

What Happens When You Return off track from your Distance Ride?

Preparing for Vetting

Look after your horse

This is the most critical stage for both short term and long term success in Distance Riding.

To complete the Ride, after you cross over the finish line, you need to strap your horse, either in the designated strapping area or back at your camp. Remember you have a limited time to cool down your horse and prepare to present him/her to the Vet Team.

The heart rate (HR) must be under 60 beats per minute within 25 minutes of completing each loop of the course, except after the final loop when you have 30 minutes.

If you think the HR is below this before the 25 minutes, you can enter the vet ring earlier - and this will reduce your recorded riding time.

If you have misjudged this and the horse's heart rate is too high, for all loops except the last, you can come around for a second HR check so long as it is also under 25 minutes. For the last loop you only have one chance at the HR check – 60 bpm within 30 minutes.

You must present your horse for vetting before the set time is up, or you will be disqualified.

The Vet will run through a series of checks and you will be required to trot your horse away from the Vet and back on a loose lead. The Vet will tell you their assessment and you can then return to camp and make your horse comfortable.

Down time

Your horse will need a feed, good hay, access to water and possibly a thorough clean up. Keep him warm after his exertions. You may need a rug depending on weather conditions. Then leave him to be a horse and go and look after yourself in terms of food, drink, loo runs, shower and rest.

Later he/she may appreciate a stroll and grass pick, certainly before travelling or bedtime. There is nothing better than fresh grass as a pick me up, whether this is a snack on track or a munch session back at camp.

Presentations

Once all the administration has been completed for the Event, the Organisers will call everyone together for the presentation of prizes. Remember, if you complete, you are a winner. Other achievements are also recognised.

It is important to attend the Presentation for several reasons:

- It is at this session that you will receive back your appropriately stamped Horse Rider Record and Horse Passport.
- You deserve recognition of your achievement and need to recognise the achievements of others. You require your record books to take home and continue in Distance Riding.
- Your horse needs to rest up to this point, after which you are free to travel home. In exceptional circumstances your horse may be signed off early. You would need to make this request at the Secretariat before leaving. This is important as horse welfare is paramount in our sport.
- This is also a good time to thank all those volunteers and people who have contributed to your weekend and arrange your next TADRA Ride with your new friends.

When you get home

The best place for your horse is out in the paddock with plenty of water and feed. Check his legs for any heat, lumps and swelling. On the first or second day he would appreciate a shampoo and bath to rid him of all the sweat and ride gunge.

Over the next few days, up his rations to replace the energy he expended for you. There is a general guideline that a horse should enjoy one day's rest for every 10k he has done at an event.

So, if you have ridden 45k, he should have 5 days rest but will not complain if you give him a week off. Clean off all your gear, check the need for any repairs and get ready for the next event.

Keep an eye on the TADRA Calendar for your next Distance Ride.

Go the Distance!