



WELCOME TO CELYN POLOCROSSE CLUB!



Welcome to Celyn Polocrosse Club. This Welcome Pack contains information we think you will find useful, if you have any questions not answered here then please do not hesitate to ask any of our members. We like to see Celyn as a very sociable club so we encourage players (and players' parents) to join in as much as possible.

ABOUT THE CLUB

Celyn is one of the two Welsh clubs in the UK Polocrosse Association (UKPA). We are based at the Northop College, partly for historical reasons, but also due to the excellent equestrian facilities available. Our summer training grounds are at Backford, near Cheshire Oaks. We are one of the oldest clubs in the country and now also one of the biggest.

We have a strong record of providing players for national squads. Our A grade team came second at the National Championships in 2011 and 2013, and the club won the overall Nationals trophy in 2013. We are particularly proud of our juniors, who over the years have taken many tournament wins and National championship titles.

CLUB RULES

The club has a constitution and a set of rules and procedures that you are agreeing to abide by when you become a member. It is recommended you read through the rules to make sure you're conversant with them.

COMMUNICATION

We communicate with members mostly via e-mail so please ensure we have your up to date address. We are also on Facebook and we have a website at www.celynpolocrosse.co.uk. To join our Facebook group please contact the secretary via secretary@celynpolocrosse.co.uk

We pride ourselves in being a caring club and want all players to enjoy the game and being part of Celyn so if you have any problems please contact any of the committee members (details on the website).

CHILD WELFARE

Celyn has a Child Welfare Officer (CWO) specially designated to look after the welfare of children (under 18) while playing at the club. The CWO's details can be found on the website. If you have any concerns about the welfare of your child or any other child then please contact the CWO as soon as possible so the problem can be investigated. The CWO's e-mail address is childwelfare@celynpolocrosse.co.uk

ABOUT POLOCROSSE

You may already have played polocrosse, but polocrosse is more than just the game. It's about becoming more in tune with your horse, gaining good friends, enjoying working as a team, having great weekends away at tournaments and generally having a fantastic time with your horse and your mates. This is what we try and develop at Celyn.

PLAYING DIVISIONS AND GRADES

There are a number of playing divisions in the UKPA (ages on 1 January of that year);

- Primary Juniors (PJs) - aged under 13 years with ponies 13.2hh and under
- Intermediate Juniors - aged under 16 years
- Open Juniors – aged under 16 years and horses 13.2hh and higher
- E, D division - adult beginners, no juniors
- C and B - intermediate divisions
- A - top division

Individual players are graded with a number from zero (lowest) to 20, depending on their ability. Grades are not generally relevant in the PJ and junior divisions, but later determine which division you play in. Grades are set by the club. Juniors may not play in the adult divisions until they have achieved a grade 5.

THE POLOCROSSE YEAR (actual dates will vary)

See the UKPA website for details <http://www.ukpolocrosse.co.uk/events/>

January – Celyn training starts, usually at Northop
April – grass training starts at Backford, Chester
First May Bank Holiday weekend - Camp
May - first UKPA tournament (Early Season Tournament)
June - season starts in earnest
23rd -24th July - Celyn tournament (Backford)
26th – 28th August 2016 – Nationals
Mid-Sept – Celyn Cup

TRAINING

Training starts early January, usually at Northop College but we do use other venues as well. Actual times and days will be sorted at the beginning of each season and then emailed out and posted on the website and FB page.

Once the weather gets a little better (usually around April) we start on training on grass at Backford, where we hire a field from a local farmer. This is the same field we use for our tournament. Training will include basic polocrosse and equine skills to get newcomers ready for the season. Players will be taught:

- The rules of polocrosse
- The roles of each team position
- How to get the best from their horse
- Polocrosse tactics

HOW TO GET INTO A TEAM

Polocrosse is all about playing the game so we try and make sure that everybody is able to play at tournaments, irrespective of their ability or experience. Your grading will determine which division you will play in, but you might not always play with a Celyn team. If you are not picked for a Celyn team then normal practice is that you will be put with a team from another club. This means that you can make friends with players from other clubs. It is very rare for a player to be unable to play in a tournament due to the lack of a team.

