

HOW TO SPEAK POLO

- **appealing** - claims by players for a foul, expressed by the raising of mallets above the head
- **backshot** - backhand swing, changing the flow of play by sending the ball in the opposite direction
- **bowl in** - when the umpire starts or resumes a polo match by rolling the ball down the center of a lineup of players, same as throw in
- **bump** - when a player directs his pony into the side of an opponent's pony
- **check and turn** - to slow the pony and turn safely
- **chukker** - term used for period of play in polo, seven and a half minutes long, there are six chukkers in a polo match
- **flagman** - an unofficial goal observer appointed to signal by waving a flag over the head if a goal is scored, or under the waist if no goal
- **field** - usually 300 yards long by 160 yards wide and outlined by sideboards
- **goal** - anytime the ball crosses the line between the goal posts, regardless of who (including ponies) knocks it through
- **handicap** - Team play is handicapped on the basis of ability. A team's handicap is the total of its players' goal ratings. Tournaments are held in handicap categories. The team with the lower handicap is awarded the difference in goals at the start of the match
- **hook** - catching an opponent's mallet in swing below the level of the horse's back, to leave or turn the ball for a teammate
- **knock in** - after the ball crosses the backline, the defending team knocks the ball back into play from their own backline
- **leave** - to ride past the ball so that the teammate behind can hit it
- **line of the ball** - the imaginary line produced by the ball when it is hit or deflected
- **made pony** - a polo pony that is well trained for polo and has been played for some time
- **mallet head** - the part of the mallet used to strike the ball, the wide face of the head is used to strike the ball
- **nearside** - the left hand side of the horse
- **neck shot** - hitting the ball under the horse's neck
- **officials** - two mounted umpires do most of the officiating, with a referee at midfield having the final say in any dispute between the umpires
- **offside** - the right hand side of the horse
- **pass** - to hit the ball forward or laterally to a teammate
- **player rating** - players are rated every year by their peers on a scale of -2 to 10 goals. Ratings are based on ability to ride, hit the ball, and perform effective team play
- **penalty** - numbered from 1 to 10, a free hit is awarded to the fouled, from a set distance determined by the severity of the foul committed
- **pony goal** - when a pony causes the ball to go through the goal posts
- **positions** - there are four players on a team, the forwards are numbered one and two, and are mainly concerned with scoring, number three, the center half, assists the scorers and aids in defense, often the most experienced member of the team, defense and fast break opportunities are the responsibilities of the back, number four

- **ride off** - two riders may make contact and attempt to push each other off the line to prevent an opponent from striking the ball
- **safety** - also known as Penalty 6, a defending player hits the ball over his own backline
- **sideboards** - short boards along the sidelines of the field to help keep the ball in play
- **standings** - polo players are ranked yearly by their peers and the USPA on a scale of -2 to 10 goals.
- **stick** - the polo mallet
- **stick and ball** - personal practice time
- **sudden death** - overtime play when the score is tied at the end of the last regular chukker, the first team to score wins
- **swing** - hitting at the ball with the mallet using one of four basic shots: forehander, backhander, neckshot, tailshot
- **tack** - all the equipment used on a pony
- **tail shot** - hitting the ball behind and under the horse's rump
- **third man** - the referee sitting at the sidelines, if the two umpires on the field are in disagreement, the third man makes the final decision
- **throw in** - when the umpire starts or resumes the match, he rolls the ball down the center of a lineup of players and mounts
- **time out** - an umpire may call a time out when a foul is committed, an accident occurs, or at his or her discretion, a player may only call a time out if he has broken tack or is injured
- **turn** - to backhand hit the ball away from the goal being defended
- **umpires** - two mounted officials, one for each side of the field
- **USPA** - visit the governing body of polo at <http://www.uspolo.org>)
- **wraps** - the protective bandages the ponies wear on their legs