

The Line Up

Volume 3

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This is the third issue of The Line Up, which is a newsletter designed to help develop new players and clubs.

Please use this information as a guide, and double check with your coach or clinician about these topics and techniques when you get the opportunity.

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For more information about polocrosse go to www.americanpolocrosse.org

APA Membership—Is it important?



Picture taken by Laura Webb at 2007 APA Nationals

Story by Deb Zito

You can't see me in this picture, but I am a part of this opening ceremony. I first tried playing in mid 2005. I played at a farm that was introducing kids to polocrosse for an after school activity (to get them ready for polo). I knew I loved it the first time I played, but my family was not so sure about it. I did eventually pursue the sport. I got online and found the **American Polocrosse Association**. From there I found the zone rep for our area. I called David Brooks (Eastern Zone Rep). I found the calendar of events, and realized there would be a tournament in North Carolina. I entered that tournament (without a team or a club). I played and had a blast. I came home and started a club. I got online to figure out how to start a club. I called a meeting with everyone I knew that might be interested

and we got started. If it were not for the American Polocrosse Association, I would never have started to compete and form a club. Since that time, we have traveled and played extensively. We have made friends from all over the country. We have hosted several tournaments, clinics, and play days. We continue to compete all over the southeast. **APA Nationals is a special event and attending is a privilege.** Polocrosse would not exist in our area if it were not for the APA. For us, membership is not an option. It is imperative. The sport will not continue to grow without the knowledge and support from those who started the APA, its website, the rulebook, the development teams, and all of the other programs. **Don't hesitate! Become a member of the APA.**

How to be a Goal Judge

When attending a tournament, sooner or later you will be asked to be a goal judge for a game. This is a simple “how to” guide. If you tell the tournament umpires that you have never done it before they will help you. It’s simple and fun. It is a great way to watch your favorite team or rider play.

1. *Show up before the game starts (Be on time).*
2. *Have a racquet (if you need one the folks at the table can usually get one for you).*
3. *Make sure there is a game ball at your goal.*
4. *Let the umpire know if you are new at this.*
5. *Watch the game at all times (don’t get distracted by anything while you are doing your job).*
6. *It’s easier if you have one other person to help you. But, please no more than two people in that area (especially in A Grade games). It can get dangerous with too many people hanging around. Sometimes the horses don’t get stopped at the line and need to run out the back. If there are too many people there the horse has no safe place to go and could run over someone.*
7. *Watch for horses running out the back. It is usually best for you to stand still and let the rider steer the horse around you.*
8. *It is your job to look at every shot on goal to determine if it passes through the goal posts. The shot can be very high and still be a goal. Imagine that the goal posts go straight up indefinitely. Then determine whether the high shot would have been through the up-rights. A shot that passes over a goal post is no good. It must pass through the goal posts.*
9. *It is also your job to make sure that the horse was NOT in the “D” when the rider released the shot on goal. The horse’s feet should not touch or cross that line before the rider releases the ball. This is a great job for a second person who is there to help you. One of you should watch the goal, the other watch the “D”.*

10. *Immediately after the shot, signal to the umpires whether the shot was good, or no good. At first you will feel inclined to catch or chase the ball instead of making a signal. That is incorrect. Make the signal first.*
11. *Lift the racquet straight in the air to signal a GOOD GOAL.*
12. *Cross the racquet back and forth in front of you to signal a NO GOAL. Tell the umpire verbally if it was a no goal because the rider was in the “D”.*
13. *Throw your extra ball back to the umpire that asks for it. Then go and retrieve the ball that was thrown on goal. This is another good job for that second person who is there to help you. That way one of you can still keep your eye on the goal, especially in a fast paced game.*



14. *You should also watch the back line of the field. The umpire may not be in a position to see that back line at all times. If a ball crosses the back line or the ball carrier steps on or across the back line you should signal the umpire by crossing your racquet back and forth in front of you just like a missed shot on goal. The umpire will then know that the play went out of bounds.*
15. *The umpires on the field have the final say in all of the calls. You are there only to assist them. Do not be upset if they make a different call than you. They see things from a different position and they do appreciate your help.*
16. *Stay in your position for the entire game. If the tournament is in sectionals (3 man teams) make sure you stay for all 4 or 6 chukkas.*
17. *Most of all.....have fun!!!! Enjoy the game.*

What to expect at your first tournament

So you're ready to attend your first tournament? That's great. You will have a fantastic time. Here are a few tips to help make things go a bit smoother.

