

# BICYCLE POLO



The Bicycle Polo Association of Great Britain

THE FATHER OF BICYCLE POLO



*Photo by courtesy of "Sammy" Barlett*

R. J. MECREDY.

## Foreword

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THIS booklet is intended primarily to introduce Bicycle Polo to the "Man in the Street." At the same time it embraces the whole of the activities of the Bicycle Polo Association of Great Britain and will be found useful to the novice and interesting to the expert and particularly to those fine sportsmen who, no longer active cyclists, still retain their interest in all things cycling and are eager to organise Bicycle Polo in their own districts.

There is much in it also of assistance to promoters who wish to present to their public a thrilling and spectacular game which has all the qualities that appeal to a British sporting crowd.

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## A BRIEF HISTORY OF BICYCLE POLO

In the year 1891, Richard J. McCreedy having retired from two very successful spells of racing, one on the "Ordinary" and one on the tricycle, still found himself full of vim and vigour so he looked around for some strenuous amusement to occupy such time as he could spare from editing his beloved "Irish Cyclist." Finding nothing suitable he proceeded to invent a game which called for the same attributes as cycle racing, minus its attendant drawbacks.

With a few friends "Arjay" roughed out a set of rules, and their first game was played at the Scalp, a popular rendezvous in Co. Wicklow some 20 miles from Dublin. Here is the report in *Cycling* 10th October, 1891, page 186:—"Polo on Wheels" "The Ohne Hast C.C. had no less than 40 cyclists out on their club run last Saturday, which was as usual to the Scalp. On arriving, the game of cycling polo was inaugurated, and promises to be immensely popular with the members, and not at all so dangerous as would appear from the title. After a few games there were hardly any collisions, and these only occurred when the riders were travelling at a very slow pace. One would think that polo is a sport which would peculiarly gladden the heart of the cycle repairer, but there was not even a bent pedal pin after the game on Saturday. R. J. McCreedy is enthusiastic about it, and hopes to get up a few matches when it becomes more generally known."

The following week *Cycling* published a letter from a correspondent who signed himself "Cosmo-Cyclo," who said that, ever since the introduction of pneumatic tyres he had been urging on his friends the view that cycle polo was not only possible, but would be a most enjoyable and exciting game. His friends had suggested that he should "patent the idea"!

"Cosmo-Cyclo" offered to communicate his ideas to anyone who would take an interest in "polo up to date," and enclosed his card. One gathers from his letter that "Cosmo-Cyclo" had not actually played polo. Apparently there was no response, but *Cycling's* then editor (the late C. P. Sisley) wrote under the heading "The Latest Fad," "Quite a little stir has been caused over the announcement of cycle-polo. We admit the needed diversity of cycling from mere turning of the cranks, but believe that the average rider's fear for the safety of his wheel will militate greatly against the general acceptance of the new sport."

However, *Cycling* gave the game a fair show, as in its issue of October 31, 1891, it published the rules of Bicycle Polo as played by the Ohne Hast C.C., which, by the by, was McCreedy's club for social cycling: the title means "hasten slowly."

The following appeared in *Cycling*, November 21, 1891 :—

“Cycle polo is not a mere trick-riding performance in the sense suggested by a correspondent. On the contrary, it is a scientific athletic exercise, and is rapidly gaining in favour in the land of its inception—Ireland. One very salient advantage of the new game is that *will most efficiently train the hands, head, and eye of the racing man*; a highly necessary schooling in these days of huge fields of safety-racing-men, when the slightest error in steering loses the race, and perhaps causes a fearful smash.”

Some time elapsed before English cyclists took up the game. One of the first districts in which it was played was Northampton, where a club was formed with Spencer Downing, an ex-racing man, as its leading player. Newcastle, Coventry and Melton Mowbray started playing, and the Catford C.C. ran a team at its fine new track in Brownhill Road (opened May 18, 1895).

We reproduce here a photograph showing the Northern Bicycle Polo Club team which was lead by W. Carruthers, a Newcastle racing man, who is now a Vice-President of the Association.

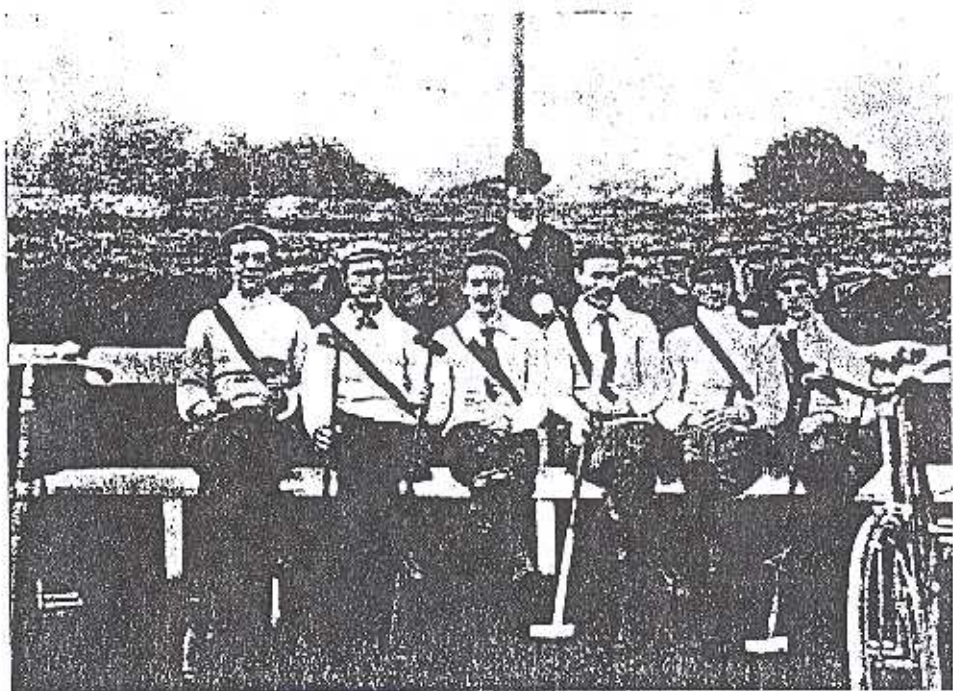


Photo by courtesy of "Sammy" Darth.

