



Australian Endurance Riders Association Inc.

Minutes for AERA Management Committee Meeting

Date: Commencing at 7.11 00 pm AEDT on Monday 27 February 2023.

Venue: Webinar – please note that this meeting is recorded.

1. Attendees

Mark Dunn (President) (TEERA); Kim Moir (Secretary) (QERA); Dick Collyer (Vice President) (QERA); Sarah Pollard Williams (NSWERA); Clare Fleming (NSWERA); Jil Bourton (SAERA), Sioux Reid (VERA),

Visitors

Belinda Hopley, NSW ERA, who initially presented this to AERA, Andrew Miles (TEERA)

2. Apologies

Natasha Ellery (WAERA)

2.1. Proxy votes

Terry Sweeney as proxy for Natasha Ellery

3. Purpose of Meeting

This meeting was called to accept consider the request from NSW ERA to hold “Ride to Time” rides.

4. Correspondence Received

4.1. 20 January 2023 NSW ERA

Correspondence seeking AERA’s clarification that the proposed rules by which “Ride to Time” would be run, do not contravene the AERA Rulebook. This ride type would be trialled during 2023 with the aim to make application for rule changes to include this into the AERA Complimentary Competition Rulebook and that associated changes to AERA Database would be made to report on these rides.

4.2. Proposed rules to be included in AERA Rulebook S2 Complimentary Competition

Complimentary Rules were copied to the agenda for information.

4.3. Commentary provided previously

The matter had been discussed at the AERA Management Meeting on 22 January but a decision was not made to give members more time to consider the question posed by NSWERA whether the running of a “Ride to Time” event by the proposed rules, to be considered in the immediate as “Local Rules” would contravene any AERA rules.

There was strong advice from the discussion at the meeting that this did contravene AERA Rulebook Table 5 with a clear statement that this challenged the principle of Introductory and Intermediate rides being non-competitive.

The concept of a "winner" in an Intermediate Ride and the measure of recovery time which is currently not measured at the end of any ride, though the ETS does register this, was also flagged for consideration.

The proposed rules with novice riders and endurance riders being two divisions was also flagged as contrary to the rules.

The agenda suggested two options -

Option 1

Respond to say it does contravene rules

Option 2

Allow a trial period to satisfy the intent to provide 40 km rides that have another element that may attract people to the sport, may encourage people to step up to longer distances, or may encourage older / less-able people to stay in the sport.

If a trial was allowed was there need to set some parameters around this.

For example, the trial period could be set to allow for a report and the proposed rule changes to be voted on for a first vote by the AERA MC Meeting in August.

The report should include feedback from those entering the ride and the Ride Organisers.

A suggested change to the proposed rules was that the optimum time was not known to riders - Noni was to seek feedback on that option. It had also been suggested that nominees should have done at least 2 x 40 km rides.

4.4. Discussion

Belinda Hopley invited to speak to the proposal.

- The proposed rules had been put together following discussions at the NSWERA meeting of members and had referenced the NZDR rules though not wholly.
- There is no winner – there is a “best ridden” who is the person who rides to a time with best recovery time and heart rates.
- Time is decided between the Ride Committee based on anticipated weather conditions, track conditions and the optimum time would reflect a “middle” time between minimum time and cut off time.
- Assessment for “best ridden” would include minimum time to present to vetting and vet parameters and assessment.
- Open to all riders and the proposal has suggested that novice and open riders should be in two divisions to allow for competition among like-experienced riders and to prevent all prizes going to more experienced endurance riders.
- Acknowledged that there is a best managed prize that can be given for entries to Introductory and Intermediate rides but this added more points for assessment of best ridden.
- Optimum time was seen to present the opportunity to riders to train to that time allowing for heart rates to be recovered in a short time. It would encourage riders to be more aware of issues that require their management of pace.
- This was seen as a good way to encourage riders “step up” or to do something different.

Clare Fleming and Sarah Pollard Williams were invited to provide further comment.

Sarah commented that if it could be used to expand or enhance the sport, she was in favour of it.

Clare commented that NSWERA were in support of this and hoped that AERA would support this. Could see advantages in expanding the sport and attracting new members so was in favour.

Others invited to comment.

Kim Moir – noted rules that this would conflict with included reference to the concept of a winner, acknowledgement of time completed in Intro or Intermediate rides; uncertain about the purpose of the two divisions; not sure that this would encourage people into the sport because they would have to have done some endurance to understand endurance rides, whether that be 20, 40 or 80 kms to know the parameters for

assessment and vet time etc and to be able to use advanced skills at this level. Noted that levels as they are now do encourage people to move through.

Dick Collyer – this was discussed at the QERA MC meeting and there was no support; whatever it may be called, “best ridden” is a winner and so rides that by the rules are non-competitive are being turned into competitive with a formula that results in someone coming out “on top” which is a significant move away for one of the basic principles of our rides that short rides are non-competitive for good reasons. There can be no definition to determine an optimum time because there are so many variables over that distance with a large number of horses – challenge of finding an optimum time that suits a fit endurance horse and a fat horse just out of the paddock doing its first ride. Noted the danger of proposing an optimum time is that someone may ride to that time, the horse is compromised and they will blame the ride organiser for setting an optimum time. Dick noted his appreciation of what NSW ERA are trying to do and not inflexible about making variations to the sport but was concerned this may turn people away. Noted his assessment that people were attracted to shorter rides because they were non-competitive. They are all treated the same at the end of the event.

