



**Sport**  
Rules  
**ver.6.3**

**Fédération Internationale de Horse-Ball**

The Sport Rules (SR) have been reviewed and approved by the International Federation of Horse-Ball (FIHB).

These rules are available in different languages on the FIHB Website: <http://www.fihb-horseball.org>

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## **FOREWORD**

Horse-ball is played between-two teams of six players who must pick up a ball from the ground without dismounting, and using a game of attack and defence attempt to score in goals at each end of a pitch.

The speed and vigour of the game requires the players to have a complete knowledge and understanding of the rules and to adhere to them strictly at all times.

Above all it must always be remembered that good sportsmanship is the foundation stone on which the game of horse-ball is built and that the safety of both horses and riders is paramount.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Any person taking part in a horse-ball match is expected to be fully conversant with the General Rules (GR), the Sport Rules (SR), the Competition Rules (CR) and their respective amendments and to accept unreservedly the contents, spirit and effect of these rules. Any person taking part to a FIHB event must be licensed by their relevant National Federation (NF) and be in possession of the FIHB rider inscription fee for the relevant year.

The Rules that follow regulate the game played on horses. For playing the game on Ponies some rules are amended as set out in Annex A.

Changes may be made to the rules during the course of the season. All National Horse-Ball committees (ONHB) will be informed in writing of any changes and the dates from which they come into effect by the International Federation of Horse-Ball (FIHB).

Each country can bring to these rules the modifications that they retain necessary for the horse-ball development in their own country.

# SPORT RULES

## 1) THE PITCH

### a) *Size*

The pitch is rectangular, with the following dimensions (excluding security zones):

- Length:     Maximum     75 m  
                  Minimum     60 m
- Width:       Maximum     30 m  
                  Minimum     20 m
- Ideal dimensions:           65 m x 25 m

In any descriptions that follow, the term 'side' will be used to indicate the long side of the pitch, and the term 'end' will be used to indicate the short side of the pitch.

### b) *Surface*

The pitch must be level and the surface soft, even, and non-slip in order to provide a safe and secure footing for the horses.

Pitches may be indoors or outdoors. If the pitch is outdoors it must be well drained in order that it remains playable in wet weather.

### c) *Security Zone*

Bordering the pitch along each side is a security zone. This is an area between 3 m and 5 m wide along the length of each side of the pitch where the team trainer and grooms may sit and where the substitutes must wait.

Outdoor pitches are preferred. The FIHB can authorise official meetings to take place indoors. If there is insufficient space for a security zone, the pitch should take the form of a manege with kicking boards along the sides (for the safety of horse and rider). In this case, space for the substitutes may be set aside elsewhere provided that there is quick and easy access to the pitch.

### d) Borders

The ends of the pitch must be made impassable using a barrier at least 1 m 60 high.

The boundary at each end of the pitch should be extended on each side to mark the end of the security zone and should have a minimum height of 1 m 20.

There is to be a net behind each goal in order to prevent the ball from going out of play. This net should be 4 m 50 high and should extend at least 5 m on each side of the goal.

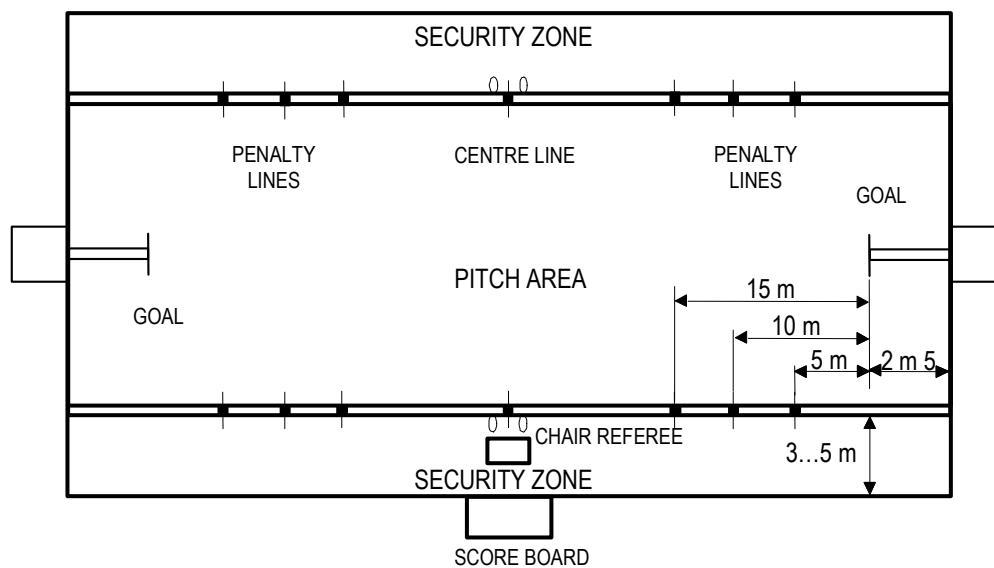
The borders between the pitch and the security zone must be marked in a safe manner and must be passable along their entire length. A raised border of some kind is preferred in order to prevent the ball rolling out of play.

All borders must be safe for both horses and riders. The barriers themselves are part of the playing area of the pitch.

### e) Pitch Markings

Along each side of the pitch flags or cones or other suitable marker will be used to indicate:

- the centre line;
- the 5 m, the 10 m and the 15 m penalty lines measured in each case from the goal;
- there will also be indicators 0.5 m from each side of the centre line.



