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Learn The Conversion Rates In High Goal Polo



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Compared to other sports such as tennis, basketball, or football, polo doesn't seem to be very statistically driven. Basketball players can analyze statistics about the score probability per possession, while a tennis player knows the speed and the effectiveness of his opponents serve. Polo, however, is lacking behind. We have comparably little statistical data available about the conversion rate of shots on goals or the percentage of 60 yard penalties, compared to penalties 3 or 2.



But why is this even important to know? The reason: Statistics can help you understand realistic goal settings. For example, if a 10-goaler has a success rate of, let's say, 40% in 60 yard penalties, then it would be unrealistic to expect a 80% success rate from yourself and get upset about every missed penalty.

Statistics help in understanding where you and your team stand in comparison to other players. Analyzed after a game, these numbers can help detect what worked well and what should be focused on in the next stick & ball session.



The numbers below have been collected from more than 100 chukkers in High Goal Polo (30-40 goals). You can use this data to judge your own performance—in comparison to the best players in the world.

Shots on Goal, Tiro al Arco/chukker*	4,9
Conversion Rate Shots on Goal	
Goal	39%
Blocked	24%
Wide	37%
Conversion Rate Penalties	
60 yd (penalty 4 & 6)	38%
40 yd (penalty 3)	74%
30 yd (penalty 2)	100%
Conversion Rate Penalties in Sum**	52%
Goals through Penalties	41%

*Shot on goal is defined as 1) ball made it through the goal or 2) ball went wide or 3) ball could theoretically have made it but was blocked by opposing team shortly before the goal, (shot on goals number is slightly higher than what Polo streaming channels usually count); not included here: penalty hits
 **included here are penalties 5a and 5b, hit from the Spot and hit from the middle line

There are a number of interesting findings based on the results. First, the conversion rate of shots on goal in High Goal Polo is 39%—about the same number of shots that go wide (37%). Meanwhile, 24% of these are blocked by the opposing team.

Next, there are around five shots on goal per chukker in general, excluding penalties. Also, slightly more hits go wide than get blocked by the opposing team (37% vs 24%).



Furthermore, 41% of all goals scored in a match are derived from penalties. And once a penalty is awarded, there is, in general, a 52% chance of it resulting in a goal. However, 30 yard penalties have a conversion rate of around 100% in High Goal Polo. On the other hand, 40 yard have 74% and 60 yard penalties have a conversion rate of 38%.

What does this mean for you now? Let me suggest a couple of learnings from the data given.

Keep track of your own performance.

Write down what happened during the game or training. It just takes a couple of minutes: How did you do? How did you feel? What was your conversion rate in shots on goal and penalties? Did you score, miss, or did you get blocked? Only when you know where your weak points are will you be able to train accordingly. You'll realize if you need to work on figuring out your opponent better or maybe anticipate her moves or you simply lack precision in shots. Having some sort of a diary gives you clearance on your own performance and on the issues you may need to train!



Make a plan and improve your performance!

Now that you have data about your performance, you can work on your weaknesses. If you permanently miss a certain shot, go back to your polo trainer and take a lesson! If you get very nervous during games or are prone to blackouts, go and see a mental trainer to show you some techniques.

Master the rules

As 41% of goals are scored through penalties, I suggest you learn the rules and better stick to them! Avoid risky maneuvers that get you into the penalty zone, stop complaining, and risk a technicality. But of course, still play fair and be a real sportswoman on and off the pitch!



Give yourself some slack

If you're a perfectionist, here's a piece of advice for you. Given a conversion rate of "only" 39% and not 100% shows you that even the 10-goalers aren't perfect! You are allowed to miss a goal, so please aim for excellence and progress rather than perfection!