Introductory note

These notes are intended to provide a general picture of the sport of endurance riding, as usually serviced by NTARC and other amateur radio groups, so that operators working at checkpoints have some knowledge of the event. Most of the following are not factors in the usual checkpoint and safety communication role. They are not intended to cover all the rules of endurance riding, nor to provide guidance to those more closely involved in the sport. Some points provide an overview only of more comprehensive rules and policies.

Full material is available here
https://aera.asn.au/images/rules/2022/2022_AERA_Rulebook_S1_-_General_Rules_January_2022_1.pdf

Equine Endurance Event – What is it?

Not all rides in an event need be Endurance rides. To be classed as an Endurance ride it must be 80km or more. Most endurance events include shorter rides of around 40km, 20km and sometimes 5km. The other distance encountered once or twice each year is 160km in State Championship or a ride run to provide an opportunity to qualify to enter the national championship – the Tom Quilty Gold Cup..

In all rides, each horse's condition is paramount and is checked by a vet before starting and at the end of each Leg. Checks include heart rate which must be less than the set maximum. The check must take place no more than 30 minutes after completing the Leg. A horse must not start the next leg until 60 minutes after completing the previous leg. (There are variations to this).

Introductory and Intermediate Rides

Introductory ride   1 to 30km – non competitive

Intermediate ride   40 – 60km – non competitive

Both must be completed no earlier than a set time and no later than another set time. These times are set taking into account the nature of the track.

Endurance Rides – at least 80km and competitive

Endurance rides are divided into Legs. An 80km ride is usually 2 x 40km legs (often the same repeated or reversed). 160km rides are usually divided into five legs, the later ones decreasing in length.

The winner of an Endurance ride is the one completing in the shortest riding time i.e. the total time expired between when the horse and rider commence the ride and when they are timed in off the final leg of the ride less the cumulative hold times imposed after each leg.

There are variations to this with Vet Gate Into Hold rides (VGIH). One difference here is that riding time continues until the horse is said to be ready for vetting and is successfull – so a fit, quickly recovering horse is recognised in the timing.
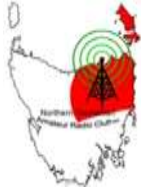
Endurance Rider Riding Divisions

For endurance rides, riders compete in divisions – Heavyweight, Middleweight, Lightweight and Junior (17 and under). A winner is declared in each of these divisions. Also, there is a Best Conditioned horse recognised in each division, based on vet assessments of set criteria.

As well as horse and rider tracking, which is covered elsewhere, checkpoints may also need to contact Ride Base in the following circumstances:

- Horse in need of a 'float' (horse trailer) to return to Base due to injury, illness or otherwise not going well enough to finish the Leg, or a rider unable to continue.
- Horse in need of a farrier to attend to a shoe.
- To relay a report from a rider of another horse or rider in trouble back on the track.
- To relay a report of a problem with the track e.g. fallen tree.

Other checkpoint duties are sometimes to:

- Call for water troughs to be refilled
- Hand out 'lollies' for riders and/or carrots for horses
- Stock control – where gates are left open for the passage of riders
- Gate monitoring – where gates are to be opened and closed by riders.

Compiled by

VK7ARN