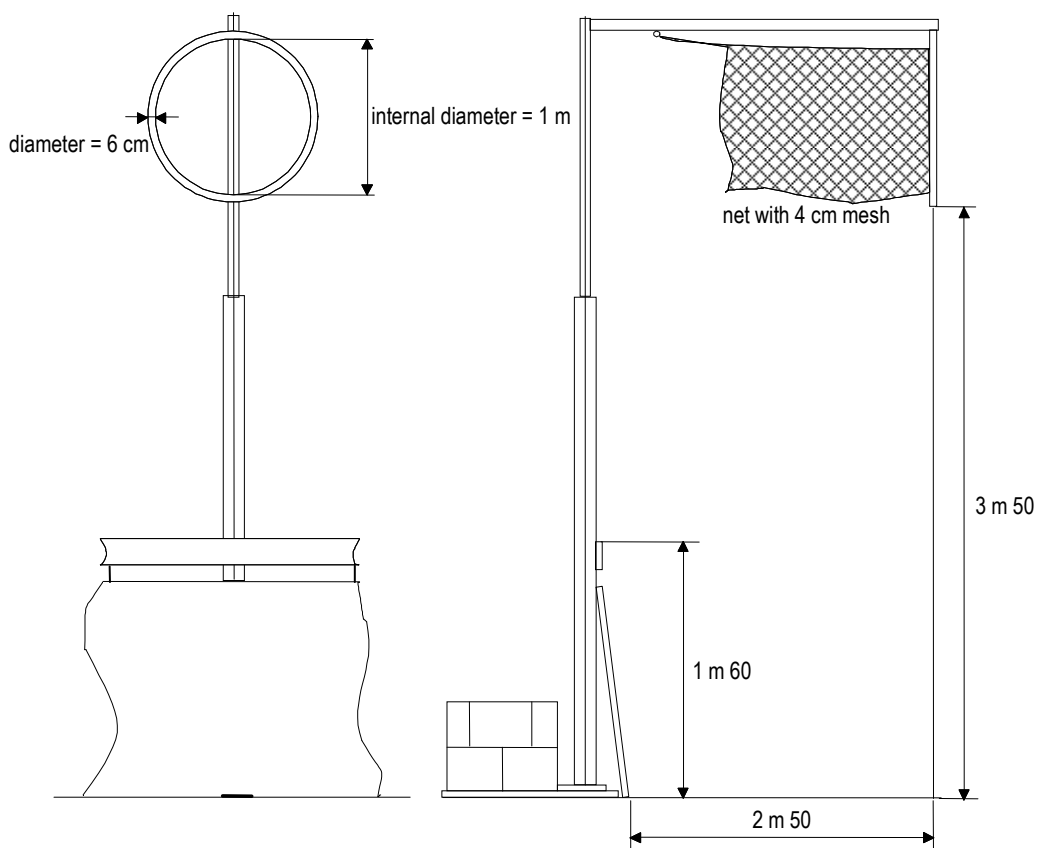
0 0 line out indicators (0.5 m from each side of the centre line)

## 2) THE GOALS

There are two goals one positioned at the centre of each end of the pitch.

The goals are circular with an internal diameter of 1 m and made from a material with a thickness of 6 cm. They are mounted vertically 2 m 50 from the end of the pitch with the base of the goal 3 m 50 from the ground. The goals should be painted white, with a white net (4 cm mesh).

They may either be suspended or mounted on a frame. In the latter case, the base of the frame must not infringe the playing area.



### **3) THE BALL**

The ball is a light-coloured junior (size 4) football surrounded by a harness to which six leather handles are attached.

• Ball size	n.4
• Circumference of ball	65 cm
• Length of handles (note 1)	31 cm
• Width of handles	2 cm
• Distance between fixing points of a single handle	20 cm
• Thickness of handles	6÷8 mm
• Total weight	600÷700 g

Note 1: length of the handles measured as the length of the leather without taking into account the stitching.



### **4) TEAMS**

#### **a) *General***

A team is made up of six horses and six players. Only 4 players from each team are allowed on the pitch at any one time. A team can play with only three players but no less than that number. Substitutes must remain within the security zone until a substitution is made or in the zone designated by the official appointed for the indoor pitch.

#### **b) *Substitutions***

Substitutions may only be made when:

- there is a break in play (such as when a goal has been scored or when the ball has gone out of play);
- during a time-out called by a team, or the referee.

There is no limit to the number of substitutions that may be made.

The substituted player can only come onto the pitch from the half of the pitch, which the player's team is defending. Under no circumstances should there be more than four players on the pitch otherwise the team will be penalized with a technical foul.

### **c) Team Captains**

Each team must have a team captain easily identified with a colour arm-band. The captain is the representative of the team. He directs and controls his/her team's game. He is the only player who may address the referee. The captain is entitled to discuss the interpretation of the rules with the referee and ask for basic information regarding the state of the game; he must address the referee with courtesy.

Before leaving the pitch, the captain must transmit the arm-band to another player who stay on the pitch. This player assume captain responsibilities until the captain came back.

## **5) PLAYERS**

### **a) Licences**

Players playing in a competition organised by or for the FIHB must be members of their own ONHB. All players must comply with the GRs especially Chapter III, VI. Minimum age of players participating in an official competition in the Horse category is 16 years old, the age that he/she reaches in the calendar year.

### **b) Equipment**

Riders must:

- wear riding hats conforming to the current appropriate European standard. Chin straps must be done up at all times;
- wear correct riding footwear: one-piece long boots; half chaps made of glazed leather are also permitted, provided they correspond optically to one-piece boots (e.g. unicolor);
- wear the same uniform for players of their team. Players are numbered 1 to 15 with each rider wearing a number on the back (20 cm) and on the chest (10 cm). Players may not change numbers during a game;
- spurs may be worn but star spurs, dangerous or that can injury are forbidden. Adhesive tape may not be used to secure spurs to boots. Spurs must be fitted correctly and must not exceed 3 cm (maximum). Spurs that have caused injury to a horse cause the withdraw of the pair until the end of the game;
- whips may not be carried during the game but is allowed in the separate warm up arena;
- players are recommended to wear back and knee pads (soft only materials) protectors;
- players may not wear jewellery or watches. Rings may be worn provided that either gloves are worn or the rings are taped over in order to make them safe.

Shirts with black and white vertical stripes (5 cm) are reserved for referees.

Any sponsorship showing on the horse or rider must be conform to the regulations of the ONHB of the country in which the event takes place.

### **c) Players Protection**

For any injury to a player that causes bleeding, the player should leave the pitch and will return only after the doctor or paramedic so advises, after the injury has been protected and the bleeding was stopped.

## **6) HORSES**

### **a) *General***

There are maximums of six horses per team of which four can be on the pitch at any one time.

Each horse can only participate in one match a day. A horse can participate in two matches a day provided that the length of each half of the match is less than 8 minutes.

Each horse in the team must be at least 5 years of age and have valid identification and vaccination certificates.

Horses entered on the match sheet can be mounted during the warm up and during the game by other riders, the coach or the grooms in correct riding equipment.

A horse who voluntarily leaves the official playing area can not take any further part in the match.

### **b) *Tack***

Horses, including referees horses, are subject to the following conditions:

- subject to the prohibition of Fulmer bits, there is no restriction on the choice of bit providing that it is of a type acceptable to the FIHB. Bit less bridles are acceptable provided that they are correctly fitted and correctly used. The referee can insist that any bit that has injured a horse shall be removed and replaced;
- standing martingales (either rigid or elastic) are compulsory for all competitions;
- protection on all four legs (bandages or boots) is compulsory;
- the use of overreach boots is compulsory. If any over-reach boot or boots is lost the referee can send the player off. No substitution can take place until there is a break in play;
- there is no restriction on the choice of saddle except "Camarguaise", western style and racing saddle;
- the use of pick up strap is compulsory for all players in all categories; pick up straps should run through the loop on the martingale under the horse's belly, i.e., they should not hang unrestricted;
- blinkers are not permitted;
- studs (either fixed or removable) are permitted only on grass and after agreement with the supervisor;
- all tack used must be safe, be in good condition, and be correctly fitting and correctly fastened. If any article of tack breaks it must be replaced immediately: no substitution can take place until there is a break in play.

