
**TRAIL RIDING ALBERTA CONFERENCE (TRAC)
VETERINARIAN JUDGING HANDBOOK
Revised 2019**

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1. INTRODUCTION

This veterinarian judging handbook has been prepared in an effort to achieve consistency in the judging of Competitive Trail Ride events in the province of Alberta.

The procedures in this handbook are essential to the judging of all rides. Certain items however, may be at the discretion of the individual veterinarian judge. TRAC does request that each veterinarian judge endeavor to maintain consistency in his/her observations and judging procedures between all equines throughout any one competition.

In the case of multiple judges per division, they should act together and discuss individual horses throughout the course of the ride. All veterinarian judges will evaluate all equines on soundness and condition and final decisions should be reached jointly.

Consult the TRAC rule book and/or ride management if you encounter any difficulty in the interpretation of this judge's handbook. At all times the standard basic objectives and concepts of TRAC must be kept in mind.

2. PURPOSE

TRAC RIDES ARE DESIGNED:

- a. To stimulate greater interest in the breeding and selection of equines to produce excellent mounts for trail use.
- b. To demonstrate the value of conformation, soundness, and condition in equines selected for trail use.
- c. To demonstrate and, for the learning of, the best methods of training and conditioning Competitive Trail equines.

- d. To demonstrate the best methods of care for equines before, during, and after Competitive Trail events without the use of artificial methods, aids, or stimulants.

3. REQUIREMENTS FOR VETERINARIAN JUDGES

- a. Must have a Doctorate Degree in Veterinary Medicine from a recognized college or university.
- b. Must possess an interest in Competitive Trail events and have a thorough understanding of the purpose of TRAC.
- c. Must have a thorough knowledge and understanding of the current TRAC rules.
- d. Personal Qualifications:
 - i. The Veterinarian should be tolerant, cool, objective, firm, and fair.
 - ii. His/her personality should be pleasant, helpful, good humored, kind, and concerned.

4. REGULATIONS and RESPONSIBILITY of VETERINARIAN JUDGES

- a. A judge shall not adjudicate in any division (Open, Intermediate, or Novice) in which a member of his/her family or any equines owned by same are competing.
- b. Good judging depends upon a correct observance of the fine points for selection of the best trail equines according to the conditions set forth in this handbook. A judge is obligated to adjudicate each division in conformity with the rules and regulations set down in the TRAC rule book and the guidelines of this handbook. He/she is expected to be proficient in the correct evaluation of pulse and respiration readings and other recorded data.
- c. A judge shall become totally familiar with ride terrain either by pre-riding the trail or through discussion with the ride management.
- d. At the pre-ride briefing the judge should be prepared to explain the entire judging procedure.
- e. A judge is not required to discuss the judging in progress. He/she may answer questions of competitors that are of a general nature. Veterinarian Judges should recognize that all communications with riders will be done with tact and diplomacy. This includes disqualifying an equine from the competition. Most riders spend a lot of time, money, and energy preparing for the competition and they deserve courtesy and consideration.
- f. All equines that complete the ride within the allotted time for that division must receive a final veterinary inspection. The practice of inspecting only those equines which are considered in line for placing is **NOT** acceptable.
- g. A judge is required to place the equines in order of ability to carry a rider over additional trail with reasonable comfort. The scoring system is designed to accomplish this.

- h. Any equine finishing the ride with **more than grade one (1) lameness will be given completion only without placing**, even though said equines' final score may be higher than that of the equines placed.
- i. Working equines under saddle at a walk, trot, or canter in a confined ring can be used for soundness determination only.
- j. Judges shall not discriminate against any equine due to conformation or type as long as the animal performs satisfactorily.
- k. All judging cards shall be complete with judging notations and signed before being presented to the contestants. Judges should be prepared to answer competitor's inquiries.
- l. Judges, while competing or attending a ride as an observer, will refrain from making unsolicited comments about the judging in progress.
- m. **It is the duty of the judge to remove any equine from the ride before the animal succumbs to excessive stress or lameness. The veterinary judge's decision will be final.**

Note: The number one priority of the Veterinary Judge is to assure the equine's safety and well being at all times. This means both during the competition and in the post ride period.

