

Understanding what it takes to overcome fear and self-doubt has been at the root of Paul 'Stalkie' Stalker's personal transformation. He has proven experience of working with Polo Teams, Patrons and individual players for the past 2 years achieving outstanding results. With individual clients, Stalkie's aim is to untap, nurture and focus their passion and potential on becoming the best versions of themselves in all aspects of their lives, whatever their starting point



# Are You Ready to Fulfil Your Polo Potential in 2023?

“Whether you think you can or think you can't, you're right” – Henry Ford



Photograph courtesy of Flatse Polo

Team engagement on and off the field is important for success

One of my fondest highlights of the 2022 home polo season was a beautiful sunny afternoon in July when Emlor – one of the teams I have the pleasure of 'mindset' coaching – took to the number 1 ground at the Royal County of Berkshire Polo Club to battle it out with Jolly Roger King of Polo for the prestigious Eduardo Moore Trophy.

The tournament is a tribute to Eduardo 'Gordo' Moore, the legendary polo player in the 1960s-80s, who reached 10 goals

here in the UK and 9 goals in Argentina. For Emlor, victory also ensured more points towards the Victor Ludorum.

The heritage, the setting, the weather, the quality of play, the camaraderie, the crowd energy, the high stakes – all these things contributed to a sparkling tribute to the game of polo we all love so much. Here were players on top of their game regularly putting the ball between the posts.

After the first two evenly contested

chukkas, Jolly Roger, with McKenzie and Cork both on fire, started to ride high and were looking odds-on to extend the 7-4 lead they had established in the third chukka.

What followed was the most powerful collective demonstration of one of the core beliefs that helped to raise Emlor's mindset to such a superior level this season – 'together we believe we can achieve'.

The final chukka was electric for crowd and players alike, as both teams gave

everything they had. When the final hooter sounded, the teams were 9 goals apiece. And after six tense minutes of an extra chukka, Emlor's Max Charlton managed to do from 60 yards what Harry Kane wasn't quite able to do from 12 yards in Qatar, slotting an assured penalty. This made Spencer McCarthy's team the 2022 Eduardo Moore champions.

To approach polo and play the game with unwavering self-belief is the aspiration of virtually every patron and player I've ever worked with. Get it right and you'll reap the following benefits:

- Remove the negative moods, stress and anxiety you associate with polo
- Replace these moods with an abundant, positive mindset
- Motivate yourself to always choose the best course of action on and off the field
- Become accountable for your behaviour and actions
- Be a positive role model and inspiration to other polo players
- Slot the penalty that matters most and win trophies!

Over the last two years, I have explored the fundamental principles of building a winning polo mindset. And then put practical team and individual programmes together to bring these principles alive in our daily behaviours and actions.

One of our fundamental principles is BELIEF. Our players learn:

- The psychological science behind self-belief
- How internal and external factors shape self-belief
- The mental and physical damage that negative self-belief can have on your game
- The incredible mental and physical benefits that positive self-belief can have on your game
- How to unlock and give free rein to your positive self-belief on and off the polo field.

### Self-Belief is Learnable

To give you a brief insight into our RAISE Polo methodology, let's start with the fact that self-belief is learnable.

Your current level of self-belief isn't fixed for the duration of your days on this planet. We can all learn and adapt. Self-motivation starts with wanting to do something and is fuelled by believing you can do it.

The minute you rely upon your coach,

your team-mates or your horses to present you with the best game of your life on a plate, or for your patron to give you a complete road map that will effortlessly lead you to a dream polo career, you are destined for disappointment.

Unlocking your self-belief is the cornerstone to becoming the polo player and person you want to be. If you are honest with yourself and seek to understand the things you need to improve upon, then there are plenty of powerful RAISE Polo tools that you can use to make positive change happen.

Your self-belief is influenced by:

- The knowledge you have built up from past experiences
- Your past plays and results
- The environment you decide to create for yourself using that knowledge

By applying your knowledge in a positive manner NOW, focusing on your best past plays and results NOW, you'll stack up your self-belief NOW.

### Replace Negative with Positive Thoughts

The power to upscale the quality of your polo game is massively dependent upon the quality of your internal thoughts and questions – and your ability to act upon them.

Polo is full of players telling themselves why they can't play at their best:

"The umpire keeps ruling against me"

"My horse is not responding to me"

"My team-mates keep criticizing me and think I'm rubbish"

"I'm letting the team down"

"My team-mates are playing badly and letting me down"

"Once I've made a few poor shots I always go in a downward spiral"

All of these types of thoughts are common throughout the polo playing world, but they only serve to distract us from experiencing 'the now', the present moment.

We often allow our thoughts to steer our attention to the past or the future, but we have no control over either – the past is over and the future isn't here yet. This means we are in an endless cycle of wasting our mental and emotional energy on things we can't control.

### The Only Moment We Can Impact is The Present

When we focus on the past, we often stir up negative feelings of guilt, regret, resentment and hurt which can drive us towards thinking and acting without confidence in the present. If you remember missing a potential match-winning shot and how it made you feel, it's likely to affect your ability to convert one now.

Likewise, when we focus too much on the future, we often create anxiety, tension and worry: 'What if I miss a vital shot again today?'

To succeed in the present, you must generate positive self-talk and affirmations ('I'm going to hit this shot as sweetly as I know I can'), visualize past success ('just like that winning pen I took against Jolly Roger'), and adopt a relaxed but powerful physiology.

### Playing Polo in The Now

Playing 'in the now' means being solely and intensely present in each moment. The more we live in the now, the more we are able to allow our instinct and talent to shine through in our play without hesitation and without worrying about the 'what ifs?'

In short, it's about directing our egos and self-belief to what we can control and experience right now, rather than distracting ourselves by focusing on things we can't control.

In our 2023 Winning Mindset Training programme, we'll be using strengths-based psychology to develop the belief in every player that they can do so much more – maybe it's building your core strength, improving your endurance, your horsemanship, your stick to ball technique, being a better communicator and team leader, increasing your handicap, playing for longer periods in the year across more countries?

All these goals are reachable in 2023 when you believe you can.

For further info contact; [Stalkie@rygp.co.uk](mailto:Stalkie@rygp.co.uk) or call him on +44(0)7771 515885  
[www.raisepolo.com](http://www.raisepolo.com)

Join Stalkie's Free Webinar: *Raising Your Polo Game*

Stalkie will be sharing three of the top tips that have supported two of the teams he's worked with this season, achieve new heights. Register by emailing [polotimes@rygp.co.uk](mailto:polotimes@rygp.co.uk) with your name, contact phone number and team name.