USPA Outdoor, International and Arena Rules Changes for 2018

Dear Members,

With the support of the Rules Committee and other USPA committees, the USPA Board of Governors has approved a number of changes to the USPA Outdoor Rules for 2018 (and two changes for 2019). These changes are designed to open up the game, make it safer, and bring the Outdoor Rules more in line with the USPA's International Rules and the HPA, FIP and AAP Rules. The most significant Outdoor Rules changes are summarized below, with corresponding International Rule changes noted in parentheses:

Rule 2.a (1): If a player is injured in a game and there are no eligible substitutes available, an eliminated player may be substituted to complete that game and any subsequent game for that team only.

Rules 4.a and 8.f: As of June 1, 2019, the protective helmet required for players and umpires must be NOCSAE-approved.

Rule 14.b: Except for the final period of regulation play, each period will terminate following the 7-minute horn or bell, when the ball goes out of play, a goal is scored, or the Umpire(s) whistle sounds. In the final period, if the game is not tied at the end of 7 minutes, the game will end on the 7-minute horn or bell. In the final regulation period and any subsequent overtime periods, if the game is tied play will continue until the second horn or bell, or until a goal is scored or awarded.

Rules 20.b, 22.a, and 36.e: For throw-ins, knock-ins and penalties, a player who is off-sides when play begins may not make a play until he is on-sides relative to a member of his own team who was properly positioned when play began. If all four players on the same team are off-sides when play begins, no player on that team may make a play until play is interrupted and resumed. (This change also applies to International Rule 36.a.)

Rule 20.c: During the throw-in, the Right of Way will be established when the ball leaves the line-up. Until such time, players may play the ball from any direction or angle providing they do so without creating danger or a risk of danger to themselves, other players or horses. (This change also applies to International Rule 10.)

Rule 22.e(2): If the ball is hit across the side boards or side line either directly or off the hitter's horse or a teammate or teammate's horse, or after glancing off the side boards, a free hit will be awarded to the team that did not hit the ball out. If the ball is hit across the side boards or side line after glancing off a member of the opposing team or his horse, a free hit will be awarded to the team that last hit the ball. (This change also applies to International Rule 9.c.)

Rule 24.i: When the ball is hit toward the boards and stops or is within approximately 6" of the boards, a player following the ball that is at an angle of approximately 90

degrees perpendicular to the boards, cannot turn without allowing the trailing player to clear or make a nearside play; unless the trailing player checks or reduces speed, the player with the ball may then turn the ball in either direction providing that he maintains speed and continues the play.

Rule 26: As of January 1, 2019, during the execution of a knock-in, Penalty 5.a or 5.b, or a free hit resulting from a ball hit out of bounds, an offensive player may not deliberately block a defensive player from marking the offensive player's teammate who has a play on the ball (i.e., deliberately set a pick on a defending player). When an offensive player improperly blocks a defensive player, the Umpires shall call a foul and award an appropriate penalty. Improper Blocking may or may not constitute Dangerous Riding, and result in a yellow or red flag under Rule 33, depending on the degree of danger as determined in the discretion of the Umpire. (As of January 1, 2019, this change also applies to International Rule 18.) (As of January 1, 2018, this change is available through the variance process to clubs and Host Tournament Committees who want to use it in 2018 events provided that they use USPA Professional Umpires and provide feedback to the Rules Committee.)

Also, with the support of the Rules Committee, the Arena Rules Subcommittee, and the Arena Committee, the USPA Board of Governors has approved changes to the Arena Rules and Arena Optional Tournament Conditions for 2018. These changes are also designed to open up the arena game and make it more player- and spectator-friendly. The most significant changes are summarized below:

- Optional Tournament Conditions have been adopted for Alternative Format Arena Polo (i.e., beach polo, snow polo, stadium polo, and other forms of arena polo played in non-standard arenas or facilities), making it possible for the USPA to sanction alternative format polo events.

- Arena Rule 5.c has been revised to allowing players on the same team to change horses in a shootout.

- Existing Optional Tournament Conditions for Arena Rules 6, 9 & 10 have been revised to add an optional Defended Penalty 3 from 15 yards for arena events with a lower handicap rating of 12 goals and above.

- An Optional Tournament Condition for Arena Rule 15 has been adopted to align the definition of a high hook in the arena with the outdoor definition for arena events with a lower handicap rating of 12 goals and above.

- Tournament Condition VIII has been revised to allow for Instant Replay in Arena and Alternative Format Polo.

We hope you agree that these rule changes are a step in the right direction and we welcome your feedback, whether positive or negative.

Chris Green, Chairman
USPA Rules & Rules Interpretation Committee