Early in the year the UKPA sets out the tournament dates for the year. Players will be asked by Celyn at which tournaments they are available to play. This doesn't mean you have to play at the ones you pick, but we like to know so we can start to look at organising teams.

At least 3 weeks before the tournament you should e-mail the Celyn Competition secretary saying that you are definitely available to play at that tournament. The teams are then picked from the available players and the lists disseminated via e-mail before the tournament. Players are generally picked on ability, but other factors are taken into account. You will also need to pay your entry fee into the Celyn bank account beforehand. Details of this will be emailed out before each tournament.

For more information about tournaments see 'Playing and Tournament Introduction'.

WHERE ARE THE TOURNAMENTS?

Tournaments are organised both by the UKPA and by the individual clubs. Players are welcome to attend as many, or as few as they wish.

They take place at the following places and others from time to time;

- Backford, Chester
- Doncaster
- Henley-in-Arden (South East of Birmingham)
- Rugby
- Goudhurst, Kent
- Drakes Boughton, Worcester

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Parents of the younger players are strongly encouraged to join in with the activities of the club and in particular they have very important roles during tournaments. We have various social events during the year which double up as fund raisers.

THE UKPA

The UKPA is the governing body in the UK and **all playing members of Celyn must be UKPA members** too. This provides them with insurance and allows them to compete in UKPA tournaments, including Celyn's. Further details can be found on the UKPA website at www.ukpolocrosse.co.uk.

There are around 11 clubs in the UKPA, 2 in Wales, one in Scotland and the rest in England.

EQUIPMENT

Most of the equipment you need will be standard equine gear. Specialist polocrosse equipment can often be borrowed from the club until you decide to invest in your own. Sometimes Celyn Club has equipment to sell at discounted prices so try us first. For details of what equipment you are likely to need see the 'Playing and Tournament Introduction'.

Within the UK there are presently two places you can purchase racquets and balls:

- www.equineweb.com
- www.polo-x-treme.com

These often come to tournaments and you can buy from them there.

Racquets – New racquets will take some time to settle in and may change the way they 'throw' because the net loosens up. Some racquets are 'slow' or 'hooky' meaning it is difficult to throw the ball with them, but also difficult to knock a ball out of them. Some are 'quick' and easy to throw with, but also easy to knock the ball out of. If you are having trouble with your racquet then speak to a Celyn coach and we can adjust it for you.

Also, the lengths of racquets is pretty standard so may be too long for you. The racquet can be shortened, but cannot be lengthened again so be sure you want it shorter before you ask a coach for help.

PLAYING AND TOURNAMENT INTRODUCTION

Parental Involvement

Parents play vital roles during the game (as well as off the pitch too!). At each goal there are 2 goal judges (one from each team) whose job it is to indicate to the umpire whether a goal has been scored or not. It is ultimately the umpire's decision, but they usually take the goal judges' opinion. One judge watches the 'D' to see if the player was outside the marked 'D' when they threw the ball whilst the other checks to see if the ball actually passed between the goal posts (at any height, which sometimes makes it a bit tricky). Training in this important role will be given – it's actually very simple.

We also need scorers and time keepers at the control table, located near the centreline of the pitch

So for each game we need 3 extras from each club involved in the game.

We would generally expect any underage player (under 18 years) to be accompanied to each tournament by their parent(s). If you are unable to accompany them at some point then it is permissible to send them with another adult. In this case there is a specific protocol to be followed which is explained in the club rules.

Equipment Required

Extra equipment required over and above 'normal' tack and equipment is:

- 4 x overreach boots
- 4 x leg bandages (white preferably – though not mandatory)
- Overgirth (in case your girth breaks during play)
- Breastplate/breastgirth (to stop the saddle slipping back during play)
- White playing jeans/jodhpurs
- Racquet (can be borrowed from the club)
- Electric fencing and energiser system
- Club shirts will be supplied by the club
- Celyn club saddlecloth (speak to your coach to purchase)
- Water containers for horse water
- Muck skip
- Not all bits are allowed. Those with 'protusions' are not permitted. If in doubt ask a coach

Arrival at the Tournament Grounds

Most people arrive pm on the Friday. Once on site look for somebody else from Celyn (assuming you want to pen with us!). Park up and put your pens up next to your wagon/camping spot. If you know you're not going to arrive until late (eg. after 10pm) tell us and we'll try and keep a space for you and possibly put up spare pens.