5. REQUIREMENTS FOR TREATMENT VETERINARIAN

- a. Must have a Doctorate Degree in Veterinary Medicine from a recognized college or university and be licensed to practice in the Province of Alberta.
- b. Must be available to treat horses until the morning after the completion of the ride.
- c. Must be competent in treatment of problems common in horses that compete in long distance events
- d. Must have riders or responsible person sign consent form before examination and treatment. A copy of the consent form is found on the last page of this handbook.
- e. Must have available the following supplies and equipment:
 - i. **Colic supplies**
 - rectal palpation sleeve
 - naso gastric Tube, pump, and bucket(s)
 - mineral oil
 - Flunixin meglamine
 - sedation
 - thermometer
 - stethoscope
 - IV catheter
 - IV line*
 - 20L Lactated Ringers*
 - ii. **Metabolic crisis**
 - IV catheter, line and fluids*
 - oral electrolytes
 - iii. **Wound management**

- laceration pack and suture
- sedation
- drain
- wound prep solution

iv. Means for humane euthanasia

*20L Lactated Ringers and IV lines can be provided by TRAC. Treatment vet is to be billed by TRAC or replace product used within 14 working days.

6. JUDGING PROCEDURES

Examination is to determine the equines' ability to compete or continue. Good horsemanship is appreciated. Definitive diagnosis is not required. There should be no excessive manipulation of joints which could induce injuries. The examination and inspection procedures are at the discretion of the judges, with the exception of the use of mechanical hoof testers (Calipers or pincers), which are not allowed on TRAC sanctioned rides. We are striving for consistency and all judges shall adhere to the procedures as indicated by the score card as closely as possible.

Penalty Points may be assessed by the judges for minor TRAC rule infractions. Violations other than those which the rules specifically call for disqualifications shall be evaluated and penalty points assessed. It will be at the judge's discretion to penalize/disqualify unruly equines which may cause bodily harm to judges, volunteers, and/or other competitors.

a. The official TRAC judging card

The TRAC Score Card is an efficient method to evaluate horses. It is also an excellent record for the equine owner/rider of the equines' progress throughout the season. A properly completed Score Card can also be a source of information for the riders about their equines.

b. Pre-ride Examination

The pre-ride examination is a very important part of the Veterinary Judging procedure. It is the veterinarian's first opportunity to communicate with the riders. Education of the rider is the most important single factor that can be utilized to ensure the safety of his/her mount.

This is the time when potential problems, metabolic or soundness related, can be pointed out. In addition, advice for correction of some problems, mention of tack related problems or faulty/inadequate shoeing, etc. can be made at this time. This is also the time to advise riders of any possible risk to their equine if they are to compete in the event. It is also the proper time to eliminate from competition those equine which are unfit to start for reasons of metabolic or soundness problems. Equines displaying evidence of highly contagious disease are to be excused from the competition and shall be removed from the ride area. A decision to disqualify an equine should always be accompanied by an explanation of the condition or risk. It helps a great deal psychologically to give the rider enough information so that they can decide to voluntarily withdraw from the competition. Be gentle but firm in the explanation of your decision.

It is anticipated that preliminary judging will take place the evening before the competition. At this time, have your recording secretary, ensure that the score card accurately describes the equine being judged as to name, age, sex, color, breed and division of competition. The recording of all baseline findings is very important for reference by all veterinarians during the ride. It also saves time in discussions with riders later if they should claim a lesion existed pre-ride. Use the silhouette drawing and the applicable areas of the judging score card.



- i. Note the equines' Heart and Respiration Rates (which may have been taken by a P & R team and recorded before the animal is presented to the Veterinarian Judge).
- iii. Observe for Contagious Diseases - ie. Nasal Discharge, etc.
- iv. Examine the Mucous Membranes, Capillary Refill, Gut Sounds, Hydration (vertical skin tenting response at the shoulder). Note: while at the mouth, check that the equine is of legal age for the event. Also note any damage from bits and hackamores. (01/19)
- v. Identify all marks, blemishes, and areas of pathology.
 - a. Heat, swelling or pain in any joint, tendon, or ligament is significant even if lameness is not yet present. One must evaluate very carefully before allowing such cases to start.
 - b. Recognize, for example, the difference in significance of a splint that lies wrapped around the inside and puts pressure on the suspensory versus one that simply protrudes outward. Size is less important than location and existing sensitivity.
- vi. Record sensitivity and/or tenderness in the cinch, withers, and saddle areas.
 - a. Pain in the spinal column is important. Skin sensitivity can be distinguished from deeper muscle pain by firm and even pressure without pinching. Though most lameness occurs from the knee or hock down, many have their source in the back muscles and spine. A painful back alters the equines' entire way of going and makes it much less able to travel in a manner that will minimize lameness.
- vii. Record freedom with which the equine backs up and amount of flexion and rotation of pelvis.
- viii. Have the equine trotted away and towards you and record any abnormal limb movement which may predispose to problems.
- ix. Have the equine trotted in a figure 8 or a circle in both directions. Note any abnormalities of gait and the animal's way of going. (ie. Travels close behind, paddles, wings etc.)
- x. Record condition of feet and shoes, in relation to movement, interference, and forging.

