Historical Eurasian Cavalry Discipline

Basic Chogān Track Rules

Introductory Information

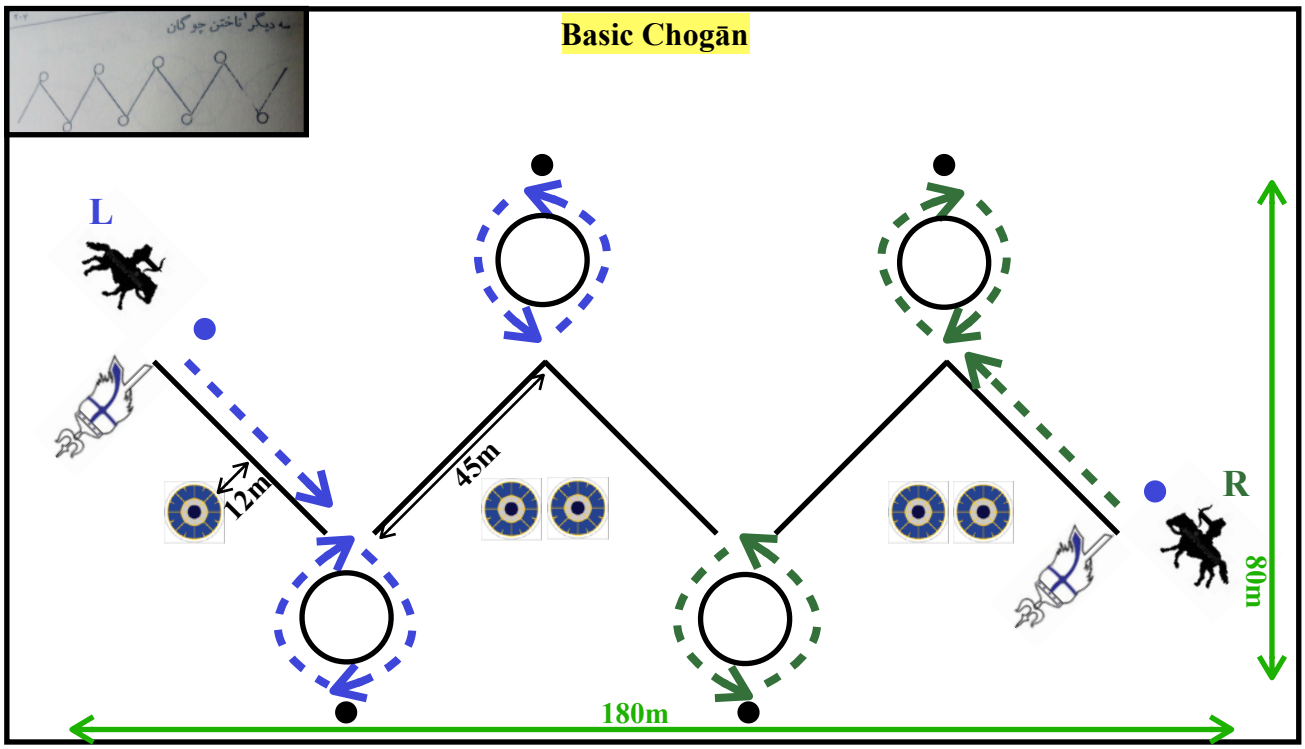
Chogān is the Persian name for an ancient game that became adapted to a modern sport today, later called polo by the British (though it is still called *chogān* in Iran today). Traditionally it was played in royal courts, often accompanied by music and storytelling, and served as a game during peacetime for warriors to practice basic kinds of equestrian skills that could also be useful in battle. The exercise from which this track derives comes from a thirteenth-century Persian military manual (within the *farasnāma* genre), titled *Adab-al-harab va Shojaat* ('The correct usages of war and bravery'), and is an exercise to train for playing *chogān*. Given that the game served as a way to practice equestrian manoeuvres that would be generally useful for battle, it has been adapted here for a few horse archery tracks involving technical riding manoeuvres.

The Basic Chogān track involves a mixture of 45m straight lines and 15m diameter circles, with 60cm targets, testing various aspects of archery, riding, and horse abilities.

