



Perth Polocrosse Club Newsletter

State Equestrian Centre

Telephone: (08) 9571 4292 Facsimile: (08) 95714447

www.perthpolox.com

Newsletter 89

2nd September 2011

2011 SEASON WELL ON THE WAY

We new this was to be a big year being selection year for the national championships next year, but steady on the club is bursting with new members. I have been informed we are the largest club in Australia at the moment, so you can imagine the personalities we have.



CARNIVALS

I will start with Walkaway where five teams from Perth attended. The carnival ran well thanks to the Walkaway club and our club members presented themselves very professionally and conducted themselves as we would expect. Here is a report I did after the carnival just so these players can see how they are progressing.

Simon have more confidence in yourself think of all the play you did well. When you get the ball you deliver well.

Rachel do not dwell on the negative play you did I saw you carry the ball out of the area many times.

Mary for Christ sake pick the ball up out the back and get your horse in the line up better

Barkley I think you learnt a lot by riding a useless horse and you never lost your cool and always in the right place at the right time

Jodi and Adrian thanks for all your help.

I did not see very much of our C grade and when I did you were playing in a lake. Still too much panic and going too fast centre field Amy, Mandy and Rory.

I did see the old Lyndal from 2009 you should very happy with yourself.

Same with this D grade I saw very little but I do know that Tracey lifted from game one to two by about 200%, your determination came back.

I saw Marina carry the ball! As always blocks up very well.

Hayley looked like she was having a great time with a grin from ear to ear. Gille was the same.

Libby I see you are ignoring the negatives of your horse more and concentrating on the positive. The effort you have put in over the off season has seen a different player. Keep it up and have a go as a number three again.

Both E grades had many surprises with the improvement from Saturday to Sunday something you would never achieve at six practices, you should be all so very proud of yourselves. I saw more of the adults than our kiddos, but was impressed with Bailey's riding and toughness. I just love how all of you juniors play as a team.

Ruben I was very pleased to see you out there and your riding is so much better. I would still try and ride more and have some lessons if possible, the same for you Mark I would try and ride more even just in the round yard and practice throwing goals. You pick up and catch very well. Corrine you are extremely brave getting out there and being part of it all. I hope someone has some photos or video to show you guys in 12 months.

Adam nothing I can say you read the play, ride beautifully and have ball skills above your grade. Practice throwing goals so old Nanna does not have to go up and down the field so much.

Karen a star on a Star. Keep practicing your progress is fantastic.

Mick sorry you were out injured so did not see you.

Susanne keep feeding old Buzz and be a little more aggressive and you will find buzz with feel like a ten year old. You took the ball out of the area so many times.

The final was great to watch and I hope you all had a great time.

IRWIN

The Perth Polocrosse Club travelled to Irwin with six teams A, B, C, 2Ds, E and 3 sub juniors.

The sun shone Saturday, crops look good, farmers were smiling and the fields were great.

Some horses were having there first outing for the season with minimal fitness, some horses having there first outing and some players the same. The weekend was extremely busy with so many teams from the club times clashed for the coaches and selectors but I am sure they watched as much as they could and were most impressed with the improvement it the members. We had five Lane family members playing and three Days. Look out the Lesters will be gearing up for South Midlands.

Saturday night it blew and poured with rain, I am so pleased our awning stayed up. It was freezing but by 0300 in the morning the mosquitoes were out and it was warm. Ready for the sunshine on Sunday and it did shine. Not a nice night for camping but a great weekend for polocrosse.

Tia just fitted in the A grade like that is where she and her dear Houdini should be. This team new they were not in the running for the finals but they were out there giving their horses a run and competition for the other teams.

The B grade had a grand time losing two games (one in a play off) and winning one after one of my team mates told me to lift my game on Sunday. Simon not sure what happened between game one and two but what ever it was can it happen before game one next time, you were great. I did not see much of the C grade but from all reports you were all happy with your games.

