



Photo credit Robyn Wishaw



## DISCIPLINE OF THE MONTH: POLOCROSSE

The perfect addition to your Pony Club

**Pony Club is all about creating well-rounded, confident riders who share a love for horses and camaraderie.**



Polocrosse aligns beautifully with these values, offering an exciting team sport that enhances horse-and-rider communication, builds skills and fosters strong community bonds. By introducing polocrosse, your club can provide members with fresh, engaging activities that keep them inspired while strengthening their connection to Pony Club.





Photo by Flash Pony

## Why include polocrosse in your Pony Club?

**Polocrosse isn't just a sport—it's a dynamic way to build essential riding and teamwork skills while having fun. Here's why your club should give it a go:**

### **Strengthen the horse—rider partnership:**

Polocrosse drills and skills sessions are perfect for building coordination, communication and confidence between riders and their horses. Even sensitive or nervous horses can benefit from controlled, low-pressure polocrosse activities.

### **Encourage team spirit and a sense of community:**

Polocrosse introduces riders to a worldwide community of like-minded equestrians. Hosting team activities or mini-carnivals can also strengthen ties between neighbouring clubs, promoting collaboration and friendship.

### **Fun and accessible for all ages and abilities:**

Polocrosse is inclusive—riders of any skill level can participate. Skills and drills can be adapted for individuals or groups and can even be played on foot, making it easy to involve everyone at your rallies.

### **Promote confidence and skill development:**

This fast-paced sport challenges riders to think quickly, strategise and improve their riding technique, all while having fun. The result? More confident riders and happier horses.

### **Retain members with fresh activities:**

By incorporating polocrosse into your club's offerings, you provide a compelling reason for members to stay engaged with Pony Club.

## What is polocrosse?



Photo by Sarah Johnson

**Polocrosse is an exciting team horse sport that blends elements of polo, lacrosse and netball. It's inclusive, played by people of all ages, skill levels and genders across Australia and worldwide.**

### What you need to play:

- One horse
- A polocrosse racquet
- A polocrosse ball
- A sense of adventure and team spirit

### How the game works:

- **Teams:** Each team has six riders and horses, split into two sections (chukkas).
- **Chukkas:** Each chukka plays for 6–8 minutes, with 4–8 chukkas per game.

### Positions:

- **Number 1:** Goal shooter
- **Number 2:** Centre
- **Number 3:** Goal defender

### Gameplay basics:

- **Start:** The game starts with a line-up at the centre of the field, where the umpire throws the ball into play.
- **Passing:** Players pass the ball using their racquets as they ride towards the goal.
- **Scoring:** The number one attempts to score by throwing the ball through the goalposts, challenged only by the opposing number three.

Polocrosse is a thrilling mix of skill, strategy, and teamwork—perfect for riders who love a challenge and want to have fun!



## Ideas to get started with polocrosse at your Club:

1. Introduce skills and drills at rallies: Include ridden and groundwork polocrosse sessions as part of your regular club activities. Focus on racquet and balls skills, riding skills and small team games to build skills in a fun and supportive environment.
2. Host a mini polocrosse carnival: Organise a friendly competition with nearby clubs to showcase the sport and create memorable experiences for your members.
3. Run polocrosse clinics: Invite experienced polocrosse players or coaches to deliver training sessions tailored to your members' needs.

## Getting started

### Basic equipment, skills and drills:

- Each rider will need a polocrosse racquet and ball to get started.
- Contact a [polocrosse club in your area](#) or reach out to [Polocrosse Australia](#) to acquire basic equipment and guidance on skills and drills.
- Reach out to [Polocrosse Australia](#) to find a suitable polocrosse coach in your area.
- If your club already has access to polocrosse equipment, download the free [Beginners Handbook](#) and [Drills Handbook](#) for ideas that accommodate riders of all abilities and their horses.