#### NORTHERN BICYCLE POLO CLUB

One of the first and most enthusiastic of the early English teams.

Later, the Birmingham B.P. Club was formed, with A. C. Hills, an old Brixton Rambler, as captain. Hills, then a partner in the Osmond Cycle Co., was the first man to design and build a special polo bicycle. Northampton ran a league competition for a challenge trophy.

About this time the Bicycle Polo Association was formed, with headquarters at the much-vaunted home of ultra-pure amateurism, the Sheen House Club in West London (opened May 15, 1897), where the game was played by smart Society—with a capital S. The Sheen House rules permitted rough play: of it the London *Morning Post* (September 19, 1898) said: "Irish polo you play on your own machine. Sheen House polo you play on that of a confiding friend."

As compared to the bicycle polo played in Ireland the English version was generally considered to be rough and to demonstrate the superiority of the game as played in Ireland, Meccredy brought over two teams to play an exhibition match at Catford in September, 1898, to emphasize the safety of the Irish version he included a lady, Miss Wheeler, in one of his teams, her side won and the *Irish Cyclist* wrote:—"She proved unmistakably the safety of the game." At that time there was a complete team of lady players in Dublin.

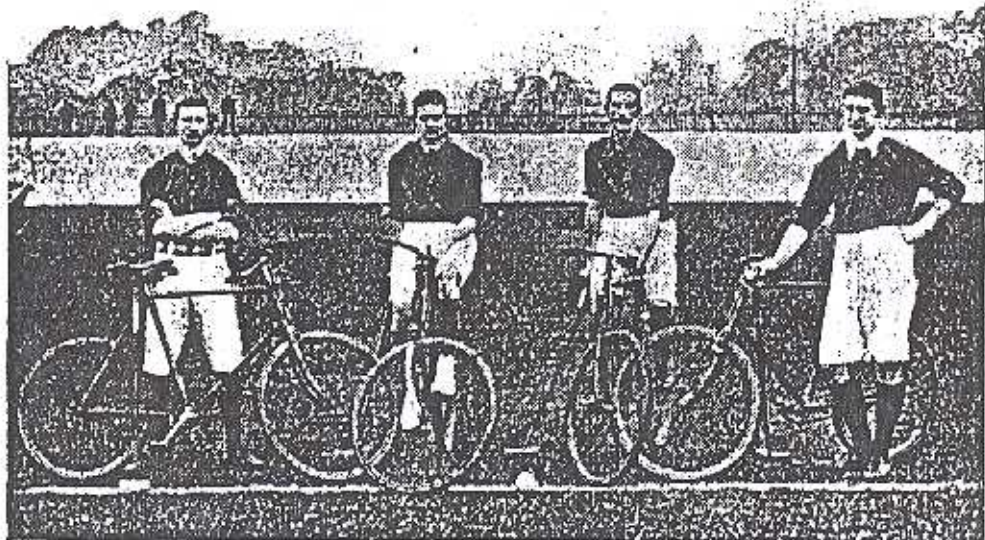
On the 26th August, 1899, Birmingham B.P.C. beat Northampton A.C. at Birmingham by 9 goals to 8. On the 23rd September, 1899, Birmingham beat Catford C.C. 14-4 at Catford, Ernest Perman was one of the Catford team and A. C. Hills was the referee. On 7th October, 1899, the Magpies of Coventry also beat Catford at Catford. This time James Blair acted as referee.

The first International Match was staged at Crystal Palace on September 28th, 1901, when Ireland beat England 10-5.

The teams were:—Ireland: Oswald Sealy, Page Dickenson, H. Oswald and F. E. Bland, all of the Rathclaren Rovers club. England: Spencer Downing (Northampton), Capt. J. Appleby (M.C. & A.C.), J. W. Dalby (Northampton) and F. Timms (Melton Mowbray B.P.C.).

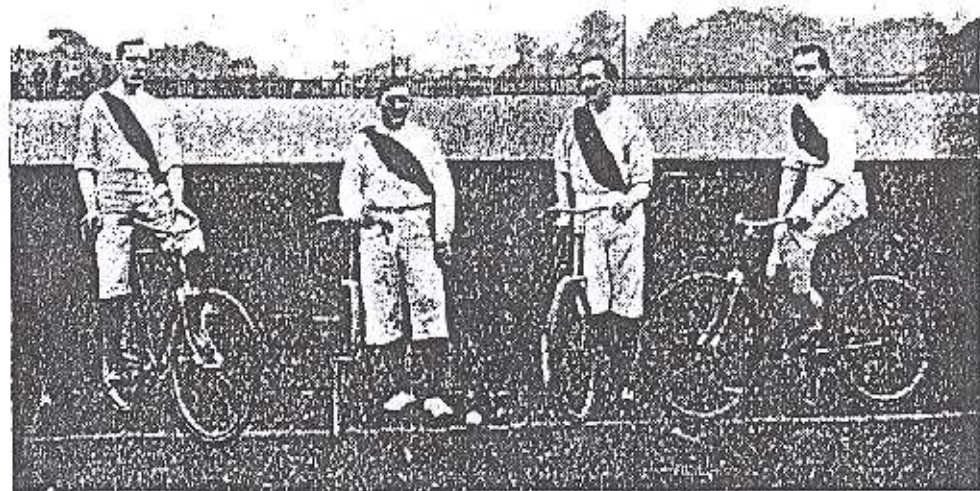
Bicycle polo then suffered a distinct slump, although an attempt was made to revive it in July, 1908, when in connection with the Olympic Games at Shepherd's Bush Stadium, London, a match was played between Ireland and Germany. Ireland won 3-1.

THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL  
ENGLAND v. IRELAND  
Crystal Palace, September 28th, 1901



*Photo by courtesy of "Sammy" Bartlett*

IRELAND



*Photo by courtesy of "Sammy" Bartlett*

ENGLAND



## THE BEGINNING OF A NEW CHAPTER



*Photo by courtesy of "Sammy" Dartlett*

### CYRIL S. SCOTT

Founder of the Bicycle Polo Association of Great Britain

The game was dead, buried, and forgotten by all but a few veterans, when, in 1929, C. S. Scott had a brain wave which led to the present and greatest chapter in the history of the game, the chapter which is still being composed and which looks like continuing till cycle wheels cease to revolve.

Cyril S. Scott, of the Highbury C.C., had just concluded a long and fairly successful racing career on road and track and like Mccredy before him, he wanted an outlet for his energy, how he came to select bicycle polo—a game which he had never heard of—makes an interesting story.

"Scottie" was an old hockey player, he had played water polo, and had a nodding acquaintance with pony polo. So he was (shall we say) "polo minded."

In the winter of 1929-30 he rode a good deal with the Corrance C.C., the members of which used to take a football with them on their Sunday runs, as did many cycling clubs at that time, and indulge in a "kick about." Scottie used to join in, but always had the idea that playing football on a club run was not in keeping with the ideals of a true cycling clubman. One day Scott and George Bell (still playing the game with the Bendfield Paragon C.C.) with sticks and branches of trees started to hit the football about, coats were put down to mark the "goals," other fellows joined in, sides were picked, and, hey presto, bicycle polo was re-born.

Charley Foster, of the Corrance, turned out some balls of oak and mallets made with broom handles and ex-army box wood mallet heads. With this equipment several games were played, but it soon became evident that some sort of rules were necessary, so Scott took the Hurlingham rules of pony polo, of which he knew very little, and the Rules of the Kent Hockey Association, of which he knew quite a lot, and combined them in the proportion of about 20-80.

The next step was to put the game on a proper basis and with this end in view Scott convened a meeting of interested parties to be held at his house, and on February 1st, 1930, the Bicycle Polo Association was formed. Six people were present, they were:—C. S. Scott, G. Bell, C. Foster, L. Watt, H. Effner and F. Turner, all of the Corrance C.C.

Now that the game is national in its appeal Cyril Scott may look with pride on the results of his enterprise and enthusiasm, not, indeed, from the depths of an arm-chair, as Scottie even now dons his shirt and shorts and shows the moderns how to swing a nifty mallet.

A meeting held on March 13, 1930, decided to issue a handbook with rules, and at a meeting held at Mogador on May 3, 1930, the treasurer reported a balance in hand of 17s. 8d. and the secretary stated that the membership of the association numbered 12 individuals, with two honorary members.

The first mention of a league, in the minutes, appears on June 19, 1930, when the secretary was requested to arrange league matches during the coming winter season. In July, 1930, Cyril Scott sent out a circular to cycling clubs in the London area with a view to increasing interest in the game. A meeting on July 31, 1930, agreed the conditions of the first league, as drawn up by the hon. secretary; in these we find the first mention of "an official referee." Regulations as to machines used for polo were accepted and it was decided that "equipment be supplied without cost to all players in league games, should they so desire, except shorts, stockings and shoes"!.

The first scheme for club affiliation was adopted at a meeting on August 7, 1930. At the second A.G.M. on September 4, 1930, the hon. secretary reported the association's strength at 16 active and two honorary members. It is interesting to recall that the meeting instructed the hon. secretary

to write to *Cycling* "pointing out the errors in that paper's article (September 5, 1930) re the supposed damage to machines." *Cycling's* comment had been "the greatest drawback to bicycle polo is that casualties to mounts are pretty frequent, so that players have, of necessity, to possess a decent sized stud of machines which they can afford to have smashed up quite often." With the game as it was played in 1930, players using their standard touring bicycles adapted for polo, the criticism was not unduly severe.

The first public match, arranged by the association, was played at Herne Hill on September 27, 1930, at a carnival in aid of King's College Hospital; the two teams were selected by the B.P.A. committee. Official referees were first elected on October 3, 1930. On November 6, 1930, the hon. secretary reported that considerable interest was being taken in the game in Oxford. He proposed that a local centre should be started under the guidance of the B.P.A., in that city. This was agreed. By December 5, 1930, interest in the game had increased to such an extent that it was decided to rent a second pitch at the association's ground at Mogador. This was a momentous meeting, for it was the occasion of the election to membership of George Brake, of the Adys C.C. who was afterwards to play such a very important part in the movement. The Velma C.C. became affiliated at the same meeting, which also adopted a new type of ball and mallet. On this date also we find the first reference to an agreement between the B.P.A. and the N.C.U., each to recognize the other's suspensions, etc.

The Mitcham football ground, which has been so closely associated with the development of polo, came into the picture at a meeting on February 13, 1931, when the committee decided to rent the ground for a summer league competition. Although a team of private members of the association took part in the early competitions, it was the policy of the association, from its inception, to affiliate established cycling clubs, and among those which enrolled in the early days of the game were the Polytechnic, Adys, Tooting, Merton Wheelers, Corrance, Calleva, Highbury, Centaur, Oval and N.C.U. S.W. Section. The Epsom C.C. came in about the second year. The Norwood Paragon C.C. was elected to membership on March 7, 1931; a momentous election, as the history of the game reveals.

Even in those pioneer times we had "supporters:" the St. Martin's C.C. paid a subscription to the association just to encourage the movement, but never put a team in the field.

In the second year the private members' team was disbanded, having served its purpose, and Cyril Scott formed the London Bicycle Polo Club, which operated successfully for a couple of seasons, when it, in turn, was broken up, its constituent units having interests in their first-class clubs which had, by now, taken up the game.

