

Jumbo sporting contest

The world's biggest sporting event – in terms of competitor size – opens in Scotland's Chivas Regal team defend their Elephant Polo World Championship title in Nepal. First played during British rule in India, the sport has taken off since it was revived 25 years ago

Player: Strapped with rope harness onto elephant's back to prevent falling off

Mahout: Skilled Nepali driver communicates with elephant verbally and with foot pressure to back of ears

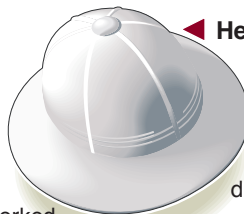
Elephant: Any age, size or sex. Has worked with mahout for years and responds quickly to his signals

After match, elephants receive a pick-me-up of sugar cane or rice balls packed with molasses and rock salt

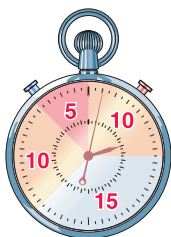
Mallet: Bamboo stick 1.5-3.5m, depending on height of elephant, with standard wooden polo mallet

Head gear: Traditional *sola topi* must be worn at all times

Ball: Standard bamboo or plastic polo ball, 78-90mm diameter, 150g weight. Originally played with football – but elephants liked to burst them!

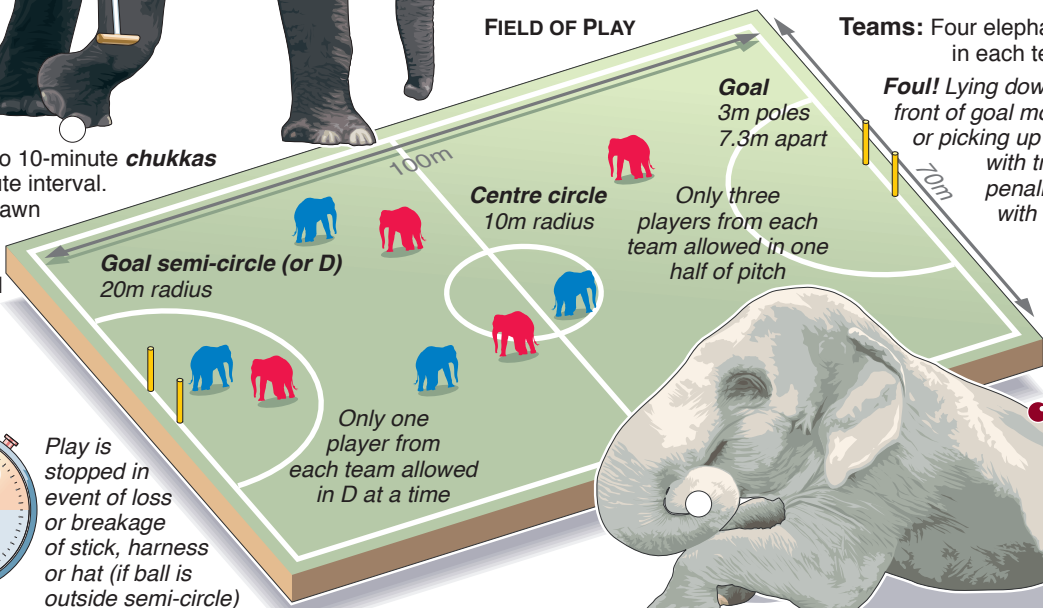


Timing: Two 10-minute *chukkas* with 15-minute interval. If game is drawn in knockout matches, an additional five minutes are played



Play is stopped in event of loss or breakage of stick, harness or hat (if ball is outside semi-circle)

FIELD OF PLAY



Teams: Four elephants in each team

Foul! Lying down in front of goal mouth or picking up ball with trunk penalised with free hit