- xi. Rate the animal's Quality of Movement (Impulsion).
- xii. All lameness will be scored according to section 7. p. irrespective of diagnosis. Any equine with Grade three (3) lameness or worse shall be excused from competition. Equines showing Grade two (2) lameness should have the source of their problem identified and judgment made as to prognosis with work: tendons, ligaments and joint lesions are a poor risk; cuts, bruises, corns, and muscle soreness may be admissible. Equines Grade one (1) should be advised of the finding and an effort made to find prognostically risky causes. If a brief examination fails to find any, such equines can usually proceed under extra surveillance. Many will complete the event with no significant change; some may even improve, while others may deteriorate to the point of disqualification. (01/19)
- xiii. Record the manner in which the horse leads (ie. Leads well, leads poor, etc.) This is recorded so it can be noted that if an equine is a poor leading animal at the start and is the same at the end of competition, thus it is not necessarily due to being tired. Or, if the equine leads well at the start and poorly at the end of competition, it is an indication that the animal is exhausted.
- xiv. Rate the animal's General Attitude - Mental Alertness.
- xv. Record difficulties encountered in examination (ie. Kicking, striking, etc.)

c. Judging Within the Ride

- i. It is very important that the Veterinary Judge perform judging in the most efficient manner possible to avoid unnecessary delays.
- ii. P & R team will record pulse and respiration after 10 minute rest
- iii. Horses are presented to Veterinary Judge to assess mucous membranes, capillary refill time, hydration, gut sounds, and mental alertness
- iv. Quality of motion and lameness can be evaluated with a short trot out

d. Final Examination

- i. Final veterinary judging examination will take place in the order in which the contestants finished the ride. Circumstances however may alter cases.
- ii. All divisions: The final examination will take place one hour after each competitor's finishing time.
- iii. The Final examination should be done in the same manner as the pre ride examination (6b) and record findings on the official score sheet.
- iv. On a two day event there will be a mounted "Trot Out" soundness examination by the veterinarian judge prior to the start of the second day's competition. The final examination will take place one hour after each competitor's finishing time.
- v. The competitor must be made aware of injuries, lameness and soreness at the time of the final inspection. It is suggested that a runner trot lame equines so the competitor may observe the animal's movement.
- vi. Once all equines are scored the Veterinary secretary will ensure that all scorecards are complete and signed by the Veterinary Judge. These cards will then be presented to the Ride

Secretary for final scoring.

7. Scoring Parameters

a. Mucous membranes (01/19)

At all following check points have the secretary record the status (by letter designation) of the mucous membranes: A - pink and moist, B - pink and tacky, C - injected dry, D - purple dry. *Alert, for Grade C and Grade D (Grade D - eliminate).

At every check the point, except initial, deductions are calculated as follows:

A – pink and moist (no deductions)
B – pink and tacky (deduct 2 points)
C – injected Dry (deduct 4 points) *
D – Purple Dry (eliminate)*

b. Capillary refill

Blanch a spot on the gum just above an upper tooth with pressure from a thumb or finger. Time the return of full color to the gum at that spot. Normally this takes one to two seconds. Refill times over two seconds signal low blood volume and/or low blood pressure. Poor capillary refill often corroborates findings of dehydration and fatigue.