A comparison of the first B.P.A. rules with R. J. Meeredy's Irish rules will show that they differed materially in certain important features: for instance, number 13 of the Irish rules stipulates that if two opposing players are approaching the ball from the same direction, both must "curve" so as to keep the ball on their right: if one of them played the ball when it was on his left he was ruled "off-side." Also the Irish practice was four men to a team: at first we adopted eight.

At the third A.G.M. held on September 28, 1931, the position of captain was altered to chief ground steward: by that date the Tunbridge Wells Club had joined the association. The Imperial Wheelers joined on November 20, 1931.

On October 21, 1931, the association held its first dinner: it took place at Brixton, and was a great social success. On February 24, 1932, the Catford C.C. became affiliated, the Clarendon C.C. joining at about the same time. On April 4 it was reported that the Cycle Manufacturers' Union had presented a trophy to the association. Two more clubs, the Old Portlians and the Southborough and District C.C. came in August, 1932.

As was the case in polo's first "boom," certain provincial centres took up the game with avidity. Though the Birmingham boys did not start until towards the end of 1936, they have made wonderful progress, and now have the strongest centre outside London.

George Brake, whose missionary work in various parts of the country has done so much to spread the interest in polo, took a team of Wrens to Birmingham, where the first match was played on December 6, 1936, against a team of M.C. and A.C. novices. Harry Lest went up to "ref." the game and give advice to the home side. This game had far-reaching repercussions. Among the spectators was Albert Lusty, who was struck by the intrinsic merits of polo as a game, its scope if properly organized, and the keenness of his fellow M.C. and A.C. members. He then and there decided to give polo his support.

Early in 1937 a Birmingham League was formed, Mr. Lusty giving a cup and medals, and the Solihull C.C. won the first local championship. The Birmingham League is one of the best conducted in the country, and its board of referees is an example to other leagues.

So much for the past. As to the present, over 100 clubs are affiliated to the B.P.A. These represent about 170 teams: and more than 1,000 players are enjoying the game.

And now forward into the future with confidence in and zeal for the grandest branch of our splendid pastime.

## A WORD TO THE NOVICE

If you or your club are contemplating taking part in this great game a few hints will assist you. In the "good old days" any old frame, plus one or two minor adjustments, was all that was considered necessary: nowadays nothing less than a specially built polo cycle will suit the discriminating player and a first class machine can be obtained within the region of £4-15s. 0d. (or on easy terms).

One or two points to look for when choosing a new machine are:—Wheelbase must be under 40 inches and as short as you can handle, ample clearance for both front and rear wheels (if possible a ball should be able to pass between the forks and the back halves). Also ample clearance for the cranks. Do not buy a machine with a low bottom bracket, 11 inch should be the minimum; a low bracket prevents you from turning quickly when at speed. Flats or upturned handlebars are the best and usual gear is 39 inches (24 by 36 with 26 inch wheels). In practice the best crank length is 6½ inches. The saddle should be well over the rear wheel.

You are being well advised when you are told to protect your head (with a crash helmet), your hands (with batting gloves), your knees (with felted knee pads), your legs (with shin pads), and your ankles (with ankle pads or boots). It is not that bicycle polo is a dangerous game, but the fact that an unlucky blow from a ball, mallet, or a cycle may incapacitate you, whereas the protection provided by the preceding items would have saved you or at least prevented the accident from having too painful a consequence. When playing on fast, hard grounds it is advisable to wear two shirts (with long sleeves, not rolled up) and two pairs of shorts, then an unlucky tumble will not see you with too large a graze to nurse.

Now for the game. Four players line up on their respective goal lines, the ball is placed in the centre of the field and when the referee starts the game, one player from each team (starting from the left hand side of his goal) sprints straight for the ball. This process is repeated at the start of each chukka and after each goal. The game consists of six chukkas of 15 minutes each. You are allowed to change the players at the end of each chukka, but there must not be more than six players in one team.

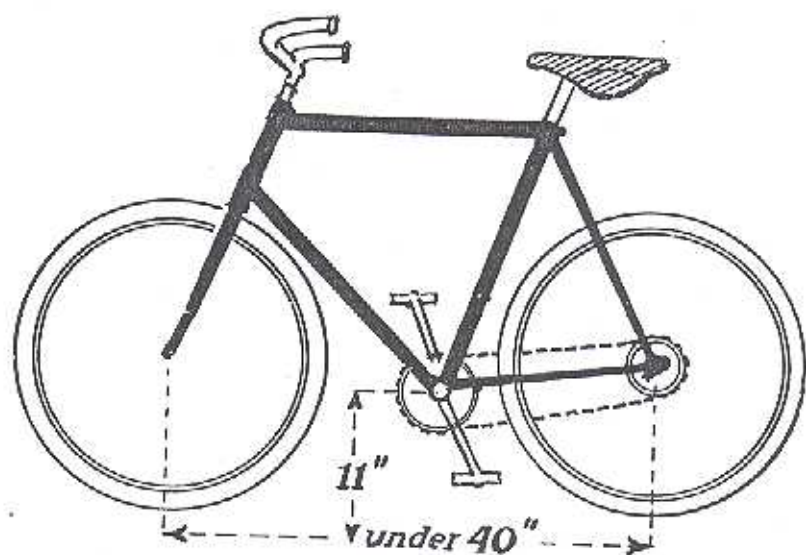
The usual positions on the field of play are:—A sure, hard hitter, as back; a player who can tackle and has a quick recovery, as half back; and two fast players as left and right forwards. For the ground, a good football pitch, as level as possible, with white bamboo poles is all that is necessary.

