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## 1. PURPOSE OF TRACKING

- 1.1. Locate missing riders to between two points.
- 1.2. Provide a reasonable indication that riders complete the course.
- 1.3. Provide points around the course where riders can request assistance.
- 1.4. Provide supporters with an indication of how a rider is going.

## 2. CONDUCT

- 2.1. A great deal of voluntary time, trouble and expense goes into organising a ride. Diligent tracking is essential to ensure fairness, especially to competitive riders.
- 2.2. At the same time, an event should be pleasant and enjoyable for all concerned, including us. Our conduct must be friendly, considerate, polite and helpful to all riders and officials. Many are young people, perhaps on their first event. Arrival at a checkpoint should be a pleasant experience.
- 2.3. We have gone to much trouble to differentiate our services as being at or above a professional level, and to stress that we are licensed Amateur Radio operators - not CBers!
- 2.4. First impressions are the lasting ones so please speak, dress and act appropriately from both a technical and a social perspective.

## 3. OVERVIEW

### 3.1. Rides we service

For our purposes, most of the rides we service are referred to as:

- (a) **80K** - two Legs of 40 km. 80 km riders usually start first;
- (b) **40K** - usually one half of the 80 km ride. 40 km riders usually start half to one hour after the 80 km;
- (c) **20K** - usually part of one of the other rides. 20 km riders usually start 1 - 2 hours after the 80 km.

There are longer rides, which we service occasionally e.g. state championships

- (d) **160K** ('100miler') several Legs, the last two shorter.

More detailed information is available in [Appendix 1](#).

### 3.2. Time of Day

- (a) 80K rides usually start at 07:00 or 07:30.
  - (b) Longer rides usually start at midnight and extend for up to 24 hours.
  - (c) Early checkpoints must be established prior to start time, to be sure of being ready for the first arrivals and to avoid vehicular traffic on the course.
  - (d) It is necessary to arrive at the ride location no later than the evening prior.
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- (e) Camping is always available at Base. Some checkpoints are in pleasant locations suitable for over-nighting in vehicles (avoiding the need to rise so early).
- (f) Breakfast is normally taken 'on the job' after setting up.
- (g) Sometimes, meals are available at Base. When this is the case prior notice will be given.

#### 4. RADIO NETWORK

- 4.1. The radio network for each event is set up suited to the course and terrain.
- 4.2. When Base and Checkpoint locations are known in advance, radio coverage is assessed with Radio Mobile software to determine the likelihood of the need for a repeater. In difficult terrain, the Course Setter may be asked if it's possible to relocate a checkpoint.
- 4.3. An on the ground survey is conducted before the event, usually by an advance group the day prior. This may determine the need for a mast and/or gain antenna at a checkpoint, which is then taken into account when deploying checkpoint teams.
- 4.4. Base is normally set up with a VHF/UHF cross-band repeater. This enables the use of low power equipment around Base, especially useful if a Base operator has to leave the station to confer with a ride official. Also to enable ride officials to 'listen' in without the need for a base antenna.
- 4.5. A cross-band set up at checkpoints is also useful, if suitable radios are available, to enable some movement around the checkpoint area, rather than being confined to a vehicle e.g. comfort breaks or water trough replenishment.
- 4.6. Frequencies are usually determined prior to the event and normally confined to commonly pre-programmed radio channels. Radios should be checked in advance that the required programming is in place.
- 4.7. Radios are often allocated to ride officials in public areas. Assume a wide listening audience!
- 4.8. Formal network procedures should be observed, especially early when more than one ride is in progress and riders are still 'bunched' with resultant heavy radio traffic.
- 4.9. Operator/equipment taken into account with deployments:
  - (a) number of operators available;
  - (b) equipment needs and availability;
  - (c) possibility of moving from an early checkpoint to a later one on completion of the first;
  - (d) access tracks and vehicle type;
  - (e) number of rides passing through a checkpoints;
  - (f) number of times a ride passes through a checkpoint;
  - (g) earlier checkpoints suffer from 'bunching' so the workload is higher and more difficult. This would be a priority for a 'two operator' station;
  - (h) any need of an operator to arrive late or to get away early;
  - (i) natural pairing e.g. family members.



## 5. CHECKPOINTS

### 5.1. Staffing

- (a) When sufficient operators are available, each checkpoint will have a minimum of two.
- (b) If there low numbers available, single operators are deployed to the easier (usually later) checkpoints.