Have the secretary record the time (seconds) count at the pre-ride examination and at each check point. Deduct 1 point per second for each second over 2 seconds. The initial Capillary refill check will not be included in the scoring. Note: Normal is 2 - 3 seconds. *Alert, times greater than 4.

c. Hydration

At the pre-ride examination as well as the vet checks, record hydration status of the equine at the shoulder (vertical skin tenting response time). The secretary will record the reading. *Alert, changes of three (3) or greater.

i. The neck or chest Hydration may be recorded but *will not be scored*.

ii. The shoulder hydration check will be scored one point deduction for each second over one second. The initial hydration check will not be included in the scoring.

d. Gut Sounds (01/19)

Gut sounds in our equine competitor is important to analyze as they are a reflection of hydration, gut fill, stress, fatigue, and can indicate the overall metabolic health of the equine. An equine with decreased gut motility can have a rapid buildup of gas and toxins within the gut and blood stream, which can cause rapid deterioration of the horse. These horses need to be identified early to prevent catastrophe. To ensure gut sounds are monitored, they will be evaluated by a veterinarian at pre-ride examination, judging within the ride, and the Final Examination and will be scored as follows:

A- Abundant gut sounds easily heard within thirty (30) seconds

B- Quiet gut sounds but present within thirty (30) seconds - Deduct 2 points
C- Present but difficult to hear over any time period - Deduct 4 points *Metabolic alert* Use all parameters to assess overall metabolic health of the equine
D- Gut sounds are absent
Elimination from competition and referral to the treatment veterinarian

e. Quality of movement (impulsion)

The loss of elasticity, power, and length of stride are proportional to muscle fatigue and are likewise moderately progressive over the course of the ride. Tying up, early or late, is associated with lactic acid build up in the muscles whether from energy crisis early in the ride or metabolic defect associated with fatigue later in the ride. Urine may be scant or discolored due to circulatory/muscle problems.

Loss of quality of movement is illustrated by leg weariness, loss of impulsion (willingness to move forward and length of stride) and attitude of the equine. Other negative observations include reluctance or refusal to trot, stumbling, inability to move straight, and loss of elasticity to the stride. Tying up of the muscle of the back and rear quarters is easily observed while backing up the animal.

Include back up and trot out. Rate 1 to 10 and deduct 2 points for each rating below the initial rating. For ratings of 5 or less *Alert and evaluate with other parameters to determine action.

Example: At the initial check, the equine was assessed a rating of 8. At Check # 1 the equine was rated as 8 for no loss of points. At Check # 2, the rating was 7 for a 2 point deduction. At Check # 3 the equine had dropped further to a rating of 5 which resulted in a loss of 6 points. At this point the equine was flagged as "Alert" (see Alert section for details). At the final examination the equine had recovered to a rating of 6 with a further deduction of 4 points. 12 points were deducted in total for Quality of Movement (Impulsion) for a total score in this area of 3 (15 - 12 = 3).

f. Mental alertness (attitude)

At the pre-ride examination note the horse's attitude and assign a rating from 1 to 10 with 10 as the highest. For ratings of 5 or less *Alert and evaluate with other parameters to determine action.

Disinterested	Decreased Interest	Relaxed & Alert	Focused & Alert
5*	6*	8	10

Example: At the initial check in the horse was assessed a rating of 8. At Check # 1 the equine was rated as 8 for no loss of points. At Check # 2, the rating for mental alertness was 7 for a 1 point deduction. At Check # 3 the equine had dropped to a rating of 5 which resulted in a loss of 3 points. At this point the equine was flagged as "Alert" (see Alert section for details). At the final examination, the horse had recovered to a rating of 7 for a deduction of only 1 more point. The total deductions for Mental Attitude are 5 for a score of 5 (10 - 5 = 5).

g. Manners

It will be at the judge's discretion to penalize/disqualify any unruly equine which may cause bodily harm to judges, ride management, or fellow competitors. If at any time when an equine is being examined, either by the veterinary judge or P&R teams, it exhibits any of the following, it will be noted and applicable points will be deducted.

- i. Will not remain sufficiently quiet for an efficient, complete, and fair examination - **deduct 2 points per infraction.**
- ii. Bites or attempts to bite - **deduct 3 points per infraction.**
- iii. Rears, strikes, kicks - **deduct 5 points per infraction.**
- iv. Dangerous behavior - **eliminate the animal from competition.**

Notes: Infractions must be noted and points deducted items B, C, and D. Care should be taken to prevent over penalization of the well conditioned restless equine.

