

Safety Response Teams Report – NSW Rogaining Championships 2010.

Location: - Abercrombie River National Park, and private land

Map: - Gurnang, Mt Armstrong, Arkstone, Fullerton, 1:25000, first and second editions, grid AGD 66

Date: - 25/26th September 2010

2 events: - 24 hour and 15 hours in 24 hours; 12 noon Saturday till 12 noon Sunday.

BWRS personnel: - Geoff Dale, Thais Turner, Jakub Zverina, Dug Floyd

Introduction

This year's NSW Rogaining Championships were held in the Abercrombie River National Park and adjacent private land. A rugged place just right for rogaining with light scrub, drinkable water in creeks (advised to treat it), and