



## **Polo: An Introduction for Sports Scientists** R. Best<sup>1,2</sup> & R. Standing<sup>1</sup> <sup>1</sup>Centre for Sport Science and Human Performance, WINTEC

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Hit-off: Polo is an equestrian team sport, played by two teams of four athletes. There is a paucity of literature concerning Polo, focussing predominantly on injury rates, with minimal performance literature<sup>1</sup>. This poster details key characteristics of Polo that are comparable to other areas of applied research, this therefore lends Polo to being further investigated by Sport Science practitioners.



This is the largest pitch in professional sport and therefore characterising a winning Polo performance requires new and innovative strategies based on the unique physiological and tactical demands that Polo

presents<sup>1</sup>.

Polo games consist of four or six 7-minute periods of play (chukkas) with a maximum of 14 horses per player, per game<sup>2</sup>. This presents a novel approach to studying HIIT responses, and physiological profiles in both human and equine athletes in tandem.

Polo is played by ~24,000 players globally<sup>3</sup>, with athletes following the summer between



Both male and female athletes play Polo, in either single or mixed sex matches. When combined with the nuanced handicap system<sup>2</sup>, this presents a fascinating challenge to the researcher.



hemispheres. Evidence based travel strategies are therefore an essential requirement of modern Polo human and equine athletes<sup>4</sup>.



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opportunities in the areas of biomechanics, physiology, performance analysis and athlete wellbeing. However there are idiosyncrasies unique to Polo which may challenge conventional sport science strategies, such as the handicapping system and Polo performance being the manifestation of human and equine attributes.



The current influx of ex-racehorses into the sport suggests play will likely change in nature and increase in pace, due to increased top running speeds (~70km/h).

The stochastic demands of riding whilst performing accuracy based motor tasks, with potential contact from other players, requires a consistent swing pattern, this has not been objectively measured in

current literature.

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