## **7) TRAINERS AND GROOMS**

Each team is permitted one groom per horse and one trainer in the security zone provided that they each wear a uniform in the colour of their team.

Trainers and grooms may not address the referee, other than the trainer to request a timeout. If they do they can receive a technical foul, a yellow or red card or to be excluded.

Except during time-outs or during the half time interval trainers and grooms may not leave the seats provided for them otherwise they may face exclusion. They may not enter the chair referee's zone that is 5 m to either side of and to the rear of the chair. Non observance of this rule is a technical foul.

## **8) OFFICIALS**

### **a) *Supervisor and Ground Jury***

The supervisor is nominated by the FIHB. The Ground Jury (GJ) is composed of three people from three different countries. The president of the GJ is the supervisor.

The GJ chooses the referees for matches. It ensures that all competitions run smoothly and it can determine disputes concerning interpretation of the rules.

The supervisor may not however, interfere with the refereeing during a match.

He can ask the referee to stop a match. He can remove a horse or a player after taking advice from the veterinary or a doctor as appropriate.

The GJ:

- presides over team leader meetings;
- presides over the draw of teams when requested;
- presides over the veterinary inspection;
- establishes that the pitch is playable;
- calls the disciplinary committee if appropriate;
- receives complaints;
- controls the horses identification, papers, etc;
- controls licences.

### **b) *Referees***

Two referees, one on the pitch (on horseback) and one on the sideline (seated) control each match.

The chair referee sits in a central position in the security zone and if possible in the opposite side of the pitch where stand substitutes, grooms and trainers, preferably on a raised chair or platform.

During the match the chair referee will signal to the referee on horseback any infringements of the rules using a method agreed between them (such as a flag or two-way radio).

At any time during a match the mounted referee may call additional time-outs (which will not be charged to either team) to consult the chair referee.

In all cases the decision of the mounted referee takes precedence and is final. He may interfere when he wishes to make sure that rules and spirit are respected.

For any official competition, the FIHB nominates referees directly or through the each country's ONHB.

All referees should have a competition license or other appropriate authority of their ONHB, valid for the current year. All referees must be covered by insurance for civil responsibility when he is acting as referee.

Only the captain of each team may address the referee during the game. The Trainer may request a timeout.

Referees must make sure that rules are respected, followed and enforced. Before the game starts, referees must check all players equipment and their own and their assistants.

The referees are empowered to make any decision concerning any infringements of the rules either on or off the pitch from the time of their arrival (which is to be at least 30 minutes before the start of the match) until the game sheet has been signed (by both referees and captains) after the match.

Horses for the referee can be provided by the event organiser or brought by the referee. This decision is taken by the event organiser.

Referees' horses must be presented to the veterinary surgeon.

### ***c) The Veterinary Surgeon***

The vet stands on the same side as the chair referee.

The vet is there to look after the welfare of the horses and can ask the supervisor to stop the game if a horse is injured.

He explains the reasons of his intervention to the supervisor in order to stop the game if the well being of any horse is in doubt.

Any horse taken off by the vet cannot resume play until the vet so confirms.

# RULES OF PLAY

## **9) DURATION OF MATCHES**

### **a) *General***

A match consists of two halves, each of 10 minutes duration or less if stated by the Competition Rules, separated by a half-time period of 3 minutes.

An official timekeeper controls the game-clock.

In the case where a team must play more than one match in a day the organisers may reduce the length of each half. In this case horses can be authorised to play two matches within the same day. This decision will be taken by the Ground Jury who can be advised by the vet.

### **b) *Breaks in Play***

Breaks in play may occur automatically or on referee decisions for a number of reasons such as:

- when a goal has been scored;
- the ball has gone out of play outside the long side;
- a foul has been committed.

The game clock will not be stopped as a result of these breaks.

The game clock will be stopped as a result of the following breaks:

- in case of Penalty n.1 and Penalty n.2;
- in case of between-two;
- the ball has gone out of play on the short side.

The game clock will be re-started when the referee blow his whistle to re-start the game.

### **c) *Time Outs***

Each team may request one 30 second time-out in each half. A time-out may only be requested during a break in play.

The team captain or the trainer may ask the referee for the time-out. The timekeeper will stop the game clock.

Any time out not called cannot be carried forward. The timekeeper will signal the end of the time-out period. The game clock will be re-started when the referee gives the signal for the game to re-start.

The referee may call additional time-outs which will not be charged to either team. This time-out may be of any length. There is no limit to the number of time-outs a referee may take during a match. Only the referee or the supervisor can order the timekeeper to stop the game clock.

The game clock will be stopped for the duration of a time-out.

## **10) START AND END OF PLAY**

### **a) General**

The team who will pick up first is decided on the toss of a coin. The team winning the toss may either decide:

- who will pick up first (the starting team);
- which end they will defend.

If the team winning the toss chooses who will pick up first the other team may decide which end to defend. If the team winning the toss chooses which end to defend the other team will pick up first.

Each team must present a regulation ball to the referee who will choose which to use. The other ball is given for the game period to the chair referee.

On coming onto the pitch before the start of the game the teams must remain in their respective halves of the pitch.

The teams will change ends at the end of the first half of the match.

At the start of the second half the other team will attempt to pick up first.

### **b) At the Start of Each Half**

At the start of each half, the referee places the ball on the centre of the 10 m penalty line of the team which is to pick up first. Members of the picking up team can be in front of their 10 m line and up to their side of the half way line, facing the goal they are attacking, but any player of the picking up team in front of the 10 m line i.e. between the 10 m line and the half way line cannot attempt to pick up the ball. All players of the picking up team who are to attempt to pick up the ball shall be the goal side of their 10 m line. The other team must all be to their side of the centre line facing their own goal.

If a team doesn't provide a valid regulation ball, the two first pick ups are given to the opposing team.

On the referee's signal, the players of the picking up team attempt to pick up the ball at a canter. The game clock will be started when the referee gives the signal for the match to start. The referee will only signal the games to start when all players are stationary.

If the first pick up is not made at the canter or if those members of the picking up team eligible to attempt to pick up the ball as set out above misses the ball or crosses the 10 m line, or if any player not eligible to attempt to pick up the ball attempts to pick it up, the referee will award a Penalty n.3 to the defending team to be taken at the centre of the pitch.

The players of the defending team must remain in their own half of the pitch until either:

- one of the members of the picking up team crosses the centre line, or
- the ball carrier, once travelling towards the opponents goal turns back towards his/her own goal, or
- the ball falls to the ground.

A Penalty n.2 will be awarded to the picking up team if this rule is broken.

### **c) At the End of Each Half**

The timekeeper will signal the end of each half by a 3-second signal on the horn or buzzer. If this horn does not work for any reason, the chair referee will whistle the end of the half.