- h. **Alterations of gait** - note any changes for reference. These will be scored at the final examination of the equine. Any equine with a lameness of Grade 3 or greater will not be allowed to compete in or complete the ride.

Note: After an extended rest period (ie. the noon rest period) it is advisable to observe the animals move out under saddle prior to being timed out after the break.

- i. **Sores and wounds** - note any changes for references. These will be scored at the final examination of the equine. Animals with sores or wounds may be removed from the ride for humane reasons.

j. Pulse and Respiration Recovery Rates

This information will be collected precisely and uniformly so as to aid the judges in making an evaluation of condition. A pre-ride pulse and respiration may be taken by a qualified P & R crew. This recording will not be used as a reference point upon which to determine that a future recording is high or low.

There will be a minimum of two pulse and respiration checkpoints during each day's competition, not including the final readings. Well trained P & R teams are available to take these readings and to do the recording. The Pulse & Respiration values are taken 10 minutes after the equine was checked into the rest stop. 15 second readings are to be recorded. Accuracy of the P & R readings is very important. Respiration rates are to be taken by a method other than holding the hand in front of the nostrils. Riders are allowed to ask for a recount. If a recount is taken, the second reading (either higher or lower) is the one recorded for scoring purposes.

Judges **MUST** establish the criteria for danger, and have the P & R teams alert them to these equines. The criteria will include: Hold for a Pulse will be at 18 beats in 15 seconds or higher. Hold for Respiration will be set by ride management and the Treatment Veterinarian and announced by ride management at the night before pre-ride briefing. If an equine is held for 10 minutes a CRI must be

performed. Judges will then refer to “alert” section to determine if the equine is fit to continue. If an equine is held for additional recovery, the time held will be credited to the ride time, and the P & R deduction points are calculated using the initial 10 minute reading. If an equine requires a second 10 minute hold it should be determined unfit to continue and removed from competition.

At the final veterinary judging examination, the P & R readings will be taken by the judge. These may be used for assessing total metabolic state and possible treatment.

Note: The initial pulse and respiration readings are for reference only and are not to be scored against the equine in any way. The final P & R readings will be scored against the equine.

k. Wounds

At the initial examination, the equine is to be evaluated, and existing wounds are to be identified for comparison purposes. These wounds are to be recorded on the horse picture in a manner that will be useful for comparison at the final examination. Wounds can be acquired from Tack, interference, overreaching and lacerations.

At the final examination, re-evaluate these areas and note any changes from the initial examination. Points are to be deducted as follows:

Grade A – No significant change from pre-ride.

Grade B – Minor change from pre-ride (Deduct 2 points)

Grade C – Major change from pre-ride (Deduct 5 points)

Grade D – Severe wounds that require treatment (Deduct 10 points)

Example: At the initial examination the horse had a slight cinch rub on the right side and an old scab from interference on the inside of the left front fetlock. There were several small wounds over the body that were not affecting the performance of the horse. These wounds were recorded on the picture on the score card for reference.

Scenario 1. At the final examination the cinch rub was the same size as initial but it was slightly tender. The interference scab was unchanged. The veterinary judge called this a minor change from initial, and a Grade B was given as a post ride grade, and 2 points were deducted.

Scenario 2. At the final examination the cinch rub was larger and now tender. The right side now has a new rub. The interference wound was now open and bleeding. The veterinary judge called this a major change from initial, and a Grade C was given, and 5 points were deducted

I. Trail Lesions

At the initial examination, the equine is to be evaluated, and existing lesions that might be acquired from previous trail riding are to be identified for comparison purposes. These lesions are to be recorded on the horse picture in a manner that will be useful for comparison at the final examination. Bites and kicks from other horses are not subject to penalty

At the final examination, re-evaluate these areas and note any changes from the initial examination. Points are to be deducted as follows:

Grade A – No significant change from pre-ride.

Grade B – Minor change from pre-ride (Deduct 2 points)

Grade C – Major change from pre-ride (Deduct 5 points)

Grade D – Severe lesions that require treatment (Deduct 10 points)

Example: At the initial examination the horse had several scrapes from a tree branch on its left back leg above the stifle that appeared to be about a week old. The lesions were recorded on the picture on the scorecard for reference.

Scenario 1. At the final examination the scrapes had not changed and there were no new lesions. The veterinary judge called this no significant change, and a Grade A was given with no points deducted.