- Get with your club (if you have one) and get set up on a team. If you are going without a team, it is best to contact the tournament organizer and let them know so that they can put you on a team that plays at your level.
 - Send your entry in before the deadline. This will avoid the late fee, but more importantly, this will help the tournament organizer to seat teams correctly and get the schedule done. It is really hard on the folks organizing the tournament to be forced to do everything at the last minute because people didn't communicate whether or not they were attending.
 - You will usually play in D Grade in your first tournament, unless your club coach tells you otherwise. Regardless of your riding skills, that is where you will fit the best until you've competed enough to know the rules and procedures well.
 - You should join the American Polocrosse Association. You can pay a "weekend fee" of \$20, but you can only do that once a year. You will have so much fun you will want to go to more than one tournament, so go ahead and join the APA.
 - Get your horse fit enough to play 4 games in two days. It is unfair to pull him out of the pasture to play for a weekend. He will get sore if he's not been ridden enough prior to the event.
 - It is a good idea to take a back-up horse if you have one. That horse could also help umpire. Not everyone has an extra horse, but bring one if you can.
 - If any of your friends or family members can attend they can help by being goal judges. Each team is usually supposed to provide a goal judge for their game. However, if you don't have help you can always ask another club to goal judge for you. You can then goal judge for them during their game.
 - Some tournaments offer stalls for rent. Most tournaments allow you to set up temporary pens for your horse. Know how you will keep your horse in advance. Temporary pens are usually free, where stalls may be an extra expense. Some people use panels for their pens, but most people use electric fences. It is very inexpensive to get the equipment for a small electric pen. The stuff can be purchased at most farm stores or Tractor Supplies. A few plastic posts (at \$2.00 ea), some electric fence tape, and a DC powered electric fence box....and you are set to go.
- Go to your first tournament with the expectation of having a great time and meeting a bunch of new friends.*
- Camping is usually free. Seldom are there electric and water hook ups. When there are hook ups, there will usually be a charge for them. Hotel information is normally provided on the entry form. If it is not you should call the tournament organizer to get that information.
 - Try to be prepared to haul water to your horse if the water source is distant from your pen.
- You can use plastic jugs, or water containers. Most people use muck buckets for watering their horse during a tournament because the horses drink a lot when they play.
- All dogs should be on a leash at your campsite.
 - Make sure you bring your current Coggins for your horse.
 - Dress code for tournament play is white pants, some sort of riding boots or shoes, team shirts (numbered 1,2,3 across the back of the shirt) and an equestrian approved helmet.
 - Tack requirements—saddle with no horn, breast collar is mandatory, leg protection (polo wraps or sports medicine boots) required on all 4 legs, and bell boots are required on all 4 feet. Bits cannot have shanks. Snaffles, gags, and Kimberwicks are good. Tails are normally braided or taped up, but it is not required if the horse cannot tolerate it. It is safer to have the tail up.
 - When you arrive you should check in at registration. You will get your playing schedule then.
 - Try to get to any meetings before the tournament. They can be informative.
 - Typically you will play a game (2 eight minute chukkas) in the morning, then again in the afternoon on both Saturday and Sunday. As you should already know, you can only play one horse throughout the tournament. The only way you can replace your horse is if it gets injured or goes lame (determined by the tournament umpire) and is replaced by a horse that has the same or lesser playing abilities.

- Try to look at a rulebook to get a little familiar with the rules before you go. You can find the rules online at the APA website in the FORMS section.
- If it's hot, it is a good idea to have a bucket of water with a sponge and a sweat scraper at the field side to help your horse cool off between chukkas. They go eight minutes, get an eight minute break, and have to go another eight minutes. It helps to lead your horse around in between chukkas to keep them from getting sore. Sponging them off will help prevent overheating.
- Feel free to ask questions or to ask for help if you need it. You will find that polocrosse players are the friendliest people in the equestrian world.
- Be ready for some fierce competition. Most of all have fun!!! We'll see you on the field.