Photo by Flash Pony

## Suggested games and activities

### GAME 1

## Leader Ball (unmounted)

**Skill level:** beginner

**Skill development:** ball control and throw accuracy

**Player number:** 5 – 10

**Equipment required:** Each player will need a racquet and a ball

#### Instructions

1. Arrange players in a line, with each player standing about 1m apart and one player standing in front of the line as leader.
2. The leader passes the ball to the first player on the line, who carries the ball and bounces it as they walk around the player at the end of the line, around the leader and back to their position. This player throws the ball back to the leader and crouches down.
3. The leader throws the ball to the next player in the line who repeats the activity.

#### Tips, tricks and adaptations

This team activity can be used as a multi-team, time-based challenge, or time each round with a single group aiming for a faster time each round.

Alter the activity by varying the action used by the leader and players (e.g. lobs, passes, bounces and rolls along the ground).

Go at your own pace. Increase speed as you gain confidence.

### GAME 2

## Fruit Salad (unmounted)



**Skill level:** beginner

**Skill development:** Ball pick-up and team work

**Player number:** 8 – 10 plus a leader (coach)

**Equipment required:** Each player will need a racquet and a ball

#### Instructions

1. Arrange players in two lines, with players facing each other, standing about 1m apart in their own line and about 4m away from the opposing line (see diagram).
2. Allocate a fruit to each opposing pair.
3. Place the ball on the ground at a point between the lines and calls out a fruit. The players given that fruit from each lines race to pick up the ball.
4. Those players run to pick up the ball and return with the ball to their position in the line.

apple pear grape peach

\_\_\_\_\_

○ leader  
ball

\_\_\_\_\_

apple pear grape peach

#### Tips, tricks and adaptations

Call out more than one fruit at a time and encourage players to work together to retrieve the ball for their team.

**Acknowledgements:** Bev Hughes



## GAME 3

# The Circle Game

(unmounted)

**Skill level:** beginner

**Skill development:** ball control and throw accuracy

**Player number:** 5 – 10

**Equipment required:** Each player will need a racquet and a ball



Photo by Meg Archer

### Instructions

1. Players stand in a circle, facing the centre, holding their racquet.
2. Allocate a player to start and finish the drill. The 'starter' throws the ball to a player on the opposite side of the circle.
3. Each player who receives the ball throws the ball to a new player on the opposite side of the circle.
4. The aim is to pass the ball as quickly as possible in the correct order to try to achieve the quickest time.

### Tips, tricks and adaptations

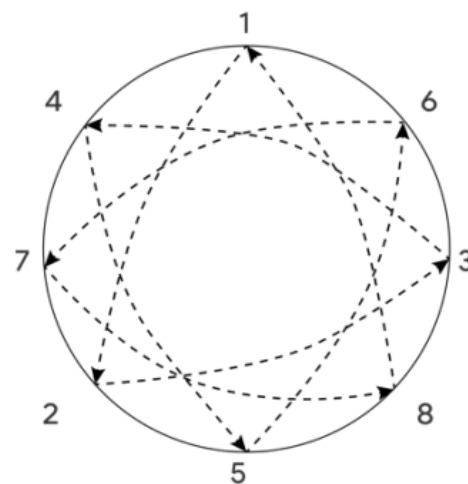
Spend two minutes planning the exercise so each player knows who they will receive the ball from and who they will throw the ball to! Support the group to set themselves up for success.

Remain calm! Focus on accurate passes and be sure to communicate.

Go at your own pace. Increase speed as you gain confidence.

Time each round for a bit of added competition.