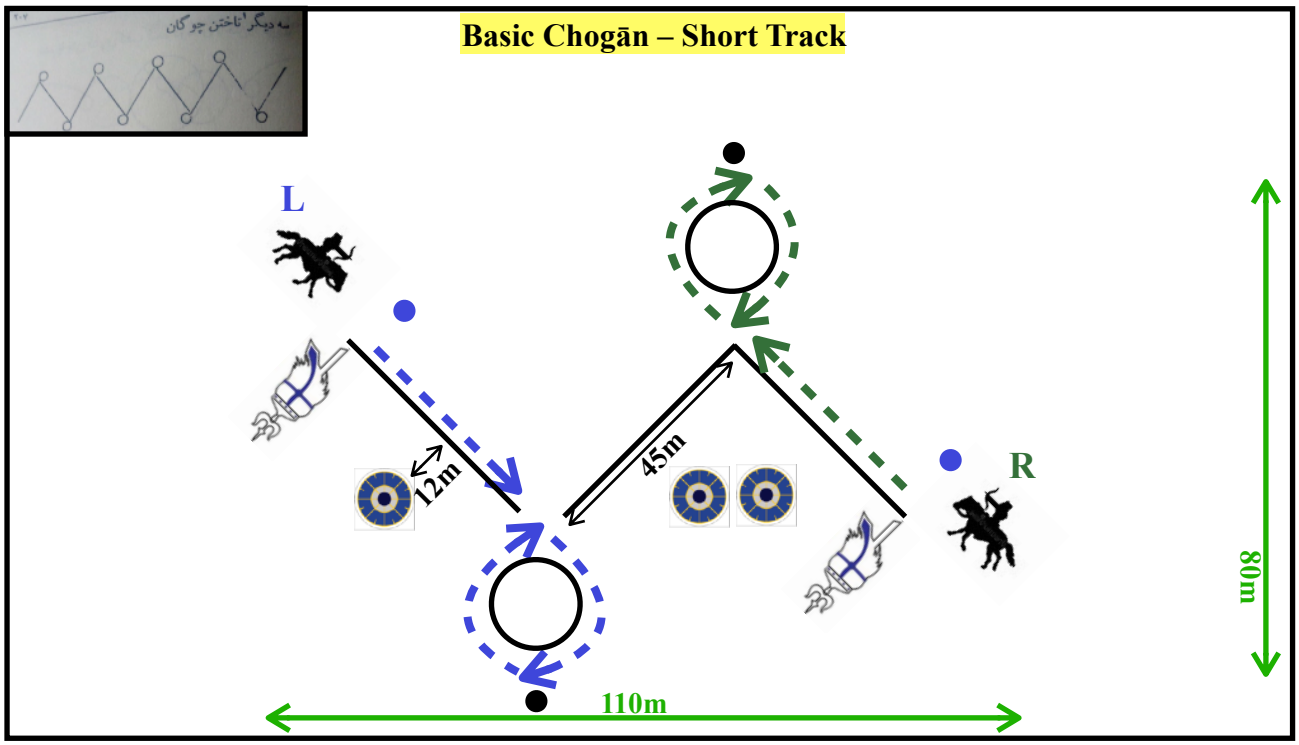
The basic level for the rider involves alternating between half-seat for shooting on a straight, then sitting for slowing and performing a simple lead change around a medium circle. For the horse, the basic level requires general balance on both sides, the ability to follow a track with a barrier only on one side, alternation between straightness and bending, and the ability to quickly perform canter to trot and trot to canter transitions to change canter lead.

Eventually, at the highest level, the best competitors and horses will extend the canter along the straight, shoot, then smoothly and swiftly collect up for a flying change right before the circles. Performing flying changes allow competitor and horse to be more efficient and will allow the competitor both to have more time to nock on the circle, prepare for shooting, and prepare for extending the canter on the straight, as well as generally gaining more time points because of maintaining canter rather than going slower for a few strides of trot on or before the circles.