Bicycle polo is not expensive; complete new equipment can be obtained for £6 10s. For example:—Cycle £4 15s.; Shorts, 2s. 6d.; Shirts 4s. 6d.; Socks, 2s. 6d.; Shin pads, 1s.; Knee pads, 6s.; Batting Gloves, 3s. 6d.; and a crash hat, 6s. 6d. This equip-

ment should last you for three or four seasons, plus a new pair of wheels a season. On top of this the average cost per player per match is less than a 1s., and that includes ground fee, league fees, cost of balls, cycle storage and dressing accommodation. Averaging it all out, bicycle polo should not cost more than £2 10s. for a five months' season.

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### THE MACHINE



*GEAR ABOUT 39" (24 X 36 X 26)*  
*CRANKS 6½". HANDLEBAR ENDS CORKED*

This diagram gives a general idea of the dimensions and position of the machine usually used to-day. Adjustments are, of course, necessary to suit the individual. A slightly higher gear up to 46" is occasionally used on fast grounds, but difficulty in pulling up to make fast turns is the chief factor against a high gear.

## PLAYING RULES

1. The teams shall consist of not more than six players—four players being allowed on the field at a time. Players can only be changed at the end of each chukker.

2. The ground shall be rectangular, 100 yards by 60 yards, divided into four equal parts of 25 yards by 60 yards; the longer boundary lines to be called *side lines*, the shorter goal lines. The goals shall be in the centre of the goal lines and shall consist of two perpendicular poles 9 feet high, placed 5 yards apart. The two areas which include the goals shall be called *penalty areas*.

3. The ball shall not exceed  $3\frac{1}{2}$  inches in diameter and 4 ounces in weight.

4. The head of the mallet shall be cylindrical or "Le Gallais" in shape, and shall not be more than 7 inches in length and/or less than  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches in diameter. The mallet head shall contain no metal whatsoever. The stick must not be fitted with a wrist strap, and shall be held in the right hand.

5. The bicycle shall not carry toe-straps, brakes, wing-nuts, or similar projections. The handlebar ends shall be protected and a fixed wheel is compulsory. Disc wheels are barred.

6. A referee appointed shall take charge of the game with the assistance of two linesmen, whom he should consult in the case of a difficult decision. He shall control the game by means of a whistle. The referee's decision shall be final.

7. *Duration of Game.* The game shall last 90 minutes, divided into six chukkers of 15 minutes each, one minute rest between each chukker, except at half-time, when five minutes is allowed. A bell shall be rung at the start and finish of each chukker.

8. *Choice of Ends.* The Captains shall toss for choice of ends, which are changed over at half-time.

9. At the beginning of each chukker and after each goal scored, the referee shall place the ball in the centre of the field, the players shall line up on their respective goal lines, and at the signal from the referee, one player from each team shall sprint straight for the ball, starting from the left-hand side of the goal.

10. In the event of a member of one team stealing ground for the sprint, the opposing team shall be given a free hit from the centre line.

11. Should the ball be hit over the side lines, the linesman, with his back to the field of play, shall, at the point where the ball crossed the line, roll the ball (not throw) between his legs back into play at right angles to the side line; the players shall not be within five yards of the side line.

12. Should the ball be hit over the goal line and the last player whose stick, cycle or person it touched be of the attacking side, then a goal hit shall be taken at a point on the goal line 6 yards from the nearest post, no opposing player shall be within 25 yards

of the defending team's goal line when this hit is being taken. But should the ball before crossing the goal line last come in contact with the stick, cycle or person of a defending player, then a corner hit shall be taken by an attacker from the 25 yards mark of the side line, on the same side of the field as the ball went out of play. When this hit is taken no defending player shall be within ten yards of the ball.

13. Should the ball cross the goal line between the two goal posts a goal is awarded. In the event of a ball passing the goal line above the posts, but in the opinion of the referee within the goal area, it shall be deemed a goal.

14. In the event of a player being in an off-side position, a free hit shall be given to the opposing team. (A player is off-side when at the time of the ball being hit, he has no opponent nearer his adversaries' goal line, he is neither in possession of the ball, nor behind one of his own players who is in possession of the ball, and he is within 25 yards of his opponent's goal line).

15. A player IS allowed to :

Crook an opponent's stick.

Play over an opponent's cycle.

Ride off an opponent who is in possession of the ball.

Charge or lean on an opponent when both are riding for the ball.

Defend his own goal by placing himself across his goal posts, players attacking must avoid him.

16. A player is NOT allowed to :

Play under an opponent's cycle.

Hold an opponent.

Hold or hook an opponent's cycle.

Ride or play dangerously.

Carry the ball lodged on his cycle or person.

Hit the ball or in any way interfere with the game whilst dismounted (one foot touching the ground shall be deemed dismounted).

Throw his mallet or any other object.

17. In the event of a player or his cycle being disabled by a foul, the referee shall order the offending player off the field until the disabled player returns.

18. In the case of a scrimmage or deadlock in the play, the referee shall roll the ball in towards the centre of the field.

19. When infringements of the preceding rules occur a free hit is given against the offending team from the spot where the infringement took place. No opposing player shall be within 10 yards of the ball.

20. When rule infringements by the defending team occur within the 25 yards area, a penalty hit shall be awarded from a spot 25 yards from the centre of the goal. When this hit is taken only one player of the offending side shall defend his goal, and he shall be not more than 5 yards from his own goal line. All the other players must be behind the ball.



21. A goal hit, corner hit, free hit, or penalty hit shall consist of a direct drive.

22. No object shall be used for raising the ball above the ground for taking any hit whatsoever.

23. Any incident or question not provided for in these rules shall be decided by the referee, and his decision must on no account be challenged while the game is in progress. Referees are expressly authorised to order any player off the field who does so challenge any decision or attempt to influence him in a decision which he is about to make.

