



**NSW ENDURANCE RIDERS ASSOCIATION INC.**

*Endurance forum 2020*

Session 9: Stepping up - 40km... and beyond!

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### Eligibility requirements

#### 40km

##### *Horse (cl 45 of the AERA rulebook)*

- Minimum age 4 ½ judged on the teeth and birthday  
*Must show a full mouth of permanent teeth erupted but the corner incisors need not be in wear*

#### Novice 80km – 120km

##### *Rider (cl 27/28 of the AERA rulebook)*

- 2 x 40km completions
- Current membership card showing full novice membership of state division
- Must be 12 years old to ride unaccompanied
- Must be 18 years old to ride a stallion

##### *Horse (cl 45/46/47 of the AERA rulebook)*

- May enter rides from 80km to 120km.
- Minimum age 5 judged on the teeth and birthday  
*Must show a full mouth of permanent teeth erupted and the permanent incisors are in wear*
- Novice (blue) logbook - apply to the NSWERA Secretariat, you will need to be a current member of a Division (State) and supply copies of the vet cards for the 40km completions
- Rider completed horse ID
- Maximum 2 x endurance rides in 22 day period
- Maximum 4 x endurance rides in 90 day period

To enter any ride, the horse shall satisfy both the minimum age and the dentition criteria for that ride. Failure to satisfy both criteria shall render the horse ineligible to enter that particular ride.

For introductory, intermediate and micro-marathon rides, where no logbook has been issued for the horse, the date of birth shall be that date verbally advised by the handler. For horses that have been issued with a logbook, the date of birth shall be the date of birth recorded in the logbook. The head veterinarian's determination of the dentition of a horse shall be final.

These novice restrictions occurred as a result of a Senate Inquiry into endurance riding because of concerns raised by the RSPCA of cruelty. In order to demonstrate that we were caring for our horses, some innovations were brought in, such as the logbook and the concept of the novice horse. This stopped riders from getting carried away and doing too much too soon, so that horses are introduced gradually and slowly into the sport.

## Endurance Status

### *Rider (cl 29.3)*

- Must have 3 x 80km completions
- Current membership card showing full endurance membership of state division – apply to the NSWERA secretariate to upgrade your membership card from Novice to Endurance
- Must be 12 years old to ride in a Tom Quilty national championship

### *Horse (cl 48)*

- 3 x 80km completions
- Can enter mini-marathon, marathon and endurance rides from 80km to < 160km
- To progress to an Endurance (yellow) logbook, apply to the NSWERA Secretariate to upgrade
- A minimum 90 days from first 80k completion must have elapsed
- Must be microchipped and have vet certified ID
- Requires registration (annual or lifetime) when upgrading to endurance status
- Horse must be 6 years to enter a 160km or more

The forms required for horse and rider are found on the NSWERA website.

Remember, for all rides (cl 54) –

- No crops, whips or spurs
- No standard martingale
- No ear plugs
- Must have 2 reins
- Remove hoods for vetting
- (cl 38) Standard approved helmet, and
- Footwear with heels or caged stirrups

If either horse or rider is of novice status, then these limits apply to both horse and rider at an event.

There is no time limit on horses completing the 3 rides required to become endurance status, and you can remain as a novice but you are restrained to novice rules. However, once you have attained endurance status, you must do one endurance ride in the next 13 months to avoid going back to novice status (time and distance) until you complete another ride. (cl 48.2)

## Training for 40 km and higher distances

### Insight

#### *Developing Judgement*

Get to know what is normal for your horse or what he is telling you, as every horse is different and affects how you ride (does he like to go, does he like company, does he like to canter or trot etc) and strap (standing heart rates and recovery, temperature, does he retain heat or feel the cold, does he drink a lot on the first leg or not etc).

#### *A foundation for the future*

It is setting up for the long game with –

Gradual progress,

Long and slow distance,

Patience and time, (perhaps starting at 5 years old starting with 40km and 80km, at 8 years old doing higher distances or going a bit faster, then at 10 years old seeing what they can do)

Don't do too much too soon, even if your horse seems to be coping fine, (putting the work into the horse in the beginning and not rushing and getting the results later on, maintaining soundness )

Increasing fitness vs maintaining fitness, and

“Last Year” syndrome, doing too much last year and not taking time out.