**Acknowledgements:** Adapted from Bev Hughes





## GAME 4

# Race the Ball (unmounted)

**Skill level:** beginner

**Skill development:** catching and throwing

**Player number:** 5 or more

**Equipment required:** A ball, and each player (except the runner) will need a racquet



Photo by Sarah Johnson

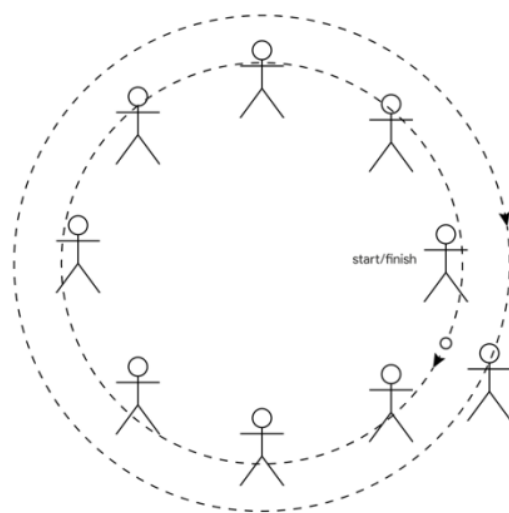
### Instructions

1. Arrange players with racquets in a circle, standing about 2 m apart, with one player holding the ball in their racquet.
2. Have the runner stand on the outside of the circle, next to the player holding the racquet.
3. On “go” the runner takes off around the circle as the players in the circle pass the ball, aiming to get the ball back to the original ball holder before the runner reaches them.
4. Rotate players into the position of runner until all players have run around the circle.

### Tips, tricks and adaptations

If the runner beats the ball back, increase the distance between the players on the circle or ask each player to bounce the ball before throwing it to the next player.

**Acknowledgements:** Bev Hughes







## GAME 5

# Line them up

(unmounted)

Photo by Flash Pony

**Skill level:** intermediate

**Skill development:** ball control and throw accuracy

**Player number:** 8 plus a timekeeper

**Equipment required:** Each player will need a racquet and a ball



### Instructions

1. Arrange players in two lines, with players facing each other, standing about 1m apart in their own line and about 4m away from the opposing line.
2. Allocate each player a number as outlined in the diagram.
3. Player number one starts and finishes the game with the ball in their racquet.
4. Starting with player number one, players throw the ball to each other as outlined in the diagram.

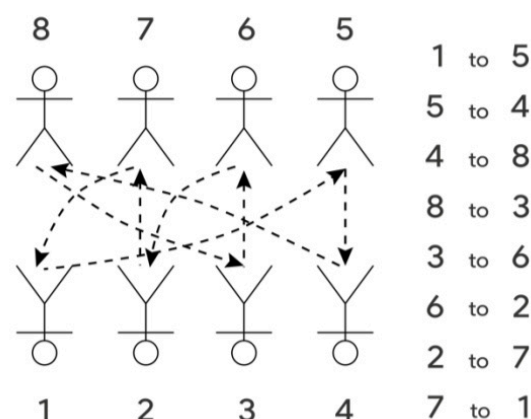
### Tips, tricks and adaptations

To increase the challenge, time each round and aim for each round to be faster than the last while maintaining accuracy.

Introduce multiple balls to the exercise to increase the challenge.

Rotate the position of the players.

**Acknowledgements:** Bev Hughes





## GAME 6

# The three-leaf clover (mounted)

**Skill level:** Intermediate — the horse and rider should be confident riding basic patterns at a range of speeds.

**Skill development:** Riding a clover-leaf pattern helps prepare the rider and horse for some of the directional changes needed in polocrosse. It ensures the horse understands your leg aids and increases their flexibility.

This slight alternative to the traditional barrel-racing pattern challenges the horse and rider with a few additional changes of direction — see if you can figure it out!



Photo by Robyn Wishaw

### Instructions

1. Set up cones in a clover leaf pattern as shown below. Start by walking the horse through the pattern, riding with both hands.
2. As the horse and rider become more comfortable with the directional changes, increase the speed and practice riding with one hand, using leg and seat aids.