### 5.2. Set up

- (a) Checkpoint positions are established by the Course Setter and marked with a sign.
- (b) A visit to the location the previous day is highly desirable, especially if to be approached in darkness.
- (c) Courses are marked with different coloured arrows and 10 km distance markers. If the course follows vehicular tracks, the markers can assist in route finding to checkpoints. GPS and/or APRS is very useful for navigation.
- (d) Normally, an APRS tracking capability is established at Base to enable the location and direction of checkpoint crews.
- (e) Checkpoints usually include horse watering troughs.
- (f) A checkpoint number board is displayed to enable riders to know they are passing checkpoints sequentially.
- (g) Sometimes, there is more than one checkpoint at the one location e.g. on entering and leaving a loop. When this occurs, for tracking purposes each pass through is designated with a different Checkpoint number.

### 5.3. Primary Task

To ascertain, record and pass to Base:

- (a) Checkpoint number
- (b) Ride
- (c) Rider number
- (d) Time arrived

### 5.4. Method – Primary Task

- (a) Riders wear a numbered (or , in the case of riders of stallions, alpha labelled) bib. These are colour coded, normally designating which ride they are doing:
  - 80K - orange with black number and edge trim
  - *80K novice horse also has a yellow tag attached to the rider's bib*
  - 40K - green with white number and yellow trim
  - 20K - yellow panel, green shoulders, black numbers, yellow trim
  - Stallions (irrespective of ride) blue with white alpha and yellow trim.



- (b) Numbers are rarely duplicated in the total field and a rider list is issued to checkpoint teams, either before departing Base or on air prior to the arrival of the first riders. This list can be used to supplement the bib colours in identifying which ride applies.
- (i) Forms are available to record the information required, though use of these is a personal preference. It is necessary to record the following in order of arrival:
- Ride e.g. 80, 40 or 20K
  - Rider number
  - Time entered the Checkpoint
  - Tick confirming information passed to Base
  - Tick confirming information transferred to tracking sheet (see below)
- (ii) On entering the Checkpoint riders are required to call out their number. It is not always possible to read the bib number.
- (iii) The checkpoint operator must call back the number recorded to confirm to the rider that the correct number has been noted.
- (iv) Riders may arrive at Checkpoints in groups, especially at early checkpoints, so you need to have your wits about you!
- (v) As soon as possible, report to Base, in small groups if arrival times are the same
- ◆ “Base this is Checkpoint #”
- (c) When acknowledged, pass
- ◆ “Checkpoint #
  - ◆ Ride (80, 40 or 20) - not necessary later when only the 80K ride is still in progress
  - ◆ Time
  - ◆ Rider numbers
- See Appendix 2 for details on passing multiple rider numbers
- (d) Base will read the information back to you
- ◆ Confirm (“Roger”) or make correction.

### 5.5. Secondary Task

To identify any missing riders and notify Base of the concern. This is a secondary task because it must not detract from the primary purpose of recording numbers as riders arrive. Base will identify any missing numbers and ask you to confirm that they have not passed. (Usually, they have but have been lost in the rush whilst recording and reporting).

### 5.6. Method - Secondary Task

- (a) Forms are available for tracking (which should be separated from recording arrivals), though use of these is a personal preference. They can be pre-prepared in Ride and Rider number order. They provide a list of expected arrivals which can be ticked off by consulting the arrivals record sheet.



- (b) They may have more than one column for each rider if there is more than one pass through the checkpoint by each rider e.g. on Leg 1 and again on Leg 2.
- (c) In quiet times, tick off the riders you have recorded as having arrived.
- (d) Base will inform you of any retirements, so that you can mark your sheet accordingly.
- (e) Check with Base if you feel you have a missing rider.
- (f) If a rider is considered overdue, other riders may be asked if they have seen the missing rider. e.g. if the horse is lame it may be being walked to the checkpoint.

#### **5.7. Other Tasks**

- (a) Pass to Base any requests for assistance from riders, usually a request for a float to transport an injured or lame horse.
- (b) Maintain levels in horse water troughs from the drums provided.
- (c) Call for more water if required.
- (d) Return empty troughs and drums to Base on closing down (if vehicle type permits).

#### **5.8. Equipment**

- (a) Mobile VHF radio - cross-bandable if possible and if so.
- (b) Handheld UHF radio
- (c) Mast, antenna and coax if required at the location.
- (d) Biro(s) (including spare).
- (e) Clipboard.
- (f) Forms (arrivals and tracking sheets) or notepad (A5 minimum).
- (g) Food and drink.
- (h) Basic first aid kit e.g. band-aids and analgesics (these should be tendered to others only on request and administered by the user).