Paying for the Tournament

You can either send a cheque to the Competition secretary or pay your fee directly into the Celyn bank account. Your entry fees will need to be paid prior to the tournament, usually by the date detailed on the email sent out by the competition secretary when she asks for teams.

Penning on Site

Horses are penned on site using electric fencing. The pens are usually about 6m x 6m but this depends on how much space is available on site. To achieve this you will need at least 50m of electric tape and 9 fencing posts. We can show you how the penning is done when you arrive if you feel you need help.

The fence should be energised at all times – especially for a horse un-used to penning, to ensure they don't jump out! At most tournaments you pen next to your wagon/tent/trailer, but at some (eg. Doncaster) the horses are penned in a separate area.

Looking After the Horses

Horses will need to be fed regularly with hay/haylage and extra feed to give them the energy they need. Muck heaps are set up around the site so you will need skipping out equipment. Watering sites are also located around the site and you will need water containers to move the water about. On hot days you will need to hose your horse down at the water sites after each game.

Introduction to the Game

A polocrosse team consists of 6 players, but this is split in to 2 sections, with sections alternating play in each chukka. The goals that each section scores are added together to make up the total team score – the team with the most goals wins. In some tournaments section games are played ('teams' of 3), and effectively 4 'teams' play in each game in 2 entirely separate matches.

Each player is designated a number (1, 2 or 3) which determines their position and their role in the game. New players will move around the positions as they develop until they find one they (or maybe their horse) prefer. Even then you are likely to move around the positions due to necessity! You are allowed to change positions during a game, but only between chukkas, not actually during the play.

The game (and each new chukka) starts with a line out in the middle of the pitch. This is also how the game re-starts after each goal is scored. Under special circumstances a new chukka may start from where the last chukka finished – but this will be made clear by the umpires at the time.

The pitch is split in to 3 zones; 2 goal zones (sometimes called penalty areas) and the midfield area. Only the attacking No.1 and the defending No.3 are allowed to stay in the penalty area, any other players may enter, but must immediately leave and must not interfere with play in any way. The midfield area is for all players.

The game is controlled by 2 umpires on horses whose word is final – no arguing!

Introduction to the Game Rules

Rules can be downloaded from the UKPA website at <http://www.ukpolocrosse.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/UKPA-Rulebook-2014-Iss-2.pdf> . You will learn many of the rules as you go along, but try and read up on them first.

It's difficult to simplify some of the rules, but below are a few of the main ones:

- You must always carry the ball on the near side of the horse (the 'near side' in polocrosse is the side you normally hold your racquet on, 'off side' is the other side). If your racquet should cross over the centre line of the horse with the ball in it the umpires will award the other side a penalty throw. You can pick the ball up or catch it over the centre line, but you must immediately bring the racquet and ball over to the nearside.
- You can never lean across the horse to reach another player's net. If you're on the player's offside there's no way of hitting their racquet – however close it may seem.
- You're only ever allowed to hit another player's racquet hitting upwards – hitting down will endanger the horse.
- You can only cross the 'line of the ball' at a safe distance. The line of the ball is an imaginary line along which the ball is travelling, or has travelled along to get where it is. Most players will be following this line to get to the ball so if you cut across it you may cause a dangerous pile up, sometimes you just have to stand there and watch!!!. This is the most difficult rule and the hardest to explain. We go over it during training.