Our strongest D grade made it to the finals and lost in a play off, which is a bit disappointing for you. I am sure you all learnt something from that game. You had some very good horses in that team and I am pleased they have all pulled up well. Amy as well as Tracey has very sore knees. The other D grade was pointed as an E grade but being adults we hoped you would see where your next step up is to be. Thank you to Adrian and PJ for helping out with the team.

E grade were our stars again making it to the finals and putting another huge effort in for the club. They missed out on a trophy but were still winners and the way the team played you are getting ready for D grade.

Saskia you have a reason for that smile on your face, unbelievable look out Lanes here is your star player.

Quin I did not know that you could pick the ball up so well, keep practicing, I know it gets frustrating but just look back when you were riding Helen. Look how far you have come?

Eliane the little trooper who never changes, so consistent and very fair with her team.

Sophie where did you come from? Not a bad horse you ride and what a beautiful rider. Come back and show us how you play so well again.

Patrick good to see you are back on Hugh or is it Dot. Very good at catching, throwing and picking up. Just the pressure in the area is a little hard to manage but you keep practicing and you will improve. Great to have you back on board.

Victoria how about that, comes out as a three in a final, a little bit daunting for you but I can guarantee that you will enjoy it as time goes on. You can sure get the ball out of the opposition's racquet. Great to see

The three Sub juniors Jake, Will and Georgina will be in our E grade with a little more riding and polocrosse practice. I hope you had fun and will be back for South Midlands.

SOUTH MIDLANDS

Perth club attended this carnival in full force with ten teams attending and still some members not playing there. Where do I start.....I was so grateful the fields were very close together as I had trouble keeping up who was playing where. I did not see too much of the A and B grade as felt the lower grades needed more support, then listening to the players from those two grades they needed more support as well. Giggly Jill you played so well so why don't you have a go as a one? All I can say about the C grade and down to E grade there has been huge individual improvements and some great team work in some games. In the C grade I saw Rory, Peter and Michael go out in their second and third game do exactly what they were asked and played so much better. Barney Rubble so good to see you back, I will try and have some oxygen on the side line for you or maybe you do some exercise and stop smoking would be a cheaper option. Simon Gray how consistent were you? You and your horse were very neat to watch. I saw a great two chuckers in the ladies chucker of the C mixed on Saturday. Libby, Dara and Rachel you were pretty to watch. Marty what does it feel like to be our oldest playing member? Fantastic seeing you back.

The ladies in the D grade I could see really enjoyed the weekend and played so well as a team, you all just need to pick that ball up centre field. Emma keep playing as a three, it was the best I have seen you play. Marina you can throw goals, as I new you could and thank you for demonstrating on how to play a three centre field and in the area. Practice as a one at practice Marina. Our two junior E grades we cannot ask for more so keep practicing as we have such a large base to choose from now. Tash do not give up as I want to see you rattle the guys before the end of the season and do not be embarrassed.

Our E2 made the finals and some of you will be in D grade before the end of the season. Adam a shame you have to start on a new horse but I am sure you do well on him. Mark so you are a good three as well as a one, best weekend I have seen you play, not sure you missed one ball of the ground when I was looking. Rueben keep practicing that riding as I see you have been practicing your ball skills. Karen you never give up and took some great passes but got boxed up, need to move off a little quicker or pass the ball off. Susanne you played three consistent and strong chuckers in your final, you should be very happy with yourself and your horse. Hope you put ice on those whip whelps. Our sub juniors keep coming and will not be long before you will get a go in the E grade. As you can see from Walkaway to South Midlands there has been a good improvement in the majority of players.



PRACTICE

We have managed one practice at Brigadoon this season and hoping on two. All practices have been at the Day's farm and have been quite beneficial to the fresh and young horses. It has always been a social occasion as well which is great for all our new members to meet the other members in the club. Gille has started cooking lunch at practice so we do not have to bring our own and we are fundraising for the club along with liquid refreshments as well. I am sure we cleared over \$160 last practice and that was with the Lane and Lester family away.



