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Polocross
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Mix Polo With Lacrosse And What Do You Get?

Polocrosse, Of Course!

By Baker White

When I started playing polocrosse in 2011, I was a timid rider who was not finding much enjoyment in the standard jumping and flat disciplines. At Pony Club gatherings, I had enjoyed throwing the ball around with my friends. So, when I heard about a local polocrosse camp, I overcame my riding nerves and took my jumper pony to the field. Although it was clear that my hunter-trained mount would not become the next big polocrosse star, I was hooked. Once I grew too tall for my pony, we purchased a polocrosse horse, and we played every chance we had, progressing from a slow trot in E Grade to USPC championships in Kentucky.

Combining the speed and

agility of polo with the racket and ball skills of lacrosse, polocrosse is a fast-paced equestrian sport that originated in Australia in 1938. Now played worldwide, this exciting three-on-three game is great fun for all ages of riders and horses. In the United States, organized under the American Polocrosse Association (APA), practices and tournaments happen on any given weekend, in addition to many youth enjoying the sport through their local Pony Club. Polocrosse is easy enough to learn, and not only are most horses quite suitable, they tend to enjoy the discipline as much as the riders! The only special equipment you will need to get started is a racket and a ball. The entry level division in Pony

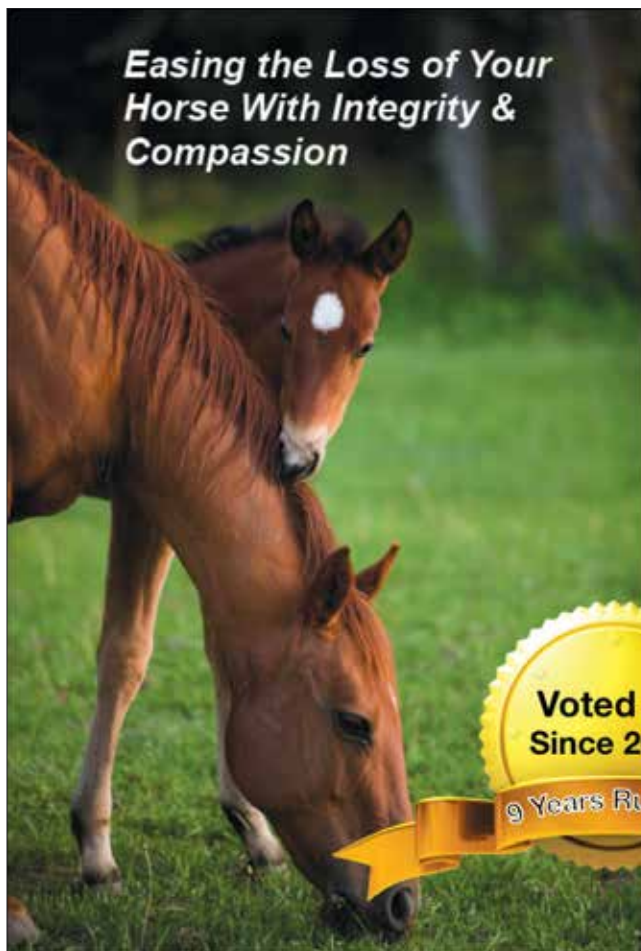


Baker White and his OTTB, Aspen, ready to receive a pass in a polocross tournament. Baker took up polocross through Pony Club and has become a serious competitor. PHOTO COURTESY: ERIN WHITE

Club is Pre-Novice, which translates to APA E grade.

A basic understanding of the rules and a little bit of racket practice will get any rider safely onto the field, not just for practice or a play day, but

for a Pony Club rally or an APA tournament. Contacting your local Pony Club District Commissioner or finding a club on the APA website will allow you to find the closest group to **continued on p. 19**



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Baker prepares to shoot a goal for Team USA while competing in Australia, as a member of the American Polocrosse Association Under 16 team playing in tournaments down under.