- You must never stop on the ball or turn on the ball – eg. if you're trying to pick the ball up off the ground and miss it you mustn't stop or turn to try and have another go as there could be 5 other players galloping up behind you!!!! If there's a stopped melee going on you can stand still near the ball.
- Nobody is allowed to travel over the penalty line (in either direction) while carrying the ball – you must either throw it over and catch it on the other side or have someone throw it to you.
- The ball is where your horse's feet are – if your horses' foot goes over the line the ball is 'out'.
- Only the No1 can score and they must be in the penalty area but not in the 'D'.
- No 'body-hits' are allowed – a hit to the head/hat with a racquet is a goal against you!!!!
- When you are crossing behind (or in front) of another horse you must be no closer than horse's nose to horse's tail – this stops you tripping the other horse up (or your own!!).
- During a penalty throw the thrower mustn't be impeded until the ball, or they, have gone more than 10m or they have ridden over the ball.
- During a penalty, all players must be more than 10m away from the penalty point.

Tactics

There are many different tactics that can be used and the more you learn and can use them the better you'll play. However, to start with the following simple 'tips' will enable you to play a good game (see the Tactics Table below):

If you have the ball don't be afraid to go in the 'wrong' direction to avoid an opposing player. Remember – your horse can regain the ground very quickly.

When going for the ball on the ground in competition with a player from the opposition:

- If you are in an equal position to the other player try and push their horse out of the way before going for the ball yourself - this gives you an easier go at the ball. This is particularly true when the 1 and the 3 are in the area together.
- If you're too far behind to push them then always assume they are going to miss the ball - get yourself set up to pick the ball up as if they weren't there. If they pick it up there's nothing lost, but if they miss you have a chance to pick it up.
- If you get pushed out of the way then push back! Don't make it easy for them!!

Communication is the key – keep talking to each other so you know who's got the ball and who needs help.

Play hard for the 6 minutes – rest between chukkas

Watch and learn from other players

BASIC TACTICS

Player	PRIMARY ROLE	CONCENTRATE ON	IN THE LINE OUT	WHEN IN THE PENALTY AREA	IN MIDFIELD
1	to score the goals	Going for the ball If another member of your team gets the ball you have to decide either to get it from them in midfield and take it in to the area yourself or get them to throw it to you when you're in the area	Getting the ball/stopping the other No1 from getting the ball	Keep moving – it's easier to get passed the No3 if you're already moving. Use the whole area – don't just hover around the front of the goal. Take your time – don't rush it	Keep going for the ball -hunt the ball. If you get the ball don't always immediately gallop down the pitch -wait for your players to take out the opposition (your 2 on their 3, your 3 on their 1). That just leaves their No2 and he's not allowed in the area with you.
2	support the No1 and 3	If your team does not have the ball – get the ball If your team does have the ball – stick to an opposing player (preferably their No3) and keep them away from your players. (Keep an eye on play – the situation can change between these 2 options very quickly!)	Most likely to catch the ball in the line out	You're not allowed in the area. Take this time to rest yourself and your horse. Watch the progress of the action in the area. If the No3 should get the ball you will need to react – apply CONCENTRATE ON rules	Hunt the ball or take out a player (preferably their No3). Never stop hassling. If you get the ball call to your No1 so they know you have it. Keep an eye on your No1, don't go down the pitch to the area until they do, you'll get stuck! Keep moving.
3	Stop the opposing No1 from Scoring	Stick to the opposing No1 like glue. Stay between them and your goal	Get the ball if it goes out the back of the lineout. As soon as this option has passed (eg, if you miss the pick up) revert to CONCENTRATE ON role	Try and slow down the No1 – once stopped it's hard for the No1 to get going again. Keep the No1 slightly in front of you as you defend your goal – it makes it easier for you to keep an eye on him and harder for them to get passed you. The nearer the No1 is to the front of the goal the closer you should be to them – that's the easiest place to score from. If close to their horse when they turn, turn away from them rather than in to them. Ride with 2 hands on the reins for greater control. Only attempt to knock the ball out of their racquet if you they are stopped, or nearly stopped – otherwise they will use the moment you are swinging to get passed you.	Stay close to their No.1 and keep them as far away from the ball as you can. Always try and stay your goal side of them so they can't slip past you. Avoid getting caught in a melee as the No 1 may break free and you may be stuck – hang back on your goal side and watch for the No1 to make a move or the melee to break up.