Scenario 2. At the final examination the scrapes had been aggravated and now had some discharge. The right knee now has a small bleeding wound that is not affecting the gait. The veterinary judge is debating between calling this a minor change or a major change but decides it is minor and a Grade B was given, and 2 points were deducted.

m. Joints, Tendons and Muscles.

At the initial examination the equine is to be examined for any swelling, fluid fill or heat of the joints, tendons and muscles and are to be identified for comparison purposes. Any abnormalities are to be recorded on the horse picture in a manner that will be useful for comparison at the final examination.

At the final examination, re-evaluate these areas and note any changes from the initial examination. Points are to be deducted as follows:

Grade A – No significant change from pre-ride

Grade B – Minor change from pre-ride (Deduct 2 points)

Grade C – Major change from pre-ride (Deduct 5 points)

Grade D – Severe swelling or pain that requires treatment (Deduct 10 points)

Tying up or thumps – NOT fit to continue

Example: At the initial examination the horse had wind puffs on both back fetlocks. The lesions were recorded on the picture on the scorecard for reference.

Scenario 1. At the final examination the back fetlocks still had wind puffs and now the front fetlocks have wind puffs too. This was not affecting the gait, and the veterinary judge called this a minor change, and a Grade B was given and 2 points were deducted.

Scenario 2. At the final examination the hind leg wind puffs had not changed but the right hind flexor tendons were warm and slightly swollen. The veterinary judge felt this to be a major change and a Grade C was given and 5 points were deducted.

n. Back.

At the initial examination the equine is to be examined for any back pain. To evaluate, use firm and even pressure with flat hand from withers to tail head. It is important to not use excessive force which would make sound backs appear sore. Any areas of pain are to be recorded on the horse picture in a manner that will be useful for comparison at the final examination.

At the final examination, re-evaluate these areas and note any changes from the initial examination. Points are to be deducted as follows:

Grade A – No significant change from pre-ride.

Grade B – Minor change from pre-ride (Deduct 10 points)

Grade C – Major change from pre-ride (Deduct 20 points)

Grade D – Severe back pain – NOT fit to continue.

Example: At the initial examination the horse had a slight reaction at mid lumbar. This was recorded on the picture on the score card for reference.

Scenario 1. At the final examination the horse had a similar reaction as was found at the initial examination.

The veterinary judge felt this was not a significant change and a Grade A was given with no point deductions.

Scenario 2. At the final examination the horse had a significant increase in the reaction at mid lumbar. The veterinary judge felt this was a major change and a Grade C was given, and 20 points were deducted.

o. Lameness

Lameness and Stiffness - The judge shall evaluate an equine's way of going during the ride to determine change in gait (lameness and stiffness) which is a result of an inability to adapt to the stresses placed on tendons, muscles, ligaments, bones, and joints. Whenever an equine is judged to be lame, the rider must be informed and given the right to observe, with the veterinarian judge, the animal at a trot out on level ground. In cases where the judge desires to make the rider aware of the equine's condition, it is advisable to have a runner trot out the animal so the rider can observe and discuss the horse with the judge.

An equine judged to have a lameness GREATER THAN or EQUAL TO Grade II (two) will NOT be eligible for placing. However, mileage, if completed, will be recorded.

Grade I - deduct 20 points. Difficult to observe. Not consistently apparent regardless of circumstances, circling, going up or down hill, trotting on a hard surface, etc. Be careful to make sure that any suspected lameness is not the result of a horse stepping on a stone or into a hole, etc.

Grade II - deduct 40 points and animal is NOT eligible for placing. Lameness is difficult to observe at a walk or trot on a straight line, but consistently apparent under certain circumstances, such as circling, etc.

Grade III - deduct 40 points and animal is NOT eligible for placing and is considered not fit to continue. Lameness consistently observable at a trot under all circumstances.

Grade IV - deduct 40 points and animal is NOT eligible for placing and is considered not fit to continue. Obvious lameness, at the walk or trot, with marked nodding, hitching, or shortened stride.

Grade V - deduct 40 points and animal is NOT eligible for placing and is considered not fit to continue. Minimal weight bearing on one leg in motion and/or at rest, or inability of animal to move.

