

# Polo

## Polo Excel Award

### Award Description

This award is designed to advance your skills and ability to apply appropriate decision making to underpin your skills for participating in the game of Polo.

### Extended Award Description

Your Polo Excel Award will advance your ability to apply your informed choices to an enjoyable training session and game on the water. You will have extensive experience and advanced skills to be in control throughout the training session and game, looking at the factors which affect your decisions and developing an informed and comprehensive understanding of Polo.

### Award Content

#### 1. Training Factors

In order to have an enjoyable training session, we need to have an understanding of our individual and team development plans.

**We might consider:** What is our individual training plan? How does that fit in with our team training plan? What do we think are our strengths and areas for improvement? Does our coach agree? How can we work with our coach to improve our skills and strength? How can we build these agreed aims into a training plan? What psychological tools can we use to maximise our performance during a training session and game?

## 2. Getting Ready

Before getting to the water we must choose suitable kit and equipment and have the correct knowledge to use it. Key points we may consider are:

### **What will we wear?**

What are the clothing options available to us? Why might we choose one over another? What protective equipment will we wear? Are we confident in the use and fitting of our chosen personal safety equipment? Are our kayak and helmet legal for our sport? How would we find this information?

### **What will we use?**

What are the different equipment and boat options available and why might we choose one over the other? How might our craft and equipment choices differ if we are training or taking part in a game? Does all our equipment meet ICF legal standards? How might we find this out?

### **What will we take?**

What additional equipment might be useful to have with us? What training aids might we use to monitor our performance? How could this help us? What safety kit would it be useful to have with us or available on the bank? What drink and nutrition might we need for our training session?

## 3. At the Venue

Once ready for our training session we must get our boat to the water's edge without damage to it or ourselves. Some craft for polo are relatively light and fragile, others are heavier and more robust.

**Consideration:** Getting to the water

**We may need to determine:** What is the best way to carry, load and secure our craft to protect ourselves or others from injury and prevent unnecessary damage? How will we get our craft and additional equipment to the water?



#### 4. Rules and Tactics

**Factor:** A comprehensive understanding of polo and its rules is essential to perform well at the highest level. Knowledge of formations used in attack and defence is essential.

**We may need to consider:** Are we able to demonstrate an extensive understanding of the rules of polo as well as being able to explain the basic rules to others?

#### 5. Polo Skills

When paddling a polo kayak we should demonstrate a fluid linking of strokes, enabling us to play the game in the most efficient manner.

**Skill:** Sprint starts

**We may need to know:** How can we use appropriate stroke combinations for an effective sprint start?

**Skill:** Changing direction

**We may need to consider:** What techniques and tactics can we use to steer our boat during a game? What different strokes can we use to steer our boat? How can we use these most effectively without affecting our momentum in zone play? How can we use edge and trim to turn the boat whilst maintaining speed?

**Skill:** Passing, catching and shooting

**We may need to know:** Are we able to pass fluidly throughout the game? Are we able to make appropriate decisions on passing and catching options from a wide range of different angles and distances? How can we use accuracy when shooting the ball to affect its path? How can we control the power of our shots for greatest accuracy?

**Skill:** Paddle skills

**We may need to consider:** How do we fluidly pick up the ball using our paddle? Are we able to choose the correct skills at the right time during a

game? If in goal, can we set up a position to stop shots from a variety of situations during a game, including set pieces and sprint backs?

**Skill:** Dribbling

**We may need to know:** Are we able to efficiently dribble with the paddle on both sides? Are we able to efficiently hand dribble on both sides?

**Skill:** Tackling

**We may need to know:** What different tackling techniques might we use? How would we decide on the correct one for different points in time?

**Skill:** Supporting and recovery

**We may need to consider:** Are we able to hand roll with the ball?

## 6. Tactics

**Factor:** A comprehensive understanding of tactics is essential to perform at the highest level, for example a good understanding of formations used in attack and defence and which work well with each other. Equally as important is the ability to analyse your team and your opposition and making decisions on which to use to complement the strengths within your team and that will work well against your opposing team.

**We may need to consider:** Do you understand all of the following attack plays and defensive zones and are you able to demonstrate them? Examples of attacking play include; draw, split, overload or centre player. Examples of defensive zones: 3&1, 2&2, flat 4, chasing 2&2 or chasing 3 or chasing 4 or five out.

Can you use the basics and design your own attacking move?

## 7. Team Work

**Factor:** Canoe polo is a team sport, therefore it is essential for team mates to be able to work together.

**We may need to consider:** Can you demonstrate supporting your team mates during a game/training session? Ideas include; motivating others and positive communication.

## **8. During and After the Training Session/Game**

Every game/training session is an opportunity for learning and improving. We can create a positive impact on our future experiences by performing a good pre, in action and post-training assessment.

**Watching what others do:** It might be useful to spend some time watching others. How are the opposition positioning themselves in attack plays and defence zones? Do we have a comprehensive understanding of why they are doing this? How can we use varying tactics which play to the strengths of our team and react to work well against the opposition?

**Consider what you will take away:** What have we learnt today? What can we focus on next time?

## **9. Future Development**

Each day we spend playing polo further expands our skills and knowledge, creating a more enjoyable experience on the water. With no two training sessions or games ever the same, we never stop learning.

Continually evaluating the choices we make creates a natural evolution of decision making ability helping us to link training to the game. When we reach a certain point in this, it may be worth considering moving onto British Canoeing Polo Coaching qualifications.