At the 1937 Annual General Meeting of the B.P.A. of G.B., the following suggestions were passed as recommendations to referees with the idea of assisting them in the interpretation of the Playing Rules :—

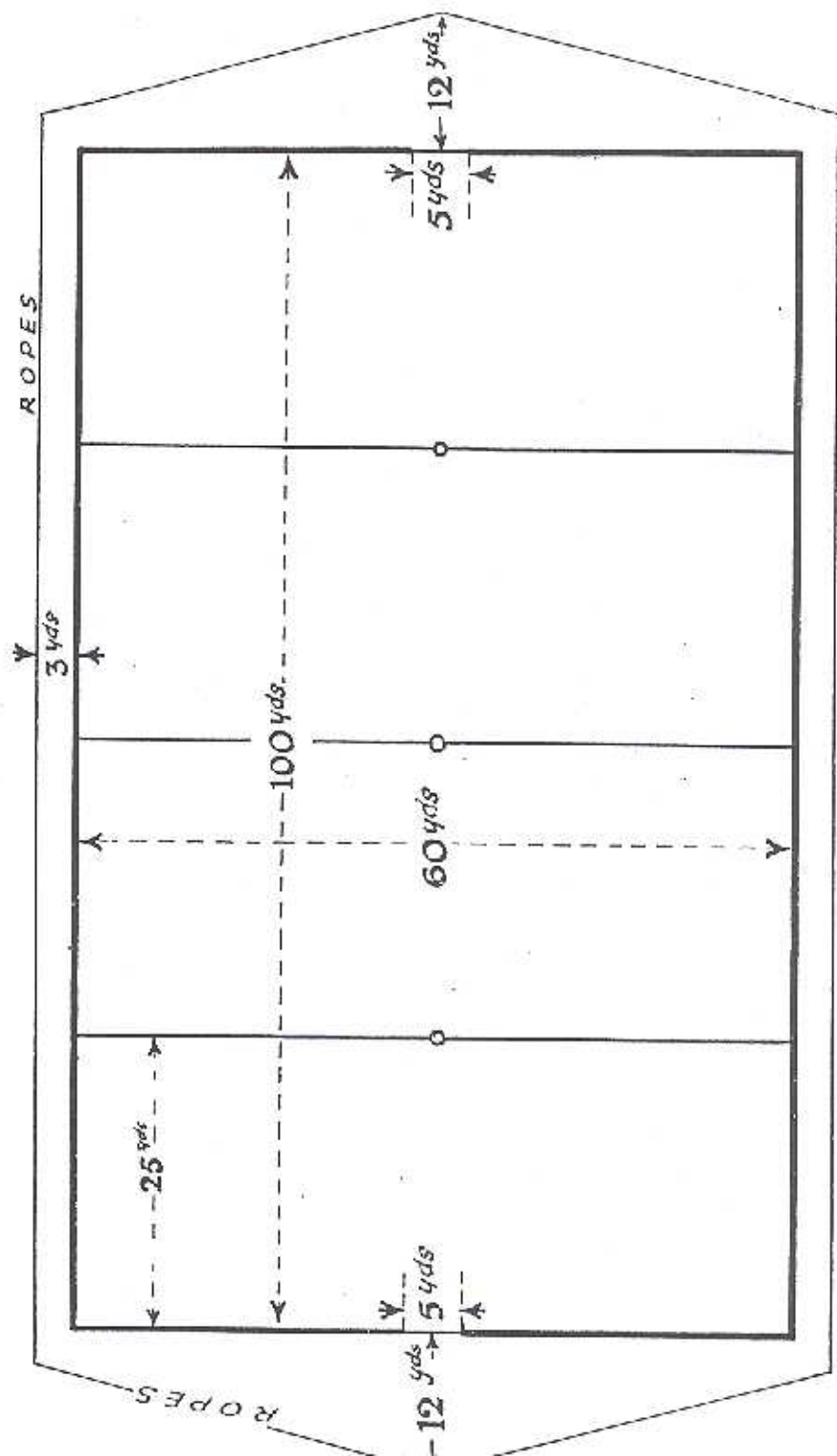
Rule 7. In the event of the ball being struck towards goal on the stroke of chukka time, the referee is recommended to delay the cessation of play until the ball has finished its course.

Rule 15. Do not forget that when a player is across his own goal-mouth, attacking players who do not avoid him should be penalised.

Rule 16. Do not forget that a player who stops the ball with his machine or person whilst having one foot touching the ground is "dismounted" and should be penalised.

Rule 19. Please note that players may take a goal, corner or free hit with cycle facing to suit himself.

Rule 19. In the event of a free hit being awarded against a defending team within their 25 yard line on the stroke of time, the game should be prolonged until such hit has been taken. This does not apply to free hits outside the 25 yard line or for corners or goal hits.



This diagram shows the dimensions of the playing area.

## LEAGUE RULES

1. Subject to any express provision contained in these articles, each League shall be constituted and its affairs carried on in accordance with Bye-Laws to be made by the General Council and shall have such powers and duties as the General Council may from time to time think fit.
2. A League shall consist of not less than six teams (unless special permission is granted by the Executive Committee) which shall be formed of registered players of duly affiliated clubs.
3. Each League shall be managed by a committee consisting of a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, Press Secretary and Representative of the Referees, who shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting of the League and one other member of each club. Seven shall form a quorum.
4. The Annual General Meeting of each League shall be held prior to the second Saturday in September and should be attended by the Committee and two other members of each team, and shall :—
  - (a) Receive the Secretary's Report and Treasurer's Financial Statement (duly audited) for the year ending on the previous 31st July.
  - (b) Elect a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Treasurer, Secretary and Press Secretary and Referees' Representatives.
  - (c) Elect two members to the General Council.
  - (d) Elect two Auditors (who need not be members of the Association).
  - (e) Elect any sub committee necessary for the good organisation of the League.
  - (f) Transact other business.

All contested elections shall be by ballot. Not less than ten days' notice shall be given to each committee member and team secretary. Ten shall form a quorum.