FUNNIES AND PHOTOS

Could all members please email Susanne (I will email her email to you) any funny incidents involving any of members on or off the field please, as we have some great prizes at the end of the year for these clever people.

Could a member take on the role of taking photos for the photo gallery for our web page? You do not have to take all the photos just let me know who you are and then other members can contribute and you coordinate with Graham Lane.



TOTAL FIRE BAN

There will be a total fire ban at the Greenough tournament this year. I think you will find the flies will keep you warm.



GERALD O'BRIAN CLINIC

Gerald O'Brian was well attended by Perth club members up at Twin Pines which I am sure they have all found beneficial and some what confusing at times.

GROUNDS

The polocrosse grounds have had two mows in a week and will be mowed again next week to try and get them the best we can for the state championships. There is a bit of a problem with all the grass laying on top, but it will improve with a sweep or a drag. They were vertidraind earlier this year as well. Barney Langford soil sampled them and now wants to fertilize them!!! There are not many broad leaf weeds as yet thanks to Barney spraying every year. He will be down again to spray and also the yards will be sprayed as well.

There are some large branches around the camping area, is there a member who could organize a couple of members to cut them up and put in piles? Let me know who you are so we do not get a double up on people doing the same job. That goes for the mowing as well can a member organize that as well but let me know who you are and who you are recruiting. Mow around the goal posts and club rooms and continue up until the State championships.

I have managed to buy Kmart out of chairs when on special for the club and will buy more when they are out again.

CARNIVAL FEES

The fees to play at carnivals that you are all EFTing into the clubs other account are working a treat. Please keep it up. Let me know if you do not agree with this idea. I know the host clubs are very happy with receiving all players' fees on Friday night.

GOSSIP and SAFETY

Sharna is home from England and played at Muchea and hopefully will keep playing. There have been a couple of injuries, Amy has a sore knee. Mary and Sharna a sore leg each, Kate and Hayley a sore belly. Could one adult please accompany our young E grade juniors when they are goal waving in the D behind goals? No E grade juniors to goal wave C grade and above and only

two people at anytime allowed in the D. This is a safety measure, not because our juniors are not capable of doing the job well.

PHOTOS

Red Fotos were at South Midlands for a few hours last weekend. While uploading is not yet complete you can see all the shots at <http://www.redfoto.com.au>

HEALTHWAY

The Perth Polocrosse Club would like to thank Healthway for their sponsorship of Hilary Beech through their Smarter Than Smoking (STS) Country Sport Scholarship Program.



CENTRAL ZONE

The Central Zone which our club is part of is due to hold it's AGM. On this, all positions are up for nomination and would welcome all clubs to put forward nominations. More details to follow with regards to a date, time and venue.

GUESS WHO THIS IS BELOW?



WORLD CUP PHOTOS





Gone are the days of old when 'chucking him some dusty oats and chaff' were all that we thought was required to enable a polocrosse horse to perform at his peak and then wonder why he was so tired on Monday morning!

Deciding the intensity of a horse's exercise program is not difficult, but owners are often left to determine this on their own with few or no guidelines and the majority of polocrosse players go by 'gut feel'. Over or under feeding and over or under working your horse can have a very detrimental effect and in turn reduce your horse's capacity to play the game. Hopefully some of the information we have provided may help you understand the huge expectations that are placed on polocrosse horses and what you may need to do in order to keep him in peak condition so you can play the sport we all love so much!

HORSE FITNESS

Conditioning, Training & Fitness of Polocrosse Horses

"Remember like yourself a HORSE needs to be WARMED up before a period of work."

You don't need to be very fit to play sport once a week, but you pay for it in stiffness and soreness in the next day or two. If however, you played 3 games a night then you would have to be fitter or you would be so fatigued by game 3 you could hardly run. The same goes for horses, something that's "one off" doesn't require much fitness, however if it's continuous over a short period of time and regular, then they need to be fit or performance is greatly affected, recovery is slow and injury can occur.

