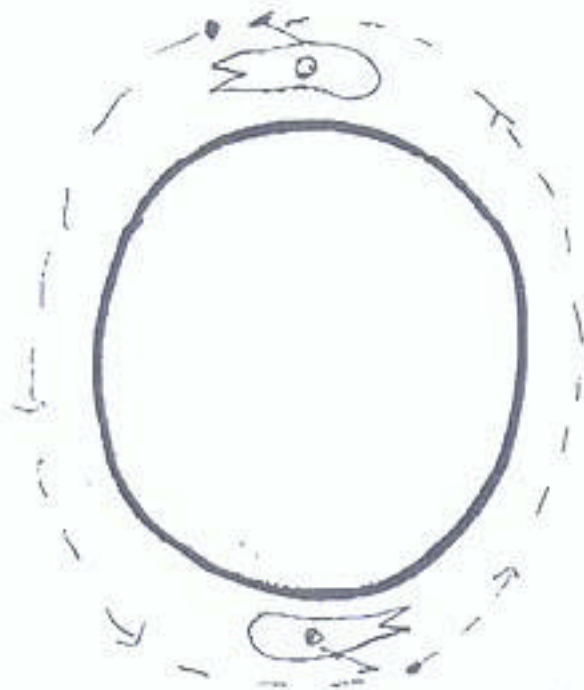


Near-Side Push Drill
(preparation for near-side)



THIS HELPS A PLAYER BECOME COMFORTABLE
ON THE NEAR SIDE - before attempting regular
near side shots

OFFSIDE CIRCLING LEFT



- * CIRCLE LEFT
- * CARRY BALL ON OFFSIDE
IN A PARALLEL CIRCLE
- * NO NECK SHOTS. Keep horse bent to the circle
- * PREPARATION TO STAND AND
HIT

CHART ~

mallet is angled when the ball is struck. Stroke stops at the ground so as not to cross under the horses neck.

Polo Student Questionnaire

A. Beginning

B. Do I know if my tack, saddle, bridle, are on correctly?

C. Do I know how to adjust my stirrup length from the ground as well as mounted?

D. Do I know how to hold or adjust my reins?



B. Mounted

- Can I balance without the use of my reins as a 3rd stirrup?
- Can I post trot? Can I drop 1 stirrup without using the reins for balance?
- Can I ride without stirrups?
- Can I pony a horse (s) at all gaits with or without stirrups?

If you can, then it is time to pick up a mallet.



C. Mallet

- Do I know how to hold the mallet properly?
- Do I know where one shot stops another shot starts?
- Do I know where the front of the elbow faces or the back of the elbow faces is where the mallet head faces, is where the ball goes?
- Do you know that the last 6's to hitting the ball is most important?
- Do you know how to practice in circles?

- Do you practice half shots to learn to control the ball?
- Do you know to hit each shot to a specific spot, not just hit the ball?
- Do you know no shot is important if it hits another live body or you mallet strikes your horse?

If you know ever this little you can play slowly.



D. Game

- Do you know what take a man is?
- Do you know what establish the line means? Getting parallel to the ball & opponents line? There are 2 lines.
- Do you hit the ball correctly not just hit cause it's there?
- A few other do you knows . . .
 - Where to line up
 - How to make a play on someone
 - That speed kills
 - Because you're the first to the ball doesn't mean it's your line.
 - Full swings are done only after you can control (6's) the shot?



E. Do you know how to spend your money effectively?

- Polo is a dangerous sport
- Horses are living beings
- Getting injured is a waste of time
- A polo player takes years to make
- A person who plays polo is short lined - polo players last.

