

SPORTING DESIGNS

Recent changes, enhancements and corrections to Polo Scoreboards.

We have a policy of continual improvement in all areas. Some of these improvements come about after feedback from users and we thank those who have made suggestions and pointed out problems. Please continue to tell us what you think – good and bad!

1. All our scoreboards are now made in aluminium. Although the wooden ones were properly treated and made with external grade and marine ply, the new aluminium ones are much lighter and should last forever. Being lighter the new ones are also much easier to move around; even by hand.



A new aluminium scoreboard

2. There is now better weather sealing including water drain holes where previously we didn't think they were needed. We have sourced a supply of water-proof tape which is used extensively; thank this summer's downpours for this 'enhancement'.
3. The buttons on the remote control units now have a better feel and 'click' more when pressed. A ridge around each button makes them easier to feel, especially when you are a mounted umpire and timekeeper!
4. We have speeded up operation when you want to reverse scores (for example). The first designs also prevented you from adding scores too quickly but we realised that this was not necessary and was frustrating.

5. All scoreboards are now provided with manual backup switches (see photograph below). These are the same switches as on the remote control unit but located on the side of the scoreboard. If the remote control unit ever fails then you can stand next to the scoreboard and operate it in exactly the same way. Although failures of the remote control unit are rare, it can be very frustrating to say the least.



Manual switches and re-start button (blue)

6. There is an option for an automatic power-off. If the scoreboard is not used for one hour, the digits are set to display OFF and the scoreboard powers down saving battery power. A simple reset button (usually blue) is located on the side (or on the horn) and used to restart the scoreboard.
7. You can start the scoreboard in Arena mode. Arena mode uses slightly different timings according to HPA rules. By default, scoreboards start in outdoor polo mode.
8. We have found a manufacturer who makes purpose-built trailers for outdoor scoreboards. These are galvanised and so will last a long time. These trailers also have 'outriggers' which extend out at each corner by nearly a metre and should prevent the scoreboard being blown over in a gale.



New scoreboard on purpose-built trailer (outriggers **not** extended)

9. We have also done some research into solar panels. Guards Polo Club has now fitted these to all their Sporting Designs scoreboards and they work well. Solar panels will be useful to all clubs which leave their scoreboards out all the time. Two, 5 watt 12 volt solar panels wired in series mounted horizontally at the top of the scoreboard will work well in summer providing that your scoreboard has the auto-power-off circuit. Please contact us if you want more information.
10. It was clear that some spectators did not know what the middle (chukka) digit was for. Now we put the word 'chukka' on all scoreboards. (See photograph above).
11. You can now display the time until the next chukka is due to start. The time between chukkas is 3 or 5 minutes. If this option is selected, at 2 minutes to go, the clock displays the time to go. When it reaches 0:00 the bell is sounded as usual.
12. We have just discovered how to let you change values and settings in the scoreboard. These have been implemented in Version 28 (not yet installed in any scoreboards). The settings are held in permanent memory and are therefore retained even if the scoreboard is powered off. The current list of settings is:
 1. Scoreboard type (outdoor Polo or Arena).
 2. Number of chukkas in matches; 4 or 6 (used to get the timing between chukkas correct as half time (5 mins) is between chukka 2 / 3 or 3 / 4 depending on the number of chukkas)
 3. The length of time the bell sounds for.
 4. The length of time the horn sounds for at the end of a chukka.
 5. If you want to display the time until the next chukka (see above).
 6. The length of time the bell sounds for at the end of the time-out between chukkas (if set to zero, the bell never sounds).
 7. The idle time before the scoreboard powers itself down (often one hour but now changeable).
13. Various modifications and corrections have been done in the control unit. Whenever the scoreboard powers up, the last stage is to display a P (for polo) or A (for arena) followed by two digits for the version. The current version is 28.

Some of the more important modifications and corrections have been:

 - Version 14. Allow chukka numbers to go up to 9.
 - Version 17. Arena timing is now an option on start up.
 - Version 18. Faster operation when reversing scores.
 - Version 22. The ability to cancel the bell in-between chukkas (see below).

- Version 24. When adding 10 seconds to the time after the bell has sounded the scoreboard will operate correctly. E.G. If the bell has just sounded, and the time has gone to -:26 and 10 seconds is added (because of timekeeper error) then the clock will go back to 0:06 and will re-sound the bell again at the correct time. (This was discovered because the author was watching just such a scenario happen).
- Version 25. Correction to the auto-power-down algorithm.
- Version 26. Auto–power-down does not happen if the real time clock is displayed.
- Version 27. The real time clock starts at 1:00 and not 10:00. 10:00 was confusing where scoreboards did not have a digit for the tens of minutes because it was displayed as 0:00.
- Version 28. User configurable settings added. See above.

Cancelling the warning bell in between chukkas. The scoreboard will automatically sound the bell 3 minutes (or 5 minutes) after the end of a chukka to warn the players that the end of the time-out is due. One timekeeper had the embarrassing experience of the bell sounding just as a player was about to start a chukka with a penalty hit. Now if you want to cancel the bell between chukkas, you can press the stop button (version 22 and later)

The Future.

We will continue to improve the polo scoreboard and of course fix any problems. We are currently looking at the design for a combined scoreboard / podium where at the end of a tournament the scoreboard can be brought to the prize-giving area and the rear of the scoreboard used as a raised winner's podium. This would be painted white with sponsors logos etc permanently attached. This will allow clubs to maximise sponsor's returns and provide good photo opportunities with the sponsor's messages.

We are also designing a simple, low cost polo clock for export and for clubs which have a lower budget. This will only have 3 digits for the time and with manual buttons on the side. It will be powered by a single 12 volt car battery. This unit will be very useful for players, spectators and grooms and it is expected that manual digits will be used for the team scores. Of course you will also be able to incorporate it into existing manual scoreboards.

Suggestions

We are very pleased to receive **any** suggestions from you as we want to improve the operation of the scoreboard and make it easier to operate. Please contact Paul Girdham, Sporting Designs Ltd. Thank you.

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