PHOTO COURTESY: ERIN WHITE

Polocross.....from p. 15 get started. Here in Virginia, we have Heartland Polocrosse Club in Round Hill. Nearby states of Maryland, Pennsylvania, and North Carolina also have active clubs of their own.

In 2016, four years after my first tournament, I was representing the American Polocrosse Association on an Under-16 team in Australia, riding guest horses and playing in huge tournaments every weekend. Here at home, I enjoy playing my OTTB, a hot mare that I would have been too scared to even get on before I started polocrosse.

Besides finding success in my chosen sport, polocrosse has given me the confidence to ride in other disciplines and pursue my Pony Club certifications. For example, I competed in dressage on a borrowed horse at the 2017 Festival in Lexington, Kentucky. My experiences in polocrosse have truly opened up the world of horses to me, and the I feel as though I have become a true competitor and lifetime rider. I plan to continue playing during college at Virginia Tech and I can't wait to have my horse at school with me.

My start in polocrosse through Pony Club became the driving influence that changed me from almost quitting riding, to becoming an international competitor pursuing a college degree in Equine Science. More than that however,

polocrosse has given me my closest personal relationships, best equine partners, and some of the most fun times of my life. Polocrosse to me, and many others, is not just a game, but a way of life. I would strongly encourage anyone looking to have some fun on their horse to give organized polocrosse a try. I hope to see you on the field!

About The Author: Baker White, from Locust Grove, Va., is a member of Casanova-Warrenton Pony Club in the Virginia Region, as well as Heartland Polocrosse Club in Round Hill, Va. He will be attending Virginia Tech this fall with his OTTB Aspen, pursuing a degree in Equine Science.

Polocross Tack & Clothing

There are very few requirements and lots of flexibility regarding tack and apparel. Any saddle is OK, as long as it doesn't have a horn. (Even western saddles are acceptable with the horn cut off!) White pants (jeans, breeches, jodhpurs, painter pants, etc.) are only required for APA tournaments and Pony Club rallies, otherwise, jeans, chaps, or any color breeches are fine. Any style of boot (paddocks to cowboy boots) can be worn. Riding helmets can also be of any kind or style (polo helmets to velvet hunt caps). The horses tails are only done up for tournaments or rallies.

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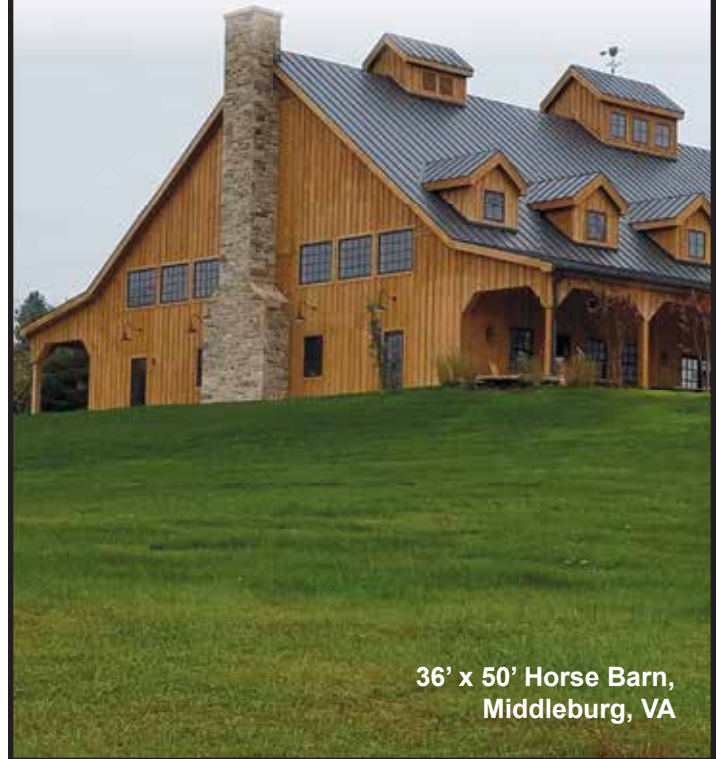
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