The 3 main stages are:-

1. Legging Up/ Basic Training.

This is the initial period of 4 to 6 weeks, where you walk and basically trot only, it is low intensity work that is the initial work any horse must do. Start off slow walk and trotting for 2-3 weeks min 6 out of 7 days. Start with about 20-25min and increase the amount of work done by 5 min about every 4 days until you get to 60 min work. Toward the end of this period start introducing periods of 2-3min (max. 2 per ride) of canter at 350m/min. You may need to measure it so you get an idea how fast it is. It is a slow canter. Aerobic capacity is the ability to do work breathing air normally. To increase the aerobic capacity of your horse, you must increase the distance and speed of the work-out every 10-12 days.

This is necessary to tone up ligaments, tendons and muscles on your horse. Young horses need more time than older horses to tone their ligaments. It is often younger horses that will strain tendons and ligaments as they were overworked too soon. Shin soreness is an example of undertaking hard work too soon. It is during this period, you need to develop the aerobic capacity of your horse.

Your horse by this time should be able to trot 50min without effecting its breathing or heart rate.

2. Development

This is the middle stage of training where you would use periods of short work separated by a rest interval and also start to introduce the more strenuous work needed including sprint work, stopping, turning and marking up to increase aerobic capacity of your horse. Sprint work is a brief period of acceleration and then deceleration during the cantering period. Very slowly increase these sprints until you are doing about 3-4 in a work out. Remember

since you don't sprint longer than 100m in a game this is all you need to condition them to. After at least 8 weeks work you will be doing high intensity sprints and these will be done 4 times spread across a 2 week period. This development stage takes about 2 to 4 weeks.

3. Finishing Exercise

This is the final stage and is done to achieve stamina and endurance. It is mainly aerobic work done by distances. It is at this stage however that fast work can be reduced in your training program after you commence playing your horse regularly.

4. Other Exercises

Strength training benefits your horse. This can be done during interval training using a hill with the work up the hill and rest is the walk down. To "ride off" another horse requires strength and momentum. So this should be practiced even at a walk. Practice it at varying speeds.

During a chukka, muscles collect a large amount of lactates. The warm down should be done with low intensity exercise to remove the lactates. 5 min relaxed trot gets rid of lactate faster than walking or standing still. If lactates are let in the muscle then it leads to fatigue, so after 3 chukkas your horse could be very fatigued even though it is fit enough.

FEEDING

****The following Feeding Polocrosse Horses guide was developed by Nerida Richards of FeedXL in conjunction with Jodi Tiver. FeedXL is a fantastic aid to any feeding programme and not only can it help improve your horse's condition but it can save you quite a lot of money!!****

Polocrosse horses are special animals, required to have lightning quick reflexes and react with speed to the slightest aid and yet remain calm and think their way through a game. To keep polocrosse horses on the top of their game they need a diet that provides them with enough energy to get them easily through the work they need to do, but not so much that they become on edge and nervy. Enough protein to build their muscles for strength and agility, but not so much that it causes them to overheat and dehydrate. Enough electrolytes to allow adequate sweating during training and competition, but not so many that their feed becomes unpalatable. Enough forage to keep their gut healthy and aid with hydration, but not so much that it disadvantages them with the extra weight they have to carry around the field. Feeding polocrosse horses is not complex, but there are a few things you need to keep in mind. They are discussed in detail below.

Energy

How much should you feed?

How much you need to feed your individual horse depends on your horse, its temperament, how hard you work it and whether it is normally a good or poor doer. Other variables like how heavy you and your saddle are, the quality of pasture if any the horse has access to, how often you train and play and even the weather will affect how much you need to feed your horse.

Knowing how much to feed your horses really comes down to you knowing your own horses. You need to be constantly monitoring their condition (to see if they are losing, gaining or maintaining weight) and general attitude to work and adjusting the amount you feed accordingly.