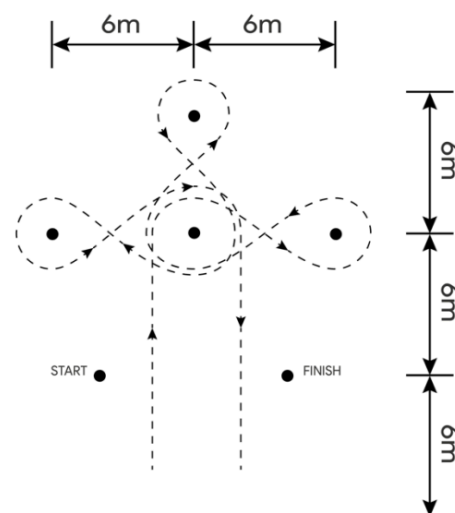
### Tips, tricks and adaptations

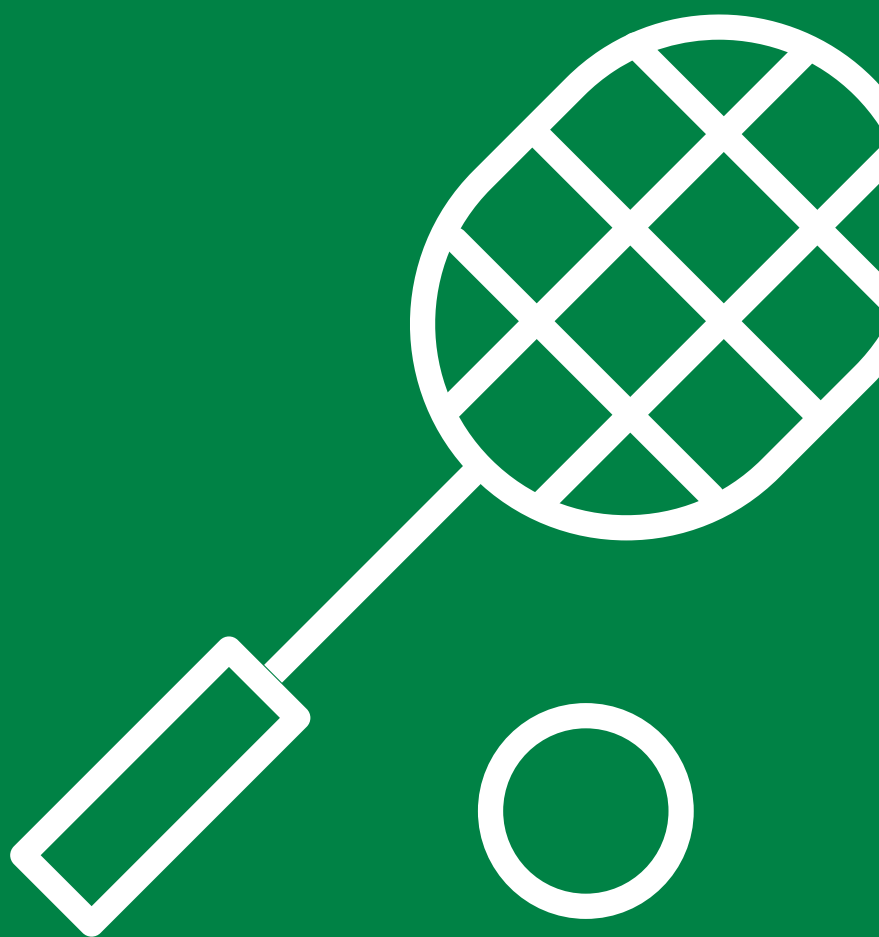
As the horse and rider combination progresses, introduce racquet and ball skills to the pattern.

Place a ball on the ground at the first cone. Pick it up and place it on the ground again while moving through the pattern.

When the rider and horse become confident, add a bounce and catch or a 10-yard throw at the start and finish. Place the ball on the ground as you pass the first cone and pick it up again during the final pass of the centre cone.

**Acknowledgements:** Adapted from a polocrosse drill supplied to Polocrosse Australia by Jill Clarke in 2007.





[www.ponyclubaustralia.com.au](http://www.ponyclubaustralia.com.au)