#### **5.9. Nice to haves**

- (a) A supply of 'person' drinking water and dispensing containers (normally carried by riders but unexpected warm conditions may deplete).
- (b) A container of 'lollies' or suitable fruit to hand out to riders.
- (c) Camp chair and table.
- (d) GPS or APRS tracker.



## 6. BASE – Radio Operator and Compiler

### 6.1. Primary Task

- (a) To inform the appropriate ride official, either directly or via supplied radio, of:
  - (i) requests for assistance from riders e.g. float;
  - (ii) riders not reported as passed a checkpoint;
  - (iii) horse water supply needs.
- (b) To gather from the appropriate ride official, either directly or by radio:
  - (i) list of rider numbers for each ride;
  - (ii) any retirements or ‘vet outs’
  - (iii) any other information useful to effective tracking.
  - (iv) Leg finish times
- (c) To inform checkpoints of
  - (i) Rider numbers for each ride
  - (ii) Any retirements or ‘vet outs’
  - (iii) Progress on requests made from checkpoints;
  - (iv) ‘Suspect’ rider numbers e.g overdue or having passed a subsequent checkpoint.

### 6.2. Role: - Radio Operator

- (a) To pass numbers of starters and ‘vetted out’ or retired riders to checkpoints;
- (b) to receive raw data (in time order), note and pass to compiler, (singly or in small groups);
- (c) to seek clarification requested by the Compiler;
- (d) to receive from the Finish official the Ride or Leg finish times for each rider;
- (e) to receive from the Start official any variations to individual rider start times i.e. starting Leg 1 later than the group, or starting Leg 2 other than one hour after finishing Leg 1;
- (f) to pass requests for assistance from Checkpoints to the appropriate ride official e.g. float or water requests.



### 6.3. Role: - Compiler

- (a) To compile and overview all data received to identify possible errors, omissions, or events requiring action to enable the ride officials to ensure that the ride rules are met.
- (b) to receive data from the Radio Operator and compile in rider number and ride progress order;
- (c) to receive from the Start official the start time for each Horse/Rider.
  - (i) Normally this will be same time for the initial start of all riders in each ride.
  - (ii) 80K riders will normally start Leg 2 one hour after finishing Leg 1.
- (d) To inform the Secretary of any rider recorded as having finished a Leg but not having passed through all preceding checkpoints;
- (e) to seek, through the Radio Operator, clarification on the whereabouts of missing riders;
- (f) to relieve the Radio Operator as necessary;
- (g) to attend to any technical needs e.g. generator refuelling.

### 6.4. Process

- (a) When circumstances permit, the master tracking records are maintained on a PC spreadsheet. The PC screen, or a secondary screen, should be visible to the Radio Operator. If a PC is not available, the Compiler uses a paper based spreadsheet.
- (b) The Radio Operator notes transmissions received on a 'no carbon required' pad and attaches the top copy to the compiler's to be entered clip.
- (c) The compiler enters the data in the spreadsheet, then removes the copy from the clip and 'files' it in the order of receipt.
- (d) In quieter times it may be possible to keypunch the data directly from the radio traffic. However, a written paper record should always be maintained as in (b) above.

### 6.5. Equipment

- (a) Biros
- (b) NCR pads e.g. telephone message or waiter's order pad.
- (c) To be entered clip e.g. kitchen order clip rack.
- (d) PC with pre-prepared spreadsheet.
- (e) Entered copy file e.g. spike or box
- (f) If Base is set up with a cross-band repeater
- (g) 2 handheld UHF radios with speaker microphones,  
otherwise
- (h) 1 mobile VHF radio
- (i) Note:  
Other activities may be undertaken e.g. APRS tracking. This may need alternative radio/PC configurations.