If a shot from open play is attempted at the end of a half, the goal will only be allowed provided that the ball left the thrower's hands before the start of the signal to end the half.

If a Penalty n.1 or Penalty n.2 has been awarded at the end of a half, only a direct shot can be made. The direct shot cannot be defended.

**The half definitively stops when the referee blows the whistle three times.**

### **d) The score**

The team scoring the most goals wins the match.

A goal is only valid if the entire ball passes through the circle of the goal (assuming no rules have been broken).

If the goal is invalid, but the ball remains in play, the game will continue, with the normal rules of priority of pick up applying.

If a player shoots and scores in his/her own goal, a goal will be awarded to the opposing team. The three pass rule will not apply to an own goal.

In league competitions the following points will be awarded:

- match won = 3 points
- match drawn = 2 points
- match lost = 1 point
- match forfeit = 0 points. In addition 8 points will be deducted from the goal difference of the team forfeiting the match, and 8 points added to the goal difference of the opposing team.

In the event of teams finishing on equal points, they are separated using the following formula:

- goal difference taking into account only the matches played between the teams finishing on equal points;
- the team, within the same competition, who won against the other team;
- most goals for;
- least goals against;
- most matches won;
- least matches lost;
- lowest number of yellow or red cards (1 red card = 2 yellow cards) and/or Penalty n.1s;
- lowest total age of the team;
- toss of a coin.

If the competition requires a winner and a match is drawn then a period of 'sudden death' extra time will be played.

The sudden death period starts immediately after 2 minutes break from the end of the second half; the referee will call a between-two on the centre line to start the sudden death period. Each period of sudden death should be 5 minutes long. After each period of sudden death there will be a break of 2 minutes. Play will then restart with a between-two on the centre line.

The first team to score wins the match.

### ***e) Abandoned Matches***

- in the case of a major incident the referee may decide to abandon the match. In this case, if  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the game time has elapsed the result will stand. If less than  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the game time has elapsed and the match cannot be restarted within 30 minutes of the stoppage the match must be replayed;
- a team may decide to concede a match at any point. In this case the team which concedes loses the match. All goals scored by players will be credited to them. The goal difference of the forfeit is applied unless it would be improved as a result of the goals scored in the match up to that point. In this case the goal difference of both teams is adjusted accordingly.

### ***f) Forfeit***

A team which is not ready for the veterinary check or to start playing at the scheduled time forfeits the match.

The supervisor committee however can allow the match if the referees, the opposing team captain and the event organisers agree but this can be allowed only if this decision is taken at least one hour before the official start time of the match.

Definite entry to international competition means the team is obliged to participate. In case of forfeit the FIHB will take relative sanctions.

## **11) PASSING**

A pass is the interval between the ball leaving the hands of one player and being touched by a second player of the same team.

Handing the ball to another player does not constitute a pass.

There must be three passes between three different players of the same team before a goal can be allowed. If the ball is dropped or it is intercepted the three-pass count starts again. Touching or deflection of the ball by the opposing team is not loss of possession.

The ball can be passed either with one or two hands.

Any touch of the ball between two players of the same team is considered a pass.

A player may not hold the ball for longer than 10 seconds before passing otherwise a Penalty n.3 will be awarded to the opposing team at the point where the 10-second period ended.

## 12) BALL OUT OF PLAY

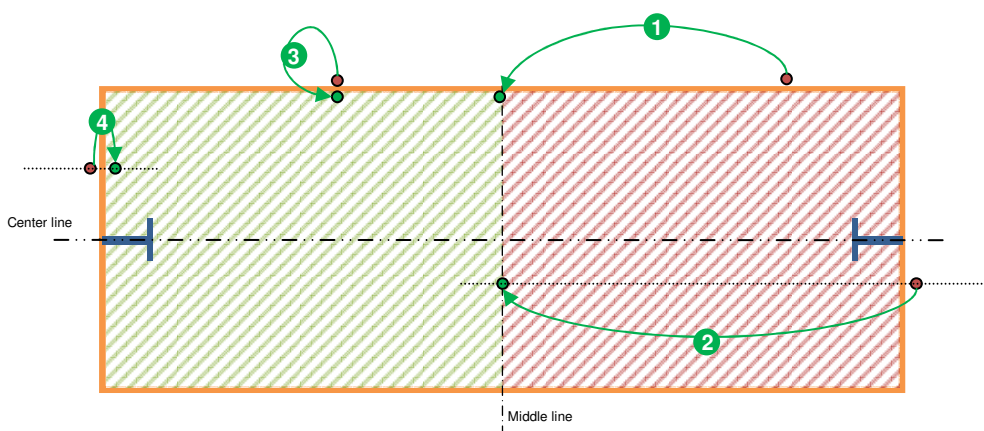
The ball is considered to have gone out of play when the ball has fallen to the ground over the pitch limits or the horse of the player carrying the ball goes out of bounds, i.e., at least one foot goes out of bounds or if the ball goes out from the short sides.

Play is re-started by a Penalty n.3 awarded against the team who last had possession. The Penalty n.3 is taken at the point where the ball went out of play.

The clock-game must be stopped when the ball goes out of play on the short sides (goal sides). The official timekeeper will restart the game-clock when the referee engages the game on the Penalty n.3.

### Note:

On these examples the ball is carried by the red team on each situation. Right side of the pitch is red team one. Left side is Green team part of the pitch.



① If the ball goes out of play on the Red team side, the Penalty n.3 starts for Green team from the Middle line of the pitch along the pitch limit.

② If the ball goes out of play behind the Red team goal, the penalty n.3 starts for Green team from the middle line of the pitch but on the same level.

③ If the ball goes out of play on the Green team side, the Penalty n.3 starts at the same place where the ball went out of play for Green team.

④ If the ball goes out of play behind the Green team goal, the Penalty n.3 starts at the end of the pitch at the same place where the ball went out of play for Green team.

## 13) LINE-OUT

### a) General

A line-out will be awarded as a result of a goal being scored. In this case the ball is thrown in by a member of the team conceding the goal.

One or two players from each team line up in two parallel lines facing the touch line. The two lines of players should be separated by a distance of 1 m. The first row of players must be at least 7 m from the side of the pitch.

The thrower stands at the side of the pitch with the ball in line with the centre line. The players must all face the thrower.

The throw-in does not count as a pass (i.e. there must be three subsequent passes before a goal may be scored).

The remaining players of each team must be at least 5 m down field from the players on the line, on their respective sides of the pitch, until the throw has been taken and may only play the ball after it has been caught or deflected by a player in the line-out.

The thrower must wait for the referee's signal before throwing in the ball and must take the throw-in within 3 seconds of the whistle. The ball must be thrown along the centre line and must be at least stirrup height of the first row of players and must not go over the second row of players without being touched.

Before the referee's signal:

- players must remain in line, stationary or moving without coming closer than 7 m to the side of the pitch;
- players must all face the thrower.