5. A League committee has the power to fine and/or suspend or take any disciplinary action it may deem fit against any player, referee or club. Provided always that notice of such a resolution shall be inserted in the Agenda Paper for such meeting, and that no resolution to fine or suspend shall be valid unless seven clear days' notice shall be given to such player, referee or club, that the question of fine or suspension is about to be considered by the League Committee and give such reasons against this action as he may deem fit but he shall not be entitled to be present at the voting or to take part in the proceedings (save as aforesaid) otherwise than the League Committee permit.
6. Any player, referee or club feeling aggrieved by any action or decision of a League Committee may appeal to a General Meeting of the League or to the Executive Committee of the Association.

7. All games must be played in accordance with the Rules of the Association.
8. Two points shall be awarded for a win one point for a draw, and nil for a loss.
9. The team with the greatest number of points shall be the winners. In the event of two teams tying on points for the first place or for any award a deciding game shall be played. Should more than two teams tie on points, a draw shall be made on the knock-out principle a bye being added if necessary.
10. Each player must wear his team's coloured shirt or jersey, stockings and shorts and must be a registered member of his club.
11. The Referee MUST award the points for a win to a team whose opponents are not ready to start at the scheduled time. In the event of both teams being late, neither team is to receive any points. For the purpose of this rule not less than 3 players shall constitute a team.
12. Each team is to supply three new bamboo balls per game.
13. The fixture list as published shall not be altered unless the ground or weather conditions are, in the opinion of the referee not suitable for play.
14. When a club has more than one team competing in the same league or has other teams competing in Leagues of a lower standard the Club Secretary shall notify in writing the secretaries of the Leagues concerned the personnel of each team, once this is done it is not permissible to transfer a player from a higher team to a lower team without first obtaining the League Secretary's permission. It is permissible to promote a player to a higher team without notifying the League Secretary until after he has played in that team, but once he has played with a higher team on two occasions he shall be deemed a member of that team. (Should the League Secretary not feel justified in granting the necessary permission for the transfer of a player without first consulting his committee, and it is a matter of urgency for the team in question it shall be sufficient for the transfer to take place provided that the Referees and the Captains of the opposing teams do not object but the matter shall be brought before the League Committee with the least possible delay.)
15. League Committees shall appoint competent official referees and shall compile a list of same giving their names and addresses.
16. Official Referees shall be appointed in keeping with the standards set up by the Referees' Committee, and each appointment shall be notified to that committee together with such information as they may desire so that a certificate may be granted.

## THE REFEREE

Every sportsman will agree that, to ensure constant progress and stability, any competitive team game must be efficiently controlled and the Association's determination to attain this desirable object is borne out by the functions of the referees' committee which has been formed to organise the government of the game on the field. Its members are all competent referees. No new referee is granted his certificate until he has proved his ability on the field and no referee may take control of a league or public game until he has received his certificate through the committee. This body are constantly meeting to deal with mis-interpretations and to endeavour to simplify the game from all angles. They have formed an Information Bureau to whom referees and players may apply for guidance on any problem dealing with the governing of the game. This department welcomes queries, for they help the committee in its recommendations to the association.

The appeal of any game from the spectators' point of view depends greatly on the manner in which it is conducted. The referee, in the eyes of the Association is the most important man on the field. In his hands lies not only the control of the game at the present time but its future as a national sport. He should be active, for the game is fast, able to make quick decisions and to enforce them, he must be tactful and his knowledge of the rules must be complete.

While an active player may be, or should be, conversant with the rules, he may not necessarily make a good referee, but actually very often does. The Association welcomes non-playing honorary members to take up referee appointments and would in fact like to see a great many more of these gentlemen in the field.

In addition to his obvious duties, it is part of the referee's job to see that the rules governing the layout of the playing area are carried out and only to allow modifications where they are imperative for the safety of players or spectators. He should enforce stringently those rules governing proper clothing and equipment and his own dress should be in keeping. He should see that his linesmen and goal judges are conversant with their duties before the game starts.

He should report in writing as early as possible after the game, any breaches of regulations or any slackness on the part of officials in addition to necessary reports of occurrences on the field of play. Only in this way can the Association deal with incompetence, unintentional or otherwise, which if allowed to pass may bring the game into disrepute from a national viewpoint.

## THE GOAL JUDGE AND THE LINESMEN

These officials if they function properly are almost as important as the referee, and can do much to lighten his task. They frequently are positioned so that they see an "incident" more clearly than the referee who may be temporarily unsighted. Their job does not consist merely of waving a flag to indicate the ball is out of play and rolling or placing it when recovered. They should assist the referee in the proper governing of the game reporting irregularities to him immediately they occur and be prepared to assist him in making a decision when necessary. They should, therefore, be fully conversant with the playing rules and be able and ready to make decisions particularly regarding "offside" and "corners" and to a lesser degree infringements by the players. Both should position themselves within their prescribed areas in relation to the play so that they can see what is actually happening. The goal judges should be particularly "alive" especially when the ball is "lifting" for his decision for or against a goal scored high may be vital in a close game and he is usually the only official competent to judge. Both goal judges and linesmen should however, always remember that the referee is in supreme control and his decision is final on all points arising in the course of the game while in progress.

## INFORMATION

For further information regarding any aspect of the game of Bicycle Polo application should be made to:—

GEORGE BRAKE, Esq.,  
10, Brighton Road,  
Purley,  
Surrey,

who, as Honorary Secretary of the Association, will be pleased to answer any queries, or supply literature, arrange matches, send experts to attend in an advisory capacity and give all assistance to any individual or body interested in the game.