8. ALERT

Riders and equines may become caught up in the spirit of the competition and push beyond the metabolic or physical capabilities of the equine. This may result in deterioration of the metabolic or musculoskeletal systems to a point where it becomes painful or dangerous for the animal to continue. By careful examination of the equines at the veterinarian checks, any equine can be removed from competition before serious damage occurs. It is obvious that all competitors must be treated fairly and alike so the competition will be fair and just.

Equines that are assigned an “Alert” or showing deterioration of one or more scored parameters need to be looked at long and hard. Temperature, gut sounds, and CRI should be included to determine if the equine is able to continue. (Refer below to “Instructions for Cardiac Recovery Index”) Don’t rely on numbers alone. Many equines with satisfactory recovery numbers can demonstrate serious metabolic fatigue based on other parameters not the least of which is the general impression of alertness, impulsion, and elasticity. The veterinary judge should choose one of the following options:

- 1) The animal is allowed to continue on the trail, perhaps with a caution to the rider. (Remember, if the equine has been held for pulse/respiration recovery an additional 10 minutes are added to the total riding time allowed for this contestant.)
- 2) The animal is eliminated from competition and placed in a trailer (if possible) and taken back to base camp to avoid further stress.
- 3) The animal is referred directly to the treatment veterinarian for treatment. This option should be chosen for any horse with an “alert” or a CRI increase of 3 beats in 15 seconds.

When in doubt about fatigue, pull the equine. When in doubt about lameness, let it continue.

Equines significantly fatigued or needing veterinary care should be listed and kept under observation until they have recovered or referred to the treatment veterinarian and eventually to the rider’s own veterinarian.

Instructions for Cardiac Recovery Index (CRI)

1. To be performed on a flat even surface over a distance of 40 meters.
2. Judge will take the initial 15 second pulse then start a 1 minute count down. The Rider will trot the horse in hand over the 40 meters and return. The judge will take the final 15 second pulse when the one minute has elapsed. ***NOTE: the trot out over the 40 meters IS INCLUDED in the 1 minute elapsed time.
3. If the Final Pulse is 1 beat in 15 seconds above the initial pulse, the examining vet must evaluate the horse for fitness to continue. The Vet has the option of redoing the CRI. If the Final Pulse is 2 beats above the initial pulse, it is at the discretion of the Vet to pull the horse after a thorough examination. If the final Pulse is 3 beats above the initial pulse the horse is to be referred to the treatment veterinarian.
4. Record the CRI on scorecard in the P&R location. P will be the Initial Pulse. R will be the Final Pulse.

RECOMMENDED GUIDELINES FOR SCORING P & R'S

PULSE

Based on 15 second Reading
(normal 12 and below)
Deduct 2 points per heart beat
above normal.

12	0
13	2
14	4
15	6
16	8
17	10

RESPIRATION

Based on 15 second reading
(Normal 10 and below)
Deduct 1/2 point per breath
above normal.

10	0
11	$\frac{1}{2}$
12	1
13	$1\frac{1}{2}$
14	2
15	$2\frac{1}{2}$
16	3
17	$3\frac{1}{2}$
18	4
19	$4\frac{1}{2}$
20	5
etc	

The recommended guideline for scoring P & R recovery rates has been established to provide more uniform scoring

Consent Form for Emergency Treatment

1. Treatment Veterinarian _____

2. Owner or Authorized Agent Identification

a. Name: _____

b. Address: _____

c. Phone: _____

d. Email: _____

3. Animal Identification:

a. Name: _____

b. Breed: _____ Age: _____

4. I Agree That:

- a. I agree to entrust to you the above named horse for investigation, diagnostic procedures, and such medical or surgical treatment as the treatment veterinarian considers necessary.
- b. I accept there may be certain risks to the life of the horse which could occur as a result of the proposed treatment. These risks have been fully explained to me. I appreciate that whilst reasonable care and attention will be given to the horse, no member of TRAC or management of this ride shall be liable for loss, damage or injury resulting from treatment or otherwise.
- c. I agree to be invoiced direct by the Treatment Veterinarian, and I agree to pay all reasonable costs and expenses that may be incurred whilst the horse is under his/her care. I understand that if complications occur, costs may be in excess of any first quoted.
- d. I have read and understand the above points.
- e. I am the owner of, or authorized agent of, the animal described above and I am of legal age (18 years or older).

Signed: _____

Date: _____