Basic Chogān Track Diagrams



Allotted time: 106s



Allotted time: 58s

Track Setup

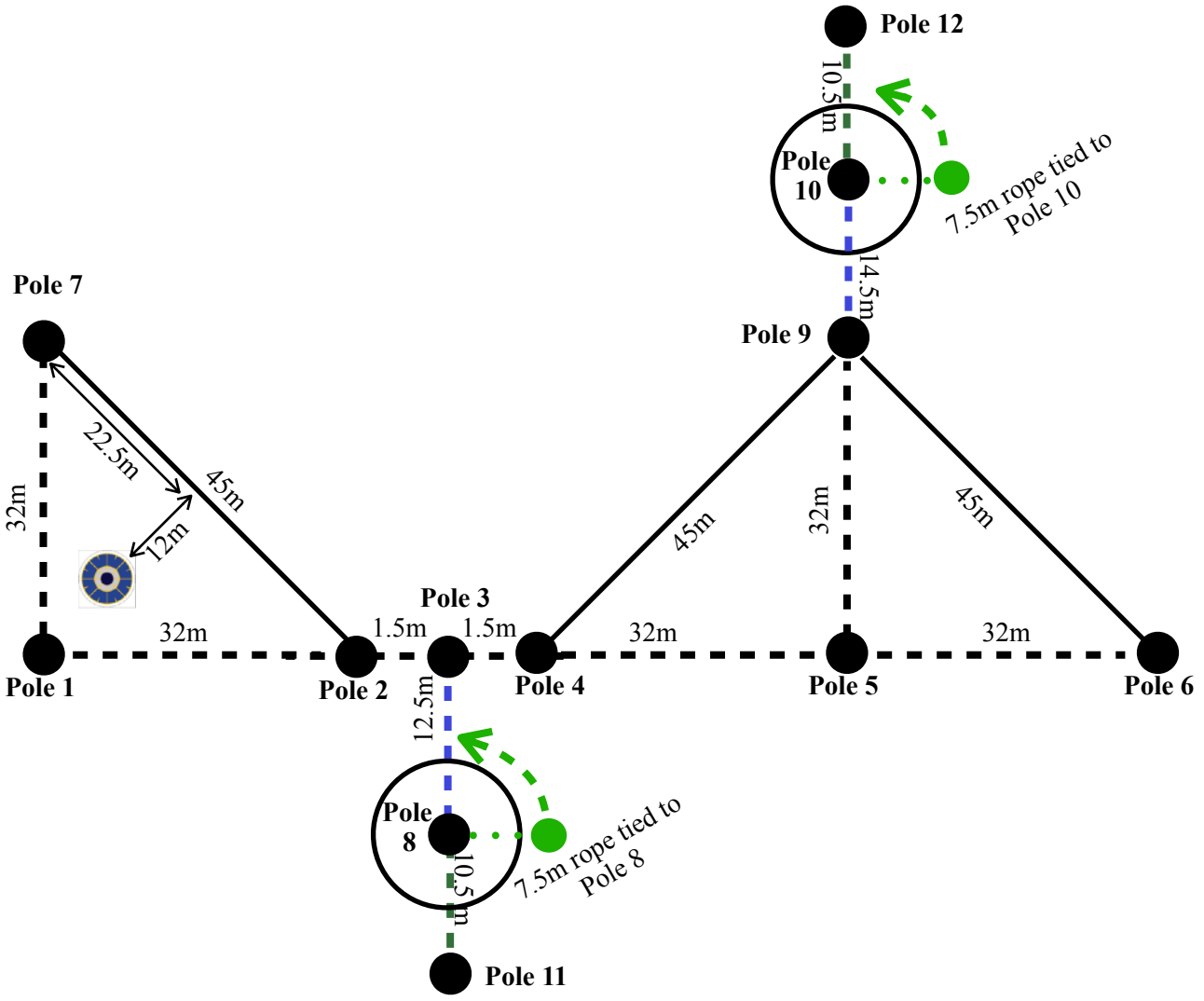
1.1. The area required for the full track is 70x180m, and for the short track is 70x110m.

1.2. The track should be set up by first putting up 6 poles, with 32m between Pole 1 and Pole 2, 1.5m between Pole 2 and Pole 3, 1.5m between Pole 3 and Pole 4, 32m between Pole 4 and Pole 5, and 32m between Pole 5 and Pole 6.

1.3. From Pole 1, measure 32m perpendicular to the line from Pole 1 to Pole 2, and place Pole 7. Make sure line is at 90º by ensuring that the distance from Pole 7 to Pole 2 is 45m.