As an example, if you were feeding a horse 3 kg per day of a commercial grain mix together with one flake of lucerne hay and free access to average quality pasture and after a week of work he seemed flat and tired and you noticed he had lost some condition over his ribs and rump you would need to increase his energy intake. For this diet, the easiest way to do this would be to increase the amount of grain mix he was being fed, first to 3.5 kg/day, and if that still wasn't enough to 4 kg and then to 4.5 kg or more per day if necessary.

In the reverse, if you found that your horse was on edge and full of energy and maybe even putting on a little extra condition you would need to decrease the amount of energy in the diet. In this case again the simplest way to do this is reduce the amount of grain mix in the diet, first to 2.5 kg/day, then to 2 kg/day and 1.5 kg/day or less if need be.

While this doesn't sound very scientific, it is absolutely the most accurate way you have to work out how much you need to feed your horse and you will find you probably do this instinctively already very well.

What source of energy is best?

There are three main ways you can add energy to a horse's diet. These are:

1. **Fibre** – fibre from pasture, hay and chaff form one of your horse's most important sources of energy. Fibres are slowly fermented in the horse's hindgut to give slow release energy in the form of volatile fatty acids. Fibre is the most natural and safest form of energy you can feed a horse and feeding enough fibre is essential to maintain normal gut function and hydration and avoid colic. However hard working horses generally aren't able to eat enough fibre to meet their daily energy requirements so higher energy feedstuffs like high energy fibres (sugarbeet pulp, lupin hulls, soybean hulls and copra meal), grains and oils need to be added to the diet.
2. **Grains** – grains include feeds like oats, corn, barley and rice as well as grain based extruded feeds, pelleted feeds and sweetfeeds and grain by-products like bran and pollard. Grains are an excellent source of energy for hard working horses. They are generally well accepted, they provide more energy per kilogram than fibrous feeds like hay, pasture and chaff and they provide a source of starch which is digested and absorbed as glucose. The muscles use this glucose to build up and replenish muscle glycogen supplies which provide the muscles with crucial fuel for fast sprinting and turning work. If muscles run out of this fuel they fatigue quickly, so some grains in a polocrosse horse's diet are an advantage to keep the muscle glycogen levels topped up.

If you are feeding grains, be sure to feed cooked grains (extruded, steam flaked or micronized) with the exception of oats which can be fed raw. Uncooked grains are not well digested by horses in the small intestine, but they are rapidly fermented in the hindgut. This means horses get little value out of them and run the risk of problems associated with starch fermentation and hindgut acidosis.

3. **Oils** – vegetable oils are the highest energy ingredient you can feed a horse, with 2.5 to 3 times as much energy in oils compared to grains and grain based feeds. Oils are particularly useful for finicky eaters who have trouble holding their weight as you can give them a lot of energy in a small feed. Feeding oil also provides the polocrosse horse with a ready supply of fatty acids that the horse's muscles can burn during slower work allowing them to conserve their muscle glycogen supplies. Up to 4 cups of vegetable oil can be fed per day to horses that struggle to hold their weight while 1 cup per day is enough to provide some glycogen sparing benefits associated with feeding oil.

Because of the sort of work polocrosse horses do, using a combination of all 3 sources of energy is an advantage. Fibre is a must to keep the gut healthy, maintain hydration and to provide slow release energy. Grains and grain based feeds increase the energy density of the diet (so they can eat enough to meet their requirements) and provide a supply of glucose to constantly replenish muscle glycogen supplies while oils further increase the energy density of the diet and provide fatty acids to fuel the muscles during slow work allowing them to conserve glycogen and stave off muscle fatigue.

If your horse is prone to laminitis or tying up you should avoid using grains or grain based feeds in the diet. Instead use a diet based on forages, high energy fibres and oil.