After the whistle is blown:

- players may leave the line provided that no foul is committed against a player who does not have the ball;
- players cannot turn more than 45° in the first line;
- players in the second line are allowed to turn 180° but rotating only toward their side of the pitch;
- defending players cannot come into contact with the thrower.

If either team causes an unnecessary delay of the game at a line-out or is slow coming to the line out, the referee will award a Penalty n.3 to the other team at the point where the line-out was to be taken.

The referee will allow the throw-in to be taken as soon as the thrower is ready, and one player from the thrower's team has taken up position on the line.

### ***b) Invalid Line-Out***

A line-out is invalid if:

- the ball is thrown out of the line out;
- the player comes closer than 7 m from the side of the pitch before the whistle is blown;
- the ball does not reach the first row of horses at stirrup height;
- the ball falls to the ground behind the second row of horses without being touched;
- the ball touches the building;
- the thrower pretends to throw the ball but does not.

In these cases the referee will award a Penalty n.3 against the team which caused the invalid lineout. The Penalty n.3 will start from the centre of the pitch.

If the throw in is not straight or is deliberately to the advantage of the thrower's team, a lineout will be awarded to the opposing team. If the retaken lineout is also not straight, the referee will call for a between-two at the same point.

### ***c) Priority of Pick up Following a Line-Out***

In the case where the lineout is valid but the ball falls to the ground, the priority of pick up is as follows:

- if the ball falls to the ground between the players, the players in the lineout may attempt to pick up the ball, with the normal rules of priority of pick up applying. If no player in the lineout picks up the ball, the referee will call a between-two;
- if the ball is deflected to one side or the other of the lineout, priority goes to the players on whose side the ball has landed. This advantage is lost if:
  - there is no immediate attempt to pick up the ball;
  - after the first pick up attempt (whether successful or not).

Line of play is determined by Rule 15.

## **14) BETWEEN-TWO**

A between-two will be called either as a result of:

- a re-taken line-out being invalid;
- a fault which does not benefit or hinder either team.

A between-two is a lineout thrown by the referee and with only one player of each team. The referee stands at the side of the pitch at a point perpendicular to the place where the cause of the between-two occurred. Both players' stands side by side in front of the referee at a distance of 5 m from the referee. The players should be separated by a distance of 1 m. The referee throws the ball between the two players after he blows the whistle. There is no restriction on how the referee may throw the ball.

The remaining players of each team must be at least 5 m down field from the players on the line, on their respective sides of the pitch, until the throw has been taken and may only play the ball after it has been caught or deflected by a player in the between-two.

In the case where a between-two is called at a point beyond (i.e. goal side of) the 15 m line, the lineout will be taken on the 15 m line.

A between-two will be re-taken if the referee believes that he or she has inadvertently given advantage to one of the teams or if neither player lined up in front of the referee touches the ball. There is no limit in numbers of throws.

The time must be stopped when the referee award a between-two. And it must be re-started when the referee blow his whistle to re-start the game.

All rules relating to the lineout apply to the "between-two".

## **15) PICKING UP THE BALL**

### ***a) General***

The ball must be picked up without dismounting. The ball may be picked up with the horse moving at any gait. The ball may not be picked up while the horse is stationary. Such action will be penalised by a Penalty n.3.

The player picking up the ball must do so quickly. If the player fails to pick it up the player must not slow down but must move quickly away from the ball to a distance of at least 5 m. The 5 m pick up zone must be avoided by players not involved in the pick up.

Players within 5 m of the ball may not change direction but must continue moving in a straight line away from the ball without slowing down until they are at least 5 m from the ball. A player who slows down or makes any attempt to change direction within 5 m of the ball will be penalised by a Penalty n.3.

Once the ball has been picked up the player must immediately either return to a normal riding position or passes the ball.

Players may not interfere with the player who has picked up the ball in any way until the player has resumed a normal riding position. Any interference before a normal riding position has been reached will result in a Penalty n.1, a warning/yellow card or red card at the referees' discretion.

**It is forbidden to tackle or to intimidate in any way a player who is attempting to pick up the ball, including forcing the player to change direction. Such action will be penalised by a Penalty n.1 with a warning, a yellow card or a red card at the referee's discretion.**

If it is impossible to pick up the ball whilst moving in one of the four corners of the pitch, then the referee will give a between-two at the 15 m line.

In all other cases where the ball is unplayable, the referee will give a between-two at the side of the pitch at a point perpendicular to the place where the cause occurred.

### ***b) Line of Play***

At any one instant one player is given priority to pick up the ball without interference.

The priority of pick up is determined by the line of play. This is an imaginary line passing through the ball parallel to the sides of the pitch.

In the case where the ball is behind the line of the goal (i.e. within 2 m 50 of the end of the pitch), the line of play runs parallel to the end of the pitch.

### ***c) Priority to Pick up***

For players who are within 5 m of the ball the player who has priority is determined by the following:

- the player who is closest to the ball provided that the player does not hinder his opponents;
- if two or more players are at equal distance from the ball priority goes to the player travelling closest to the line of play;
- if two or more players are at equal distance from the ball on the line of play but face to face, priority goes to the player whose team touched the ball last;
- if in the lineout the ball drops or is hit to one side the priority **direction** is set by the player (having priority as set out in Rule 13(c)) who tries to pick the ball up first.

## **16) SAFETY**

Safety has precedence on priority.

A player whether carrying the ball or not should control the speed and the direction of his own horse. In the case a player not having control of his horse, the referee may ask the player to remove the horse from the pitch.

The player in possession of the ball must observe all safety rules in selecting his path of movement, in particular he must observe all the tackling rules and avoid contact at an angle of greater than 45° to the defending player's direction of movement: such action will be penalised by a Penalty n1 or Penalty n.2 according to the severity of the offence.

## **17) TACKLING**

### ***a) Physical Tackling***

This is the action of bringing one's horse into contact with the ball carrier's horse in order to slow it down or put it off course and to take the ball. A tackle can be effected by one or more players but only one player can take the ball.

It is forbidden to tackle a player at an angle of greater than 45° to that player's direction of movement. Such action will be penalised by a Penalty n.1 or Penalty n.2 according to the severity of the offence.

It is forbidden to tackle a player by pushing him anywhere or using the horse to hit the player. A player can only tackle a player using the weight of his body and speed of his horse with the shoulder if the arm is against the body.

It is forbidden:

- to restrain a player;
- to push or restrain with the hands;
- to punch with a fist, the forearm, the elbow or head butt.

It is forbidden to stand across the line of play of an opponent whether or not that player is carrying the ball. Such action will be penalised by a Penalty n.2.

### ***b) Marking***

It is forbidden to tackle a player that is not carrying the ball. Such action will be penalised by a Penalty.

However, there are no restrictions on following the movements of a player not carrying the ball provided that the player's freedom of movement is not hindered.