1.4. From Pole 3, measure 9m and place Pole 8, then tie a 7.5m rope to Pole 8, draw a circle and mark off with a barrier.

1.5. From Pole 5 measure 32m at 90º from the line from Poles 4-6, and place Pole 9. Ensure it is at 90º by measuring Pole 4-Pole 9 and Pole 9-Pole 6 and ensuring they are equal (about 45m each). From Pole 9 extend the Pole 5-Pole 9 line by 14.5m and place Pole 10. With a 7.5m rope attached to Pole 10, draw a circle and mark off with a barrier.



1.6. Add Pole 11 and Pole 12 at the top or bottom of each circle, 3m from the edge of the circle (e.g. following the line from Poles 3-8 or Poles 9-10). These will be the posts that the competitor must pass through when going around each circle.

1.7. Remove Poles 1, 3, 5, 8, and 10. Place a single straight barrier between Poles 7 and 2, 4 and 9, 9 and 6. Add any additional segments of the track in the same way. Electronic timing gates should be placed at the poles at the start and end of the track at a width of 3m; for example, at Poles 7 and 6 in the above track setup diagram (and indicated by the blue circles in the track diagrams on page 3). An official with stopwatch and an official with flag at start and finish may be used instead of electronic timing gates in smaller competitions and training events, **BUT** a pole should still be placed 3m opposite the first pole of the single barrier at start and finish and the competitor must pass through this 'gate' for the time to start/stop.

1.8. Targets will be placed as **side shots** 12m from the track, at the midpoint (22.5m) of each 45m straight line. For competitions, the centre of the target for both kinds of target (short and long distance) should be a height of 1.5m (±5cm). (For training purposes, the targets may be placed at ground level.) In training and standard competitions (for example, club competitions, national championships, eGP etc.), FITA 60cm or 60cm Turkish Tabla targets may be used. In international championship competitions (ECs, WCs, etc.), 60cm Tabla targets will be used.

<u>Procedure</u>

1.1. All shots must be made in canter, and only shots made in correct canter lead for the target will count.

1.1.1. Competitors may start with one arrow nocked, but all other arrows must be in the quiver. After this, one or several arrows can be drawn from the quiver and arranged in the hand if desired.

1.2. For Basic Chogān tracks, the competitor will follow the line of the track with the single barrier between them and the targets. There will be a **post with clear visual indicator** (e.g. small flag) 3m away from the edge of each circle as defined and shown in the **Track Setup** above. The competitor must pass through all of these 'gates' before completing the track. The competitor's time will keep running until they have passed through all gates. If the competitor passes the timing gate at the finish without passing through all these gates, the score for that run will be zero.

1.3. The competitor (either left-handed or right-handed) will start the track on the **left** canter lead. Left-handed archers begin on one side of the track, and right-handed archers on the opposite side, as indicated in the diagram.

Scoring:
1.4. If 60cm FITA targets are used for the close distance targets, the scoring will be 2-6 points. If 60cm Tabla targets are used, the scoring will be the normal three zones with 6,4,2 points. Each target may only be shot with one arrow. Each target may only be shot with **two** arrows, and up to **two** arrows count towards target points.

1.5. At the start of every circle on the track, the competitor will need to change canter lead. This can be done via a **simple change** (transitioning to trot, then acquiring correct canter lead for the next curve), or it may be done via a **flying change**. Trotting around the circle is permitted, but the following shot still must be made with correct canter lead for the preceding circle to count. If the competitor does not change canter lead **and** passes the post placed 3m from the 'top' or 'bottom' of the circle in countercanter, a line referee will raise a red flag and the competitor will not receive any points for any target shot on the straight line immediately following that circle. This follows the concept that if a rider were not balanced harmony with their horse in battle, they would not be able to fight as effectively against enemies.

1.6. Time points will be calculated at 1pt/s for each second under the allotted time, and time penalty will be calculated at -1pt/s for each second over the allotted time. The minimum score for each run is zero. Time points are only awarded when a competitor hits at least two out of three total different targets (short track), or three out of five different targets.

1.6.1. The time begins after the competitor passes the timing gates at the start of the first straight. The competitor may take any space and shape of run-in (straight, curve, etc.) in the open area around the start.