## APPENDIX 1 – Additional Information

### 1. Rides Standards

- (a) *Endurance Ride - competitive ride of 80 km or more, made up of Legs of no more than 50 km and averaging not more than 40km. Vet checks are carried out before and after each leg. Maximum ride times are set for each ride, which in any case shall not be less than 10 km per hour.*
- (b) *Elevator ride - competitive ride of not less than 100 km.*
- (c) *Marathon Ride - competitive ride of 80 km or more each day for three or more consecutive days.*
- (d) *Mini-marathon Ride - non competitive of less than 80 km each day for three or more consecutive days.*
- (e) *Training Ride -non competitive ride of less than 80 km. Minimum ride times apply.*
- (f) *Introductory Ride - non competitive ride of less than 40 km. Minimum ride times apply*

### 2. Ride Divisions – endurance riders

- (a) *Heavyweight - riding weight of 91Kg and over*
- (b) *Middleweight - riding weight of 73 Kg and over*
- (c) *Lightweight - riding weight of less than 73 Kg*
- (d) *Junior - 15 years or less*

### 3. Care of horses

- (a) *In summary, horses have to be in good condition before starting each Leg and on completion. If not, they are disqualified (“vetted out”). This produces a balancing act for the competitive rider between a fast time and not overstretching the horse.*
- (b) *Vet checks are conducted:*
  - (i) *Prior to the ride*
  - (ii) *No more than thirty minutes after completing a leg, by which time horses must have recovered with respect to temperature, pulse rate, respiration and other factors including lameness.*

### 4. Starts

- (a) *Normally, the riders in each ride start together, but not necessarily.*

### 5. Breaks between Legs

- (a) *There is a compulsory rest break between legs (“Hold Time”). Ride time does not include Hold Time.*
- (b) *If a break of more than the “Hold Time” is taken, the excess time is included in the ride time.*



## 6. Horse fitness

- 6.1. *Horses must pass a veterinary check before being allowed to start. This may be the evening prior.*
- 6.2. *On completing each Leg, the horse is again checked for temperature, pulse, respiration and any lameness. Only healthy, sound, unimpaired horses, free of pain and which are considered 'fit to continue' are permitted to commence or continue in the ride.*
- 6.3. *On completing the ride, the horse must again be found to be in good condition or is disqualified.*

## 7. Ride Rules which may impact on the Checkpoint Role

- 7.1. *Withdrawn horse – The rider may notify a checkpoint of their decision to withdraw.*
- 7.2. *External assistance - Riders and horses must not have any external assistance whilst competing. Checkpoint hand outs of drinking water, lollies and the like is O.K.*
- 7.3. *Course as marked – If an error is made in following the course as marked, the horse and rider must return – without outside assistance – to the point where they left the course and then complete the course as marked – or withdraw from the ride.*

## 8. 'Vet Gate into Hold' Rides

*Where this procedure is in place, the ride time of a rider does not end when the horse and rider arrive at the end of a Leg. Instead the clock continues to run until the rider calls "Time". At this point the horse is vetted. The challenge for the rider is move at a good pace but also keep the horse in good condition so it recovers quickly and thus minimises the total time between starting and calling 'Time'. Unless the final Leg, following a successful vet check the horse goes into "Hold" time, which is a preset time between 'Time' and starting the next Leg. 'Hold' times are set by the ride organisers taking into account the toughness and length of the next Leg and apply to all competitors.*

*Some Legs may have a "re-present" rule applied. In this case the horse must be re-presented for a further vet check at the end of the Hold time before starting the next Leg.*

## 9. More information

- 9.1. *Australian Endurance Riders Association Rules*
- 9.2. *Tasmanian Equine Endurance Riders Association Inc*



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## APPENDIX 2 – Reporting multiple riders

To ease the job of the Base operator and Compiler, checkpoints should call multiple sets of rider numbers and times as follows:

For example, a group of five riders arrive at Checkpoint 2, closely followed one minute later by another group of two riders.

### Checkpoint

“Base this is Two - Over”

### Base

“Two this is Base – Over”

### Checkpoint

“Two times

23 at 1415

Same time

46 and

186 and

48 and

98

New time

123 at 1416

Same time

56

Roger”

### Base

– read back

“Roger”

### Checkpoint

“Roger” or correction etc.

The first part of the message enables the data entry person to position the cursor against the first number and immediately enter the time, copy and paste (or re-punch) into the following horse numbers arriving at the same time.

The inclusion of the word “and” between numbers with the same time, provides a moment to write down the number before the next is called.

### APPENDIX 3 -Bib Colours



80K Endurance – Orange/Black/Reflect stripe



80K Endurance – Novice Horse Orange/Black (yellow tag)



40K Training – Green/White/Yellow trim



Stallion – Blue/White/Yellow trim



20K Introductory – Yellow/Black/Green shoulder

Ride designating bibs with rider I.D.

(photos Matt Bennet Photography)

<http://www.mattbennet.com>

### APPENDIX 4 - LOGGING SHEETS – on following pages