### ***c) Seizing the Ball from an Opponent***

A player may attempt to seize the ball from the player who is carrying the ball, but may do so with one hand only.

Once an opposing player has seized the ball, the ball carrier may not transfer the ball to his other hand or attempt to hold the ball with both hands. Having seized the ball the player must regain his/her seat quickly. It is not permitted to hold the player or the horse or the tack.

If either player loses their seat in the saddle during the struggle he or she must release the ball immediately.

If any of the above rules is violated, a Penalty n.3 will be awarded against the offending team at the point where the offence occurred.

During the struggle for possession, no other player may interfere.

If the player who had possession before the struggle for the ball took place retains possession, the number of passes made by that team remains the same, and the player may continue to hold the ball for a further 10 seconds before passing.

### ***d) Inconclusive Wrestling for the Ball***

Where a player has possession of the ball and is tackled by another player from the opposing team and there is a struggle for possession of the ball in circumstances in which it is not clear which player will achieve possession, the referee will award a Penalty n.3 to the team of the player who made the attack on the player with possession of the ball i.e. against the team who had possession of the ball. The normal rules applicable to the Penalty n.3 shall apply.

## **18) LEAVING THE PITCH**

### ***a) Involuntary***

A player who leaves the pitch due to the action during play can return.

### ***b) Voluntary***

A player who leaves the pitch (to repair tack or to tend an injury) must dismount. He or the reserve can only return in a break of play and from his own half.

## **19) PENALTIES**

### **a) General**

The referee may award penalties against a team which infringes the rules. There are three kinds of penalty which may be given according to the nature and severity of an offence and can be accompanied by a red card or a yellow card depending on the severity of the offence.

In all cases one player from the offended team (which need not be the player offended against) takes the penalty.

For Penalty n.1 and n.2, the other players of the offended team (i.e. the team taking the penalty) must remain behind the carrier of the ball until the penalty is taken and the penalty may be taken when the referee gives the signal.

If the referee sees a foul he may signal to continue play and allow a short period of time to elapse to determine whether an advantage develops. If no advantage ensues he can award the penalty and return to the point of the offence.

The time must be stopped when the referee award a penalty n.1 or n.2. And it must be restarted when the referee blow his whistle to start the game.

### **b) Penalty n.1**

A Penalty n.1 is awarded as a result of a serious or unacceptable infringement such as rough or dangerous play, or insulting the referee and interfering with the pick up or if the foul prevents a shot at goal.

A player from the offended team stands behind the 5 m penalty line in front of the opponent's goal and takes a direct shot at goal without moving.

Players of the offending team will be placed all at the same side of the field; inside the 5 m zone and along the long side in one corner of the pitch.

If the player taking the penalty fails to score, the pickup priority is always given to the defending team; even if the ball falls between the goal line (2 m 50 from the inflatable) and the offensive team.

### **c) Penalty n.2**

A Penalty n.2 is awarded as a result of offences which are less serious but which none-the-less interferes with play or the safety of the game, obstruction or intimidation of an opponent.

The referee asks to the team captain to choose between:

- a direct shot at goal from the 10 m line;
- passing the ball (three passes between 3 different players) from the 15 m line.

The captain may discuss with his coach but must decide rapidly. The referee indicates the decision:

- a direct shot on the 10 m line by indicating the goal at which the shot will be made;
- a three pass on the 15 m line by raising three fingers.

After the decision has been taken no change can be made.

Players of the offending team must stand behind (i.e. goal-side of) their 5 m line and along the line of play in the case of a direct shot at 10 m. The shot has to be made from a stationary horse.

If the player taking the penalty has chosen the three passes the defending team must stand behind, i.e., the goal side of the 10 m line along the line of play.

In both cases, players of defending team can tackle.

#### **d) Penalty n.3**

A Penalty n.3 is awarded as a result of minor infringements.

If the Penalty n.3 is awarded to the attacking team in the defenders half the Penalty n.3 is taken on the centre line other than when the ball has gone out of play on the long side of the pitch in which case Rule 12 determines where the Penalty n.3 will be taken. If the Penalty n.3 is awarded to the defenders in the defender's half the Penalty n.3 is taken at the place the offence was committed.

A player from the offended team stands at the point where the offence occurred (as indicated by the referee) all other players can stand anywhere on the pitch but not in the band 5 m in front of the carrier of the ball in the direction of the defenders goal. If they do not the referee will award a Penalty n.3 against that team. Players of the offending team must remain at least 5 m down field outside the 5 m band (i.e. towards their own goal) from the point at which the penalty is to be taken until the penalty has been taken.

The game starts again when the referee blows the whistle.

#### **e) Technical Foul**

A technical foul is characterised by unsportsmanlike conduct such as use of abusive language or gestures, or brutality to a horse, and may be awarded against players, substitutes, grooms or trainers either on or off the pitch.

E.g.:

- addressing an official incorrectly;
- bad language or offensive gesture;
- inciting an opponent;
- time wasting;
- changing numbers without telling the referee;
- Rule 7.

Depending on the foul, the referee has a discretion to award Penalty n.1, Penalty n.2, Penalty n.3, yellow or red card or warning.

Technical fouls committed before or during the match, or during the half-time period, will be penalised as the referee sees fit.

## **20) DANGEROUS AND UNSPORTSMAN-LIKE CONDUCT**

It is forbidden for any player to:

- cause an obstruction by standing across the line of play of an opponent (whether or not they are carrying the ball);
- hit, kick, push, hold, intimidate or threaten an opponent or an opponent's horse;
- swing the ball around in order to intimidate an opponent;
- hit the horse with the ball, the slack of the reins or the hands;
- stand on the saddle at any moment of the game;
- interfere with a player who is attempting to pick up the ball even to the extent of causing the player to change direction in order to avoid a collision.

The referee is at liberty to take any action against which is considered appropriate.

## **21) UN-HORSED PLAYER**

If a player becomes un-horsed whilst in possession of the ball the referee will award a Penalty n.3 to the opposing team at the point where the player became unhorsed.

If a player who is not in possession of the ball becomes un-horsed, the game will be stopped only if the referee considers the situation dangerous.

If the game is stopped, it will be re-started by a Penalty n.3 awarded to the opposing team at the current point of possession (irrespective of who has possession).

A player on the ground may not interfere with play in any way.

## **22) BROKEN TACK**

If, during the game, a horse's tack breaks or becomes undone the game will not be stopped. The player affected may continue playing providing that, in the opinion of the referee, safety is not compromised. Alternatively the referee may ask the player to leave the pitch until the tack has been made safe. The player may be substituted, but only when there is a break in play. If the referee sends off a player, a Penalty n.3 will be awarded to the opposing team.

## **23) CARE OF HORSES**

Any brutality to any horse is forbidden on the pitch and anywhere else and can be punished by the referee.