Jil Bourton – agree with previous comments and also noted her appreciation of new ideas and our responsibility in “setting the course”. Thought that this was reinventing the wheel referencing the BC process. Jil noted her lack of confidence that anyone could set an optimum time and conditions can change at any time. Compact to initial use of pace riders – a good idea but didn’t work as experienced riders rode at a pace that left newbies behind. Jil has a basic rule of 10 km / hour for horses new to the sport. Also sense that this would become boring very quickly. If using an optimum time, decide this before start of ride and give a prize for rider closest to that – more of a novelty. A lot of newer riders don’t know about the Senate Enquiry that caused the current rules and SAERA not in favour of this.

Terry Sweeney – as a non-rider unsure how to vote on this and has not had time to consult with WAERA. Noted good points and negative points but that there were more negative points.

Sioux Reid – support comments from previous speakers and noted that 40 km rides are a good way to consolidate management skills with a horse and that bringing in too many other factors to a non-competitive ride may cause complication. Also commended NSWERA for looking at new ideas but VERA was not in favour of this initiative.

Andrew Miles (non-voting Delegate) – this was discussed at TEERA MC Meeting and consensus was that this would contravene the rulebook and was against the main point of the non-competitive element in shorter rides. This was considered only appropriate for open horses and riders. 40’s and 20’s are there for people to learn and develop horses, not for chasing optimum times.

Mark Dunn noted two threads –

Do the proposed rules conflict with the AERA Rulebook? Because there are elements by which people are ranked, Mark agreed that this conflicts with the notion of non-competitive participation. Sought the view from the committee as to whether this conflicts with the Rulebook.

Belinda Hopley

Reiterated that the concept of the optimum time is no different to setting a minimum time and giving an optimum time that is longer than the minimum time, that is seen as being of benefit in learning about the management of their horse. This doesn’t stop them going slower or faster than that optimum time. The calculation can show the shortest time but they may not score well on presentation time, HR etc so riders can see the impact of a faster time. It is not necessarily the optimum time that gets the best score overall. There are horses that compete in fast times, but HR may be higher on completion. Best Managed does take into account factors such as HR etc. NSW ERA would like to give this a go and report back at end of year as to success or otherwise.

Sarah Pollard Williams

There is a suggestion that people entering a Ride to Time 40 km ride will have done at least 2 x 40 km rides so this will not be their first event.

Also commented on Navigation Rides that are popular in adult riding clubs there is an optimum time set that no one knows and often in 50 – 60 kms events.

Comments offered in support of the idea that we trial a Ride to Time in NSW.

Clare Fleming

Noted calibre of discussion.

Can see the points of view from MC Members and also of NSWERA – suggested that this could be trialled as independent of an endurance ride as an option.

Kim Moir

Noted that the VGIH concept at the end of the ride does not happen for any ride currently. This would require people to be set up in a strapping area to give an even playing field. Also, minimum time set is often altered to suit changing conditions. Best Managed often is awarded with consideration to vet parameters and maybe we need to create more hype about this – use it at every event. It's there and doesn't need a whole set of rules.

Question posed – does this conflict with the rules.

DC – yes conflicts with table 5 – there is an award and it is a competition. Reference to Navigation Rides and the rules that govern those – present those for consideration by AERA as a Complimentary Rules.

Consensus from all MC Members that this does conflict with the rules.

Question posed – should we attempt to conceive of a way that this concept might be trialled within the rules.

JB – not opposed to a trial period but needs to be less complicated; happier if optimum time is not declared; vet parameters can be used and whoever is closest to optimum time. Perhaps should be trialled on its own merit out of endurance.

DC – notion of optimum time can't be defined so don't think any recognition should be given to that optimum time; suggest more emphasis given to Best Managed with a formalised formula. And not sure if this fulfills the goal to encourage people to come into the sport. Need to maintain the current ethos and principles of our short rides that they are non-competitive.

KM – don't think that we can having identified this contravenes the Rulebook; vamp up the Best Managed and raise awareness of parameters that will be used - they have come in within the timeframe given and have vetted in well. Focus on this as an element of high achievement rather than competition.

SR – agree with Kim's comments – focus on Best Managed with no competitive factor.

BH – any limits or parameters into Best Managed is no different to this. This is how you come across the line in an optimum time. Example of Brookvale – same ride every year – we know that if you do this too quickly horses will vet out of vet high. This information can be provided in pre-ride literature. Difference between the two awards is that Ride to Time has parameters attached – coming in on the optimum time does not mean you will awarded as Best Ridden. Can't see why this can't be endorsed for this year as an addition to the Complimentary Rules – endurance across Australia needs to bring in more members.

CF – agree that Best Managed needs to be promoted more and this may promote the sport.

SPW – agree with comments from Belinda and Clare.

Mark Dunn summarised -

- We have established that the proposed event conflicts with the Rulebook and therefore should not proceed.

- The balance seems to be against supporting a trial. There may be a way to construct a way that a trial could be run within the rules but there appears to be an amount of in-principle opposition to this concept.
- AERA has the view that this can't proceed because the proposed local rules contravene the AERA Rulebook and that there is no support or limited for a trial to proceed.

Action

Secretary to write a response to correspondence from NSWERA.

5. Meeting Closure

Mark Dunn declared the meeting closed at 8.05 pm.

President: Mark Dunn

Signature:  _____

Date: 25/4/23 _____