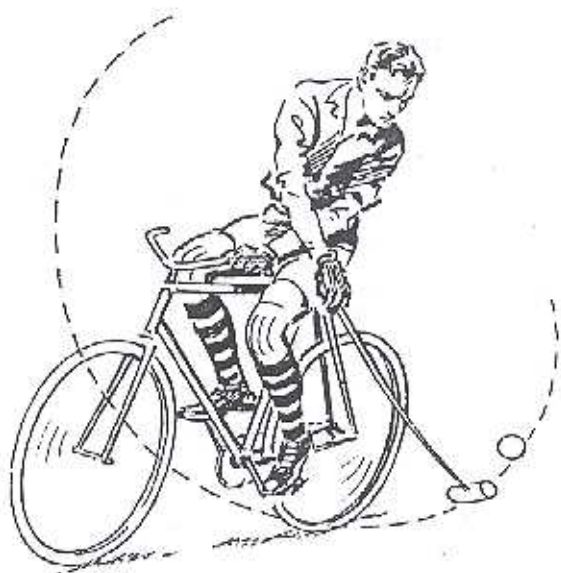


Fig. 1



Fig. 2



On the opposite page we show two useful strokes which need a good deal of practice before they can be effectively used in play.

Fig. 1 shows the method of striking the ball backwards from the left of the machine while holding an opponent off on the right. This is a defensive stroke and is seldom used when the player is crowded as he is off his balance at the time of making contact with the ball. It is, however, worth practising as it is a very useful way of clearing the ball from a dangerous position when there is not time to turn.

Fig. 2 shows a cross shot from the right of the machine, made when it is necessary to bring the ball across the field at or near a right angle and a bracket shot is impracticable. The front wheel is turned away from the path of the ball at the moment of impact by the mallet. This shot needs a great deal of practice to time properly and it is a very effective and useful stroke when mastered.

## EXHIBITION MATCHES

To bring our sport before the general public, we are always willing to supply expert teams to play at Sports meetings, Galas and other outdoor gatherings. The inclusion of these matches in past meetings has always caused a thrill to the spectators, and has gained full praise from the organising secretaries.

The following details are given as a general indication of the procedure usually adopted in making these fixtures. Forms may be had on application to the secretary.

### For the information of Sports Promoters

1. If you wish to promote a bicycle polo match this is the procedure to adopt:—

2. Fill in the enclosed form and post it together with 10s. 6d. to Mr. G. Brake, 10, Brighton Road, Purley, Surrey. No application will be considered without this fee which is returnable if the application fails. (Association Rule 50.)

3. When a permit to promote a bicycle polo match has been granted you may approach any Club affiliated to the B.P.A. of G.B. (their addresses may be found in the Association Handbook, price 6d. supplied free with the permit). These clubs may or may not expect their expenses.

4. If Expenses are to be paid application must be made to the Association Secretary stating the amount offered.

5. Payment of Expenses must be made to the Association Hon. Treasurer:—H. Leat, 26, Burmester Road, London, S.W.17, who will reimburse the teams in accordance with Association Rule 49. No payment of any kind is to be made direct to any person or official.

6. If you wish to place the entire matter in the hands of the B.P.A. we will arrange for two teams to appear for a minimum inclusive fee of £4 4s. or for four teams to appear for a minimum inclusive fee of £6 6s. These minimum quotations are intended for matches that are within a reasonable distance from league headquarters, the fee charged naturally varies with the circumstances.

7. If the B.P.A. arranges the fixture all you have to do is provide the pitch and goal posts (sometimes we can supply the goal posts as well) we will arrange for the teams, their equipment and for a referee. We will guarantee satisfaction or return any moneys paid to us.

8. If you wish to arrange for a Referee get in touch with the Hon. Secretary of the Referees' Committee.

9. Bicycle Polo is played on a pitch 100 yards by 60 yards. The pitch should be level and the grass cut reasonably short.

10. The goal posts should be thin bamboo poles 9 feet long and they should be placed five yards apart.

11. It is advisable when the match is to be watched by a large crowd for the pitch to be roped off, 3 yards from the side lines and 12 yards from the goal lines.

12. A Bicycle Polo Match can last from 20 minutes to 90 minutes, just as you desire to suit your programme.

13. If you wish two teams to play more than one match, the complete playing period should not be more than 2 hours.

14. If four teams are playing, a Knock Out Tournament can be arranged consisting of two semi-finals, a match for third place between the two losing semi-finalists, and the Final. The longest period should be four matches of 60 minutes each.

15. Bicycle Polo does not cut up the turf and it can be played wet or fine.

## **Bicycle Polo Association of Gt. Britain**

### **FORM OF APPLICATION FOR THE PROMOTION OF MATCHES**

**Application for a licence to promote a Bicycle Polo Match in Accordance with Association Rule 50**

The.....  
desire to promote a Bicycle Polo Match under B.P.A. of G.B. rules, and if permission is granted agrees to carry out the rules and regulations of the Association in accordance with the current issue of the handbook.

Signed.....

Address .....

.....

.....

Telephone Numbers.....

We wish the match to take place at :—

.....

.....

on.....starting at.....

We are making our own arrangements respecting the teams, etc.

We would like the B.P.A. to quote for the complete arrangements for two teams to give an Exhibition Match or Matches.

We would like the B.P.A. to quote for the complete arrangements for four teams to play a knock-out tournament.

(Strike out the paragraphs which are not applicable). ✓

We enclose herewith a cheque/postal order/money order for 10s. 6d.

This form is to be posted to George Brake, 10, Brighton Road, Purley, Surrey.

## NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP WINNERS

### Winners.

1931 Tooting B.C.  
1932 Tooting B.C.  
1933 Norwood Paragon  
1934 Norwood Paragon  
1935 Norwood Paragon  
1936 Norwood Paragon  
1937 Norwood Paragon  
1938 Norwood Paragon

### Runners-up.

London B.P.C.  
Norwood Paragon.  
Tooting B.C.  
Tooting B.C.  
Tooting B.C.  
Imperial Wheelers.  
Tooting B.C.  
Exiles B.P.C.

## INTERNATIONAL TROPHY WINNERS

1938 England