Protein

Protein is needed for strong muscle development, the maintenance of healthy bone, tendons and ligaments and sound hoof growth (along with many other essential body functions). The trick with protein is to feed enough of the right type of protein, without feeding too much protein. When considering protein in the diet of a polocrosse horse the focus should be on good quality protein. Using high quality protein means you can feed less protein for a better effect. High quality protein can be found in lucerne, soybean, lupins and

canola meal. Look for feeds that contain these ingredients and avoid feeds with low quality protein like unnamed vegetable meals and cottonseed meal.

Feeding too much protein increases the amount of heat generated during the digestion process and means horses need to excrete waste nitrogen in their urine. Both these factors combine to increase water loss from the body and the risk of dehydration, something that must be avoided at all costs in the polocrosse horse.

To keep your horse's protein intake in check, avoid feeds that you feed in amounts greater than 1 kg/day with high levels of protein (more than 16%), never feed lucerne hay as your horse's sole source of forage and moderate your use of high protein ingredients like soybean meal.

Forage

As already discussed, high fibre forages are an essential part of a horse's diet. Forages keep the gut filled to reduce the risk of colic, they hold water in the gut to assist with hydration, they supply much needed slow release energy and they take a long time to eat. Chewing on forages keeps horses content, stimulates saliva production and helps to reduce the risk of gastric ulcers.

The key to feeding forage to polocrosse horses is to feed enough to take full advantage of the benefits they offer, but not feed so much that your horse is carrying a significant weight disadvantage during games.

All horses must be fed a minimum of 1 kg/100 kg of bodyweight/day of forage (pasture, hay or chaff). During normal training and rest days it is preferable to feed more than this (up to 2.5 kg/100 kg bodyweight/day), but for two days leading up to a tournament, the amount of forage being fed can be reduced to the minimum of 1 kg/100 kg bodyweight per day. This will reduce the amount of weight your horse has to carry during a game. If the amount of forage being fed is reduced the amount of grain based feed should be increased to compensate for the energy taken out of the diet when forage is reduced. For every 1 kg/day of forage you remove from the diet, increase your grain based feeds by 650 g/day. Be careful not to feed more than 0.5 kg of grain/100 kg of bodyweight per meal. Feeding more than this increases the risk of problems like colic.

Electrolytes

Horses rely on electrolytes to maintain fluid balance and circulatory function, facilitate muscle contractions, trigger nerve functions and maintain the body's acid-base balance. The main electrolyte minerals are sodium, chloride, potassium, magnesium and chloride. These electrolytes are lost in large amounts in sweat and must be replenished to avoid critical electrolyte deficiencies and the associated problems that come with that including dehydration, overheating and colic.

Potassium, calcium and magnesium are generally plentiful in forages, so if your horse is getting plenty of forage his day to day requirement for these minerals will be met. Sodium and chloride are generally low in forages and grains and need to be added to the diet. If you are feeding the recommended rates of a well formulated complete feed all you should need to do is make sure your horse has a salt lick available at all times.

If you are mixing your own feeds salt will need to be added to the feed. A 450 kg horse in moderate work will need around 35 grams of salt per day to meet sodium and chloride requirements while a 450 kg horse in heavy work will need closer to 70 grams. These amounts may need to be increased if the weather is particularly hot and humid or your

horse is a heavy sweater. The amounts should also be reduced on days off or in cool weather when sweating is reduced. A salt lick should also be made readily available.

On competition weekends additional electrolyte supplementation may be required. Using well formulated electrolyte supplements or electrolytes pastes at the recommended rates together with enough salt to cover a heavy workload and free access to a salt lick will help to keep their electrolyte levels replenished. When administering electrolytes be sure to do it straight after your horse has had a drink or when your horse will have free access to water for 1 to 2 hours. If you suspect your horse is suffering dehydration or electrolyte deficiency you should seek veterinary advice immediately.

Vitamins and minerals

Making sure your polocrosse horse's diet contains everything it needs right down to the many essential vitamins and minerals is important if you want to get the best out of them now and in the long term. Meeting requirements for these more obscure nutrients is important for muscle energy generation as well as to maintain a healthy immune system, good joints, strong hooves and to help in avoiding problems like general muscle soreness, fatigue and tying up.