Any horse which does not, in the opinion of the referee, satisfy minimum requirements as to appearance and condition may be refused permission to play.

Some actions against horses will be penalised by a yellow card:

- to hit a horse with the ball or the slack of the reins;
- to hit or hold an opponent's horse.

The referee or the supervisor may at any time stop the match in order to check the condition of a horse. The referee may ask that a horse leave the pitch if he or she believes it to be in distress or in need of attention. Any horse which receives a cut or graze (even superficial) must leave the pitch and receive attention. A horse may only return to the match with the express permission of the referee and veterinary surgeon.

Disguising an injury to a horse is forbidden.

The referee's decision regarding the condition of a horse is final and may not be appealed against.

An injured horse or a horse in distress may only take part in a parade or prize giving after having received the necessary attention and with the express permission of the referee.

## **24) WARNINGS**

In addition to penalising a team as a result of an infringement of the rules the referee may also penalise individual players by giving:

- a verbal warning;
- a first yellow card. The player concerned can stay on the pitch and continue to play;
- a second yellow card during the same match. The player concerned may take no further part in the game and can be substituted. The player will also serve one-match suspension with immediate effect and will also have his case reviewed by the disciplinary committee;
- a second yellow card during the same competition/championship. The player will automatically serve one-match suspension in the next match;
- a red card. The player concerned may take no further part in the game and can be substituted. The player will serve a minimum one-match suspension with immediate effect and will also have his case reviewed by the disciplinary committee.

Any player that has been sent off with a second yellow card in the same match or a red card must leave the field.

## **25) DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE**

The disciplinary committee is called by any member of the Ground Jury and match referee. The role of the committee is to review and discipline offensive behaviour of players, grooms, or trainers involved in a match.

It is composed of the supervisor and one member of the Ground Jury and at least three members of the FIHB from at least two different nationality from the nationality of the team involved.

A player receiving a red card or two yellow cards in the same match will have their case submitted automatically to the disciplinary committee. The committee will decide on what action is to be taken and will inform both the player and the team representative in writing.

A player will be ineligible to play until the committee has given its verdict if he does, its team will be dismissed.

There is no appeal from the disciplinary committee.

## **26) DOPING**

A dope test may be carried out at any stage of a competition.

The general rules of the FEI are applicable to all incidents involving doping of horses.

## **27) VETERINARY INSPECTION**

All events organised by the FIHB must have a veterinary surgeon's inspection of all horses taking part to the event as stated in the Competition Rules.

This inspection will be held accordingly to a programme set-up by the organising committee for the event. The inspection is carried out by the veterinary surgeon and the Ground Jury together. The veterinary inspection follows expressly the FEI Veterinary Rules (VRs) from the FEI available on the FEI website [www.fei.org](http://www.fei.org). With particular attention to Art 1009, 1010, 1011-8 included.

## **Annex A - ADAPTATION OF THE RULES FOR YOUNG HORSE-BALL CATEGORIES**

The following is an adaptation of the rules for the playing of young Horse-Ball. Unless explicitly specified, the normal rules apply.

### **A.1 - Recommended Categories**

According to the player's age and type of pony or horse, recommended player's categories are specified in table A.1. Note that the player's age is defined by the age that he/she reaches in that calendar year.

### **A.2 - Category Upgrade**

A player is allowed to be upgraded to the next category up. The player joins the new category only for the duration of the championship. Other category upgrade shall be approved by the FIHB.

### **A.3 - The Pitch**

The maximum dimensions of the pitch as well the penalty lines are specified according to the category (see table A.1).

### **A.4 - The Goals**

The height of the goal is specified according to the category (see table A.1). For the category under 8 the goals must be painted in two different colours.

### **A.5 - The Ball**

The dimensions of the ball are specified according to the category (see table A.3).

### **A.6 - The Captain**

The captain is represented by the trainer of the team for Under 8.

### **A.7 - Equipment of the Players**

Only for the categories Under 8 and Under 10:

- is the use of a whip allowed; it must be tied to the saddle;
- is forbidden to wear spurs.

## **A.8 - The Ponies**

According to their height, pony's categories are specified in table A.2. A tolerance of 1 cm is allowed in order to take into account the thickness of the horseshoe.

Only for the categories Under 8 and Under 10:

- the use of leg protection, bandages boots and overreach boots are optional on the four legs;
- the use of the martingale is optional.

## **A.9 - Refereeing**

Refereeing is carried out on foot for **Under 8 and Under 10**.

## **A.10 - Pick up**

The pick up can be done at trot for **Under 8 and Under 10**.

## **A.11 - Line-out**

For Under 8, Under 10 and Under 12, play is restarted after a goal by means of a Penalty n.3 taken by the team conceding the goal. The Penalty n.3 is taken on the goal line.

## **A.12 - Tackling**

For the categories Under 8 and Under 10, the defending players are not allowed to stand between their own 10 m line and the goal line.

For the category Under 12, the defending players are not allowed to stand between their own 12 m line and the goal line.

If they do the referee will award a Penalty n.3 to the opposing team at the centre of the pitch.

## **A.13 - Tournament Categories**

According to the player's age and type of pony or horse, tournament player's categories are specified in table A.4. Note that the player's age is defined by the age that he/she reaches in that calendar year.

Category	Age	Pony	Minimum pitch dimensions (m.)		Goal height (cm)	Pen.1 line (m)	Penalty 2 line (m)		Ball
			Length	Width			Dir.shot	3 pass	
Under 8	up to 8	A	40	20	200	3	6	10	n.2
Under 10	9..10	A	40	20	250	3	6	10	n.2
Under 12	11..12	B, C	60	20	300	4	8	12	n.3
Under 14	13..14	C, D	60	20	350	5	10	15	n.3
Under 16	15..16	C, D	60	20	350	5	10	15	n.4

Table A.1 – Recommended Player Categories

Pony type	Height
A	Up to 107 cm
B	from 108 cm to 130 cm
C	from 131 cm to 140 cm
D	from 141 cm to 148 cm

Table A.2 – Pony Categories

	Category		
	Under 10	Under 14	Under 16
ball size	n.2	n.3	n.4
circumference of ball	47 cm	60 cm	65 cm
length of handles (note 1)	25 cm	28 cm	31 cm
distance between fixing points of a single handle	15 cm	18 cm	20 cm
width of handles	16÷18 mm	18÷20 mm	18÷20 mm
thickness of handles	4÷6 mm	6÷8 mm	6÷8 mm
total weight	400÷500 g	500÷600 g	600÷700 g

note 1: length of the handles measured as the length of the leather without taking into account the stitchings.

