



**a. Ball Hit Out of Play Over the Boards or Side Line (Rule 17):**

- (i) The main discussion concerned what constituted 30 yards away and what happened if a player was within 30 yards. It was confirmed that it was not a penalty and that a player could be 30 yards away to the side or behind; if they were behind they were not offside but if they were within 30 yards they could not make a play until the hitter had been engaged or run with the ball.
- (ii) The 8 and 5 seconds had worked well in Argentina, the USA and Dubai but there might need to be some common sense in the more recreational levels of polo without allowing players to take advantage.
- (iii) This rule has been redrafted as per below, following the discussion at the meeting:

**17. BALL HIT OUT OF PLAY OVER THE BOARDS OR THE SIDE LINE.**

- a. **Between the Two 60 Yard Lines.** If the ball is hit over the boards or side lines by a player either directly or, having been hit, has then deflected off his own pony or the stick belonging to another member of his team, then the umpire without blowing his whistle (the clock is not stopped) will place the ball after a lapse of 8 seconds at least 5 yards inside the playing area opposite the point from where it went out and call "play". The striker, an opponent of the player who hit the ball out of play, An opposing player must within 5 seconds hit the ball without re-placing it. His team mates may be in a position of their choosing. The players of the team opposing the hit should not be within 30 yards of the ball. Should an opponent be within 30 yards of the ball when the hit is taken then he has no play until the hitter has passed the ball or been challenged.
- b. **By Defending Player Within the 60 Yard line at Either End.** If the ball is hit over the boards or side lines by a defending player within his 60 yard line either directly or, having been hit, has then deflected off his own pony or the stick belonging to another member of his team a similar rule will apply as in Rule 17a above except that the umpire will place the ball on the 60 yard line and 10 yards in from the boards or side line. The striker may hit the ball only once and may either pass the ball to a team mate who must be at least 30 yards away or he must shoot for goal.

Should the umpires be unclear as to which team hit the ball out of play or it went off a player or pony (other than that of the player who hit it out) then there will be a throw in by the umpire who will stand with his back to the boards where the ball went out of play.

**b. Blocking (Rule 33):**

- (i) For blocking for a hit in, the experience from Dubai was that a Penalty 2 or 3 was too severe as it would usually result in a goal. Therefore, unless the offence was being repeated a Penalty 4 was appropriate. It was suggested that this should be in the guidelines.
- (ii) It was agreed that it was hard to write a rule for when the blocking rule ceased but that it was currently designed for the set plays only. Once the ball had been hit or the player was running with the ball in a positive way, the set play was over. In most cases that would probably be once the ball had gone 30 yards.

**c. Taking of Penalty Hits (Rule 38):**

- (i) If the umpire dropped the ball and called 'play', the player could not then move the ball to tee it up. It was agreed that in England the player needed to be able to put the ball on a decent bit of ground and that the umpire should just drop the ball and then allow 20 seconds for the hit to be taken.
- (ii) If the rules said that the hit had to be taken within 20 seconds, a member of the opposing team on or off the field could then cry foul if a player took more than 20 seconds. It was agreed that the rules should be amended to say 'play the ball within a reasonable amount of time, which is taken to be 20 seconds' or similar.

**THE HURLINGHAM POLO ASSOCIATION**

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<https://hpa.polo.sharepoint.com/umpiregeneralmeetings/Agenda/Minutes/2018/Notes/ClubChairUmpiresApril2018-FINAL.docx>

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(iii) There had been discussion at the International meeting in Florida as to whether players should be 30 yards in front of the ball in a straight line as had become the custom in the UK or 30 yards from the ball in a semi-circle as per the rules until the proposed change for 2018. Although the consensus was that 30 yards in a straight line was easier to umpire, it was agreed that the rule should not be changed for 2018 and thus players could be to the side but not behind the ball.

d. **Umpire Helmets.** It was reiterated that the umpires' responsibility to check helmets ended with making sure players wore a 3-point harness helmet but that clubs must be black and white and apply the rule. Any issues with obvious non-compliance should be referred to Polo Managers in the first instance and if there was intentional abuse the HPA would take action. Compliant helmets were listed on the HPA website.

3. **Welfare Duties.** David Morley made the following points:

- It was an umpire's duty to know the rules including those relevant to welfare;
- Always have a quick look at whips and spurs during the first line out;
- Understand the difference between a fatigued and a distressed pony. A player was responsible for allowing a pony to become fatigued and should be made to change in his own time; a distressed pony was a pony that had a problem not related to having been played too much;
- The umpires must take charge in the event of a major injury until they could handover to a vet or the polo manager.

4. **Rules Tests.** The following points were made:

- The S category had been subsumed in to chukka membership. Chukka members could play in instructional chukkas but not in any match or club chukkas until they had passed the Rules Test and been given a handicap by the club.
- The Rules Test for 2018 would be available in the normal way once the 2018 rules had been published.
- A new online test for 2018 was being investigated. The aim was to make it administratively easier for members to take the test and to ensure that it meant that they were safe to play. How they would be invigilated was currently an issue.

5. **Umpire Tests.** Umpire tests should only be taken when players have been playing long enough to be considered realistically capable of umpiring a match. The Umpires test for 2018 was in its final stages of editing.

6. **Umpire Courses.** Roddy Matthews was planning to run two half day courses which will be open to everybody. One will be around the M4 – M25 and the other further north. Dates had yet to be confirmed.

7. **Referee Report Forms.** These will be updated and will also be available on the web site.

8. **End of Season Meeting.** 1430 Wednesday 12 September at Beaumont Estate.

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