Physical conditioning takes –

Weeks - heart, lungs and muscles,

Months - ligaments and tendons, and

Years – skeleton and joints.

You are also building the mind as well, such as being able to ride in the dark, riding in a group, riding on a 2 way zone with horses trotting or cantering towards you etc. Other work can include lunging, arena work and other disciplines, such as trail riding, dressage, jumping,

showing, eventing, campdrafting etc are all good cross training activities to keep you and your horse fresh physically and mentally.

### Your training plan

#### *Logistics*

How often should you ride?

How far should you ride?

How fast should you ride?

Where should you ride?

What time of day should you ride?

Should you ride with others or alone?

Maintaining motivation for you and your horse

*The short answer is it all depends on lots of factors!*

What trails are easily accessible, or have to travel to, whether you have others to ride with and your work schedule etc all have a bearing on what training you are able to do. However, you can control the speed and the distance you can ride relative to the fitness of the horse. A short ride is better than no ride, and you don't want to be riding lots of long distances either. Some horses like variety in trails and work, some like the same, some like the same company etc. Sometimes it is easier to keep you motivated if you arrange to ride with a friend.

Aim to start 3 times (maintaining fitness) to 4 times (increasing fitness) a week, maybe both days on the weekend to about 15 – 25ks and rarely more than 25k when trying to boost fitness for an upcoming ride. Also ride 1 – 2 during the week approx 10 – 15ks. Start with slow and steady unless intending to go faster at the ride. Once you get to a couple of rides, the long runs in between are not so necessary. Try to include hills and new tracks, even a new start point or going backwards on a track can freshen things up for you and your horse.

#### *Measuring and record keeping*

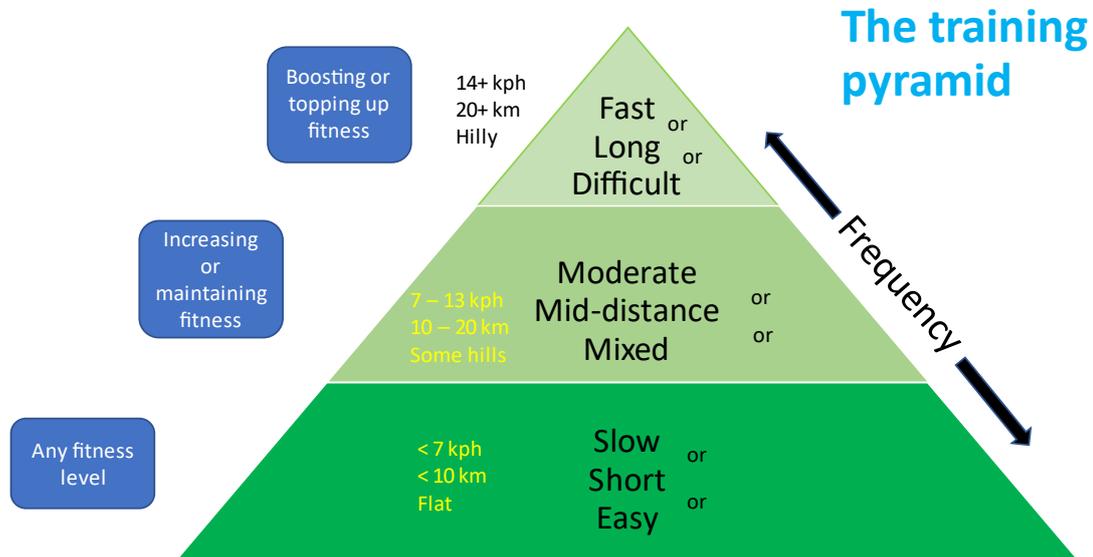
GPS apps – Garmin, Equilab, Strava, Track my Tracks etc, can be phone or watch and can be downloaded to your computer for analysis, such as average speed, distance and frequency, elevation profile etc. Turning off unused apps can save the battery.