Table A.3 – Ball Specification

Category	Age	Pony	Minimum pitch dimensions (m)		Goal height (cm)	Pen.1 line (m)	Penalty 2 line (m)		Ball
			Length	Width			Dir.shot	3 pass	
Under 10	8..10	A	40	20	250	3	6	10	n.2
Under 13	11..13	B, C	60	20	300	4	8	12	n.3
Under 16	14..16	C, D	60	20	350	5	10	15	n.4

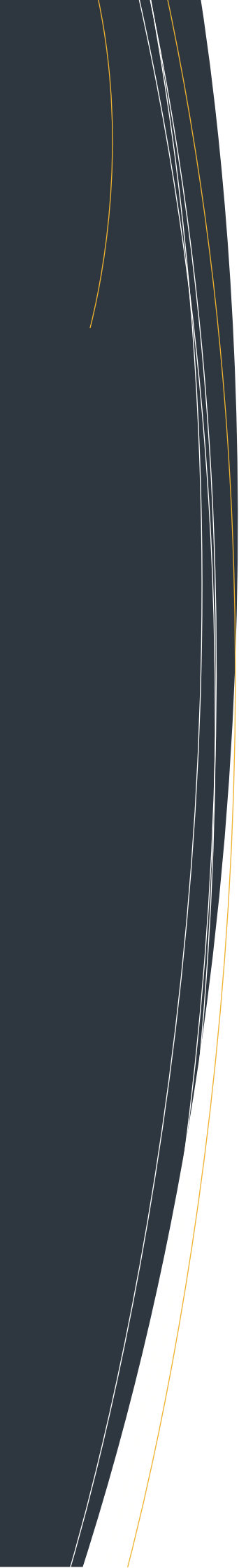
Table A.4 – Tournament Player Categories

## History

<b>Document history</b>		
Ver.1.0	May 2001	Document elaborated by rules committee (France, Portugal, United Kingdom)
Ver.2.0	June 2001	Document elaborated by Italy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Addition of the version of the document</li> <li>• Modification to Introduction</li> <li>• Clarification and correction to the pitch</li> <li>• Addition of the figures relevant to the pitch, goals and ball</li> <li>• Modification to the size of the handle of the ball</li> <li>• Addition of the team captain substitution</li> <li>• Clarification about spurs, whips and number on the uniform</li> <li>• Clarification about vet's charges</li> <li>• Addition of break of time for a between-two</li> <li>• Addition of the trainer captain for a time out request</li> <li>• Addition of the rule relevant to a non valid regulation ball</li> <li>• Addition/modification of ex aequo criteria</li> <li>• Clarification about abandoned match</li> <li>• Modification about line out, between-two (distance from referee), physical tackling, penalties and warnings</li> <li>• Addition of the Annex A relevant to the pony rules</li> </ul>
Ver.3.0	June 2001	Document approved by FIHB on 10.06.01: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarification about length of the match (two matches a day case)</li> <li>• Addition of the steward</li> <li>• Modification/addition of ex aequo criteria</li> <li>• Clarification about Penalty n.3 for a 10 sec foul</li> <li>• Clarification about ball out of play</li> <li>• Clarification about rotation of the player during line out</li> <li>• Deletion of the break of time for a between-two</li> <li>• Clarification about priority on pick up</li> <li>• Clarification about Penalty n.1</li> </ul>
Ver.3.1	September 2001	Document reviewed by United Kingdom: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revision of the English language</li> </ul>
Ver.3.2	September 2001	Document presented for FIHB approval: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New formatting and addition of document history</li> </ul>
Ver.3.3	September 2001	Document approved by FIHB on 23.09.01: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Correction to Penalty n.1</li> <li>• Addition of "no appeal from D.C. to the Disciplinary Committee"</li> <li>• Substitution of "Ground Jury" into "supervisor committee"</li> <li>• Deletion of art.26 - Appeals</li> <li>• Update to the adaptation of the rules for pony categories</li> </ul>
Ver.3.4	October 2001	Document approved by FIHB and ONHBs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modifications about pony rules (definition of player's age, goals, captain, equipment of the players, pony protection, martingale, tackling, table A.1)</li> <li>• Various modifications (minimum horse age, saddle type, use of the studs, warnings to trainers and grooms, end of the half, multiple sudden death period, behaviour of the first line in the line-out, penalty n.1)</li> <li>• Revision of the English language</li> </ul>
Ver.3.5	February 2003	Document approved by FIHB on 09.02.03: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change Request 001-2003 about between-two abolish, 002-2003 about modification on first pick up, 003-2003 about young Horse-Ball rules tournament categories and 004-2003 about FIHB bureau</li> </ul>
Ver.3.6	September 2003	Document approved by FIHB on 14.09.03: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change Request 005-2003 rev.1 about out of play of the ball along short side</li> </ul>
Ver. 4.0	November 2007	Document approved by FIHB on 18.11.07: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change Request 001-2007 and 002-2007 rev the line-out first line position from 5 to 7 m</li> <li>• Denomination to Sport Rules and adapting the coherence with the new General Rules, Competition Rules, Organisation Rules and Veterinary Rules</li> </ul>

Ver.5.1	July 2008	Document approved by FIHB on 31.07.08: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modification to ball out of play rule</li> <li>• Addition of marking a player not carrying the ball</li> <li>• Addition of stopping the time for Penalty n.1 and n.2</li> <li>• Modification of pickup priority for failed Penalty n.1</li> <li>• Modification of giving yellow card policy</li> </ul>
Ver.6.0	November 2011	Document discussed at FIHB General Assembly on 12.11.11: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modification to the distance of the goal from the barrier</li> <li>• Addition of position of the substitutes fro the indoor pitch</li> <li>• Addition of the technical foul for more than 4 players on the pitch</li> <li>• Definition of the minimum age for players participating in horse category</li> <li>• Addition of the use of half chaps, knee pads and watches</li> <li>• Modification of the minimum age of the horses</li> <li>• Addition of the rule related to a horse voluntarily leaving the playing area</li> <li>• Addition of compulsory use of pickup strap</li> <li>• Additional tasks of the Ground Jury</li> <li>• Clarification of the position on the pitch of the chair referee</li> <li>• Addition of stopping the time for between-two</li> <li>• Addition of the supervisor as person entitled to stop the game clock</li> <li>• Addition of criteria for teams finishing on equal points</li> <li>• Correction of rules 3 and 4 of the ball out of play</li> <li>• Addition of rules for the line out (turning the 2<sup>nd</sup> line and contact with the thrower)</li> <li>• Addition of horse out control rule</li> <li>• Addition of rule for attacking players</li> <li>• Modifications on warning policy</li> <li>• Deletion of the category Under 18 under pony rules</li> <li>• Deletion of the category Under 18 and addition of the category Under 10 in the tournament player categories</li> </ul>
Ver.6.2	November 2011	Document approved on 30.11.11: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarification on pickup strap that must pass in the martingale loop</li> <li>• Modification of the 1st criteria for teams finishing on equal points</li> </ul>
Ver.6.3	December 2011	Document modified on 01.12.11: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarification on the use of half chaps</li> </ul>





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