

Safety Officer Report – NSW Spring Rogaine and Championship 2011.

Location: - Private Property and the Goulburn River National Park.

Map: - Durrigeree 8833-1-S (First edition) and Wollar 8833-4-S (First Edition) Topographic Maps

Date: - 17/18th September 2011

(2 events: - 24 hour and 15 hours in 24. Start lunch time Saturday finish lunch time Sunday.)

Introduction

48 registered teams with 104 competitors enjoyed an excellent rogaie in a lovely location. 15h in 24h had 14 teams with 34 competitors. The 24 hour had 34 teams with 70 competitors.

An administration Tent, Hash House and Safety Base were set up on private property off the Durrigeree Road. An open grassed area that had been slashed to provide safe camping and assembly. There was tree cover for shade around the periphery.

Participants are encouraged to camp overnight to reduce the dangers of driving while tired. To facilitate this, an area suitable for camping is always found and hot food is provided by the "hash house" from 18:00hs Saturday to after midday Sunday. The Hash House and Administration tents were manned throughout the night.

A very experienced management committee ran the event. All competitors were provided with an accurate map and checkpoint descriptions. The pre-event briefing covered all likely problems such as:- dehydration in the expected warm conditions, availability of water in the major creeks, snakes, steep terrain with many unmarked cliff lines, limited road access, out of bounds areas, etc.

A Safety Plan was prepared, based on past year's safety plans, adapted for the changed location and environment. This was forwarded to: - Mudgee SES, Gulgong VRA, NSW Police and NSW ambulance, prior to the event.

The BWRS provided: - 4 members (with ready packs for 72 hours in the field), the troop carrier, first aid kits, base tent, HF radios for base, vehicle and response teams, GPS's (loaded with the Check Point positions), PLB's (for rescue teams, in case of serious illness or injury away from roads), mobile phones. They were provided with copies of the event map and with the GDA grid added.

The Mudgee SES had three members with portable GRN radios for infield communications, base tent for protection from the weather, generator and lighting equipment, gps and topographical maps. They were provided with the event map for each member.

A satellite phone was available to the administrators.

The Safety Officers had: - incident reporting forms, a soft 4wd vehicle, ready pack, vertical access equipment, all topographic maps as well as the event map, compasses and a gps with Check Points loaded.

Event

The weather was warm with temperatures in 30's during the day, down to 6 overnight. Mobile phone coverage was less than experienced during course setting. As a consequence HF radio was used for contact between the Tea and Damper and base on a 2 hour schedule. The satellite phone received one emergency related call, from a mobile in a paddock.

Greg Lowe the National Park ranger in charge of the park attended on both days and was very supportive and helpful.

The incidents reported to BWRS and SES, were: -

- A 20 year old male reported at the Tea and Damper, with symptoms of dehydration, he refused transport to the Mudgee hospital;
- A 60 year old male at the T&D reported mild symptoms of dehydration, he was able to self treat;
- Two teams at the same location between CP35 and CP34, reported being blocked from continuing by bulls, they had moved on by the time the response team arrived in the area;
- One of the caterers sought help for a small cut on the finger; first aid was administered by the SES personnel.

On Saturday morning before the event, a joint team of BWRS and SES attempted to do a drive check of the only track servicing the south east part of the course. Access is through locked gates on Moolarben Coal land. Unfortunately a Moolarben employee who resigned and left this week did not pass on a request for access, and we couldn't enter at that time. However an agreement was made for access to be provided in the event of an emergency. The Moolarben staff on site were very supportive and helpful at the time.

Before the event there was discussion about putting water drops out on the course. It was felt by the organisers that this would have been a logistics nightmare, due to the distance, awkward access and lack of a suitable supply of fresh water. As a result the only water drop was at the Tea and Damper. Water was available in the major watercourses but it was advised to treat this before drinking.

Conclusion

A very well run event and only 4 incidents reported to the Safety Officers and Mudgee SES on site.

The satellite phone proved to be useful at this event. Again the HF radio provided reliable communications in a remote area, between base, transport and T&D.

In hindsight I would prefer to see some way to provide at least one other water drop on the south east part of the course. The unseasonably warm weather made this more important, than if we had cooler conditions.

A particular thanks to the Mudgee SES and BWRS personnel for their professional approach, skills and friendliness, which contributed to a very successful event.

Congratulations to the organisers for such a well run and safe event.

Dug Floyd
(Safety Officer NSW Spring Rogaine)