Feeding the recommended amount of a well formulated vitamin and mineral supplement or complete feed will usually mean that your horse's needs for the most important nutrients like copper, zinc, selenium, iodine, vitamin E and the B-vitamins are met.

If you have a good doer that needs less than the recommended amount of a complete feed the amount of vitamins and minerals in the diet is unlikely to be meeting requirements. In this situation you should 'top-up' the diet with a concentrated vitamin and mineral supplement.

If you're not sure if you are meeting your horse's requirements for vitamins and minerals ask for help from your feed company representatives or nutritionist. Getting it right is really important!

Finally ...

Polocrosse horses work hard. To make their job as easy as possible for them and to ensure they remain healthy and sound in the long term getting their diet right is critical. Keep the diet as simple as possible, make sure requirements for energy, protein, electrolytes, vitamins and minerals are met but not exceeded and importantly keep the diet palatable so your horses are happy to eat when under pressure and away from home.

Some Further Feeding Info...

Light, Moderate and Heavy Work

Simpler explanations of workloads, ones that may be easier for horse owners and feed manufacturers to relate to, have been listed below. These designations are often listed as part of the feeding instructions on feed bags or tags.

Horses in **light work**, are exercised three or four times weekly in preparation for trail riding, pleasure driving, or as light training for low key show events such as western pleasure, trail, and lower-level dressage.

Horses in **moderate work** participate in a near-daily, structured training program. Reining horses, jumpers, upper-level dressage horses, polo ponies, endurance horses, and young

racehorses undergoing breaking and training would fall into this category. Horses involved in rodeo events are also included in this category. The majority of polocrosse horses would be classified as in moderate work.

Horses in **heavy work** train and compete at the peak of their physical abilities. Racehorses (Thoroughbreds, Standardbreds, Quarter Horses, etc.) on an active racing schedule and three-day event horses preparing for competition fit into this classification. Horses playing at top level polocrosse would fit in to this category, horses that participate in typical pleasure rides, horse shows, or rodeos do not fit in this grouping.

GENERAL CARE INFORMATION

CARNIVAL CARE

Before play

Each horse should be walked and trotted around for 10 to 15 minutes to warm up properly. Then one quick short sprint and two turns each way to loosen muscles.

Between Chukkas

The horse should be led around at a walk to keep warm and stop muscles from cramping. If it is cold throw a light rug over their back and rump. Fresh water should be available, especially in hot weather.

Sponging a horse's head, neck and shoulders will help cool them between chukkas. Be sure to scrape water off because it will act as a barrier to keep heat in if not removed immediately. If the weather is very warm or the game quite intense the most effective and efficient way of cooling your horse is to apply a cold cloth/sponge/towel to the horses hindgut. Hold this in place for 30secs and then scrap of excess water, reapply 2-3 times during the chukka break.

When time is called remount your horse and slowly trot around before play recommences. This helps loosen up muscles again.

After the Game

Cool your horse down by walking slowly immediately following your last chukka for 10 minutes after the game, before hosing down.

Make sure when you are hosing off you take time and care to ensure they are full washed off and cooled. It is very important to scrape off all excess water so your horse can cool down properly. After the horse has dried apply a light rug. Then, when cool, add more rugs depending on weather conditions.

Injuries

If a horse has any kind of injury, whether a rubbed mouth or cuts and abrasions, it must be treated immediately the game has finished. Failure to do so will bring action from welfare officers.

Overnight

Horses must be put in yards overnight, not tied up. They must be well fed, well rugged and be given plenty of fresh water. Next morning, before feeding, it is a good idea to lead your horses around, especially if their legs are inclined to puff up overnight.

Take the grain out of Sunday night and Monday morning feeds after a carnival. Because he will have Monday off, removing the grain helps minimise the chances of “tying-up” on Tuesday.