To get an idea of time and distance, measure your tracks, set a pace over that distance and then time that so when you are out on track you can get a good idea of where you are and how much distance and time you have left. At home training might seem be a little slower – you might have gates to open/shut, may stop a bit longer at the creek etc, but then you have a lovely long canter which is good training itself.

Initially, take your horses HR at the same time each time after a workout so you get to know what is normal for him, and you can start to be able to predict his recovery depending on the workout just done. For example, after a workout, take his saddle off and take his HR. Is that what you expect, or is it higher because you went faster, is hotter, didn't walk the last 2 ks, do I need to apply more water, or just strap his neck, clean his girth and put a light rug on because of the cold breeze? etc. Take the HR again say 15min later, is the HR dropping a

little or a lot. As your horse gets fitter, he may do the 10k track more easily with longer canter periods and/or his HRs recover more quickly.

## The Training Pyramid



The base, or foundation, is where you start and can do at any time during his riding career, whether it be going slow at the start/end of a ride to warm up/cool down, restarting after a short break, after an injury etc. A lot of riding is done at this level.

The middle range is where you are increasing and/or maintaining fitness.

Fast, long and difficult rides do not need to be done frequently. Probably a few at the beginning of the season to pick your horse's fitness up, or want to step up the distance or pace.

The harder the work, with speed, distance or terrain, the less often you need to do it, but this will increase fitness.

*Don't forget, rest days are important for both physical and mental recovery.*

### When is my horse ready to step up?

Look at your horse! Does he have a big tummy, a well rounded bottom, or is he light on and a bit ribby? Is he hairy, and is his coat glossy or dull? Does he have any muscle definition?

As he gets fitter, his tummy will tighten up and decrease, he will start getting muscle definition, and his coat is glossy. Also keep an eye on the saddle fit, as his body changes, so may the saddle fit.

### Equipment to consider for an 80k

*Remember to try all new gear well at home before using at a ride*

*On course*

Rider water - bottles can attach to the back of the saddle or in a bag at the front, camel backs can be heavy, and change rider balance

Headlights – rather than hand held

Attach to helmet so not heavy, adjustable light angle, wide view or spotlight view, preferable not to have a heavy battery pack to attach to your belt

Adjustable brightness

*Spare*s – saddlecloths

Leg boots

Shoes/hoof boots

Girths/girth/covers

Rugs

*Rider clothing* – you must wear your rider bib on the outside

Layers

Front closing, easy to take off

Pockets (cloths or saddle cloth) or bum bag

GPS

*Strapping* – Stethoscope/HR monitors need a wet horse to make contact (remember, these cannot be taken to TP Ring/vetting)

Hot water washer allows you to hose your horse with warm water at any time anywhere, handy for horses feeling the cold

Pre-ride management

*If it ain't broke, don't fix it!  
Don't change things if you don't need to!*

*The week before the ride*

- Feed - introduce more hay to ensure good gut fill, esp for travelling
- Supplementation – electrolytes perhaps every day as opposed to 3 times/week when training
- Shoeing/trimming/booting – trim the horse a week/10 days before event, shoe the horse 5 - 10 days before the ride, take old shoes so you have a spare pair that will fit the horse, look at what rides are coming up,
- Exercise – just a little every day
- Clipping – probably not necessary for a 40k unless very hairy/hot weather, 80k will depend on how hairy your horse is and how comfortable he will be

*Packing essentials*

- Helmet, jodhpurs/riding tights, riding footwear
- Logbook and membership card
- Horse Health AND Covid declarations
- Headlamp

- Saddle, bridle, saddle cloths
- Horse feed and supplements
- Rugs
- Buckets
- Horse yard

## Strategy

### *The day before - To Ride or Not?*

#### Advantages

- Preview of first few km of the course which you will ride in the dark
- Horse is less likely to tie up, more likely to drink
- You can confirm if your horse feels well and sound, and can then vet, rather than vet and find out your horse is lame
- If the horse behaves well, you will feel safer

#### Disadvantages

- If the horse misbehaves you will feel more anxious
- Takes at least an hour while you saddle up, ride then unsaddle and strap

### *The Start*

- You don't have to leave on time, but you must be out by 15min after the start time
- Dealing with an excited horse, get up early and do some ground work,
- What pace to do - trot out and let them settle, have a training buddy if possible
- To ride out or lead out on foot
- To ride with a group, a buddy or stay alone – be aware of how he reacts with others

### *Novice time*

*A minimum is not a challenge!*

Usually 3 hrs for 40k ride, and 3hrs for each 40k leg in an 80k – but check at pre-ride talk.  
Pace yourself around the leg so that you don't get back early and have to wait to come in – this is greatly frowned upon!

Use these rides as training to build up muscle, ligament and muscle.

### *Riding in the dark*

Do I really need an headlamp?

Get your horse accustomed beforehand - feed/rug your horse at night, ride out just before dark

Bright or moderate light

Headlamp etiquette – don't shine headlamp in other riders' eyes

### *Weight divisions (cl 30) and weighing*

Only for 80k and greater rides

You will need to nominate your riding division on your entry form. This is confirmed at the ride when you enter, so take your saddle and saddle cloth with you.

You may be required to weigh during the ride, but at least after the final leg (this will be conveyed in the preride talk).

Remember, you have to maintain your minimum weight for the division you enter.

Jnr – no weight limit but must be 17yoa or less in the year of the ride, once 18 yoa go into one of the following divisions

Lightweight – all up riding weight of 72.9kg or less

Middleweight – all up riding weight of 73 – 90.9kg

Heavyweight – 91kg and over

All up riding weight includes the rider and all items to be carried by the horse (or intended to be carried) but shall **exclude-**

a) the bridle or equivalent

b) any leg or hoof protection (or intended to be worn) on the horse

c) any water or liquid in any container

d) any item carried (or intended to be carried) which was not, or will not, be carried for the entire duration of the leg

### *The second leg*

You don't have to leave on time

You will probably travel more slowly

Your horse will be much calmer

You will probably be more tired than your horse

Your horse will hit a flat spot (hit the wall) somewhere during this leg (seasoned horses are much less likely to) and will usually pick up if you give them a bit of time (walking with a bit of a pick, another horse, changing track from road to bush track etc)

How do I know if my horse is genuinely tired or sore? If you know your horse, he will tell you

### *Strapping and Vetting*

#### *Standard vetting (cl 5)*

Same as for 40k with 30min to present to the vets

Another 30min until second leg departure time so you need to be organised

Early vetting option – will be detailed at pre-ride talk, ie you may present to the vets after 15min. Only one chance to meet HR criteria.

#### *Heart rate 80k*

55bpm first leg

60bpm second leg

#### *Strapping*

Ask others what the temp is? Is the breeze cold etc as you and your horse have been on track and are hot – ride base can be quite different.

Strap back at your camp in your routine

Water temperatures

To wash or not to wash

Rug choices

What to feed – hay if done at home  
Don't forget to check the feet!!  
Value of 5min in the yard - usually they wee and this brings HR down  
Electrolytes yes or no

### *Electronic Timing System (ETS)*

More and more rides are using the ETS. You are issued with a card that you scan when you finish a leg, present for TPRing/vetting and when you leave for the next leg. AT each stage you are also given a print out of the time to vet or your departure time. These procedures are detailed at the preride talk.

### *Vet Gate into Hold (VGIH) vetting (cl 6)*

This is usually done with electronic timing system.

After you cross the finish line, you have up to half an hour to present to the vets BUT your riding time does not stop until you pass the vets. There is a communal strapping area with hot water donkeys so that you can strap your horse there and save time by not going back to camp. As soon as his HR is below the required value you can present to the vets - TPRs are not used in VGIH. The vets take 2 HR's – the first to check it is under the required value, then you trot your horse out and 1 min after the first value was taken they take a second HR. This is called the CRI (Cardiac Recovery Index). If it is lower than the first reading, then this indicates your horse is recovering well. If it is higher, then depending on the value, may indicate to the vets that the horse is sore or struggling/tired and will keep a close eye on him. Once your horse has been vetted, you commence your hold time and go back to camp to rest before leaving on the next leg. The ETS printouts will tell you what time to vet by, and depart for the various legs.

For VGIH rides, there is a walk thru' the vetting area and procedures the day before to fully explain the process. Note that the HRs and hold times often vary between events.

What to do if things go wrong – and how do I prevent it?

***If you have any concerns at anytime (at camp or on track)  
about the welfare of your horse,  
don't be afraid to consult the vets!***

#### *In Camp*

Horse won't eat – he may be a bit picky, the horse is running on reserves, so that's why increasing roughage in the days before is important, if he is not picking observe him closely

Horse won't drink – this is very important so not drinking will be a problem when facing another leg without drinking

Horse won't settle – you may need to distract him if he is getting worked up – take him out for a walk

#### *On track*

Getting lost – pay attention to the markers

Over maximum time – most rides don't worry about a few minutes, but you are expected to be in on time

Horses that kick – red ribbons in the tail, novice horses often have a ribbon as they may react differently than at home

### *Getting help on track*

Lost hoof boots or shoes

Equipment breakages

However, anyone leaving camp to assist you MUST see the Chief Steward before leaving and rendering assistance (cl 35)

### *With your Horse*

Your first vet out – it does happen

Lameness – stumble, lost shoe, tired muscles

High HR – usually in conjunction with another issue, pain, not quite as fit, hot weather, strapping

Tying up – less common, occurs with the first 7ks, usually feed/exercise related

### *With You*

Dehydration/cramps/heat exhaustion – keeping your fluids up including electrolytes for you, look at your fitness, be sun aware (wide brimmed hat or visor, cover up)

Chafing – trial and error

### Post-ride management

#### *Straight after the ride*

Check for rubs or minor injuries

Monitor eating, drinking, urinating, manure, general behaviour

#### *Alarm signs*

Pawing, cow-kicking, excessive rolling

Depressed demeanour, refusing to eat or drink

#### *Normal behaviour*

Know what is normal for your horse at home so you have an idea of how he will be at a ride

Either ravenously hungry or picks at food

Will probably sleep

#### *Leg care*

Poultice

Leg wraps

Compression socks

Magnetic boots

#### *Muscle care*

Therapy rugs

Body work

Massages/muscle rubs

#### *Diet*

Extra supplementation

Extra feed and hay

Topping up and replacing reserves

*Time off*

Physical response to stress

At least 1 day/10ks ie 4 days 40ks, 8 days 80ks

Exceptions if horse is stabled or ties up.

Transitioning from completing to competing

The opportunities are endless!

Tied finishes

Best Conditioned workouts

State Championship 160k

Tom Quilty National Championship 160k

Shahzada 400k

FEI - Australia and overseas

***The sky is the limit!!!***

## Resources:

The AERA Rulebook - [aera.asn.au/national-rules/](http://aera.asn.au/national-rules/)

CL 26 Rider Code of Conduct

CL 46 Code of Conduct Ensuring the Welfare of the Horse

AERA Ride Etiquette - at the bottom of the page

Previous sessions - [nswera.asn.au/new-to-endurance/advice.html](http://nswera.asn.au/new-to-endurance/advice.html)

1. Endurance: Starting out - Floating/Membership/Entering a ride and prenom'n/Horse containment/Volunteering.

2. Getting ready – Packing for you, your horse and camp.

3. Your first ride - Ride etiquette & Ride strategies.

4. Vetting (HHD, HR, trot out) and Tack rules

5. Training/Feeding for 10-20k ride.

6. Preparing your horse vetting - strapping.

7. Why your vet card is important - metabolics.

8. Tack on track.

9. Stepping up ... 40k and beyond!

10. Rider fitness.

NSWERA Mentor Program and Step up Program -

<https://nswera.asn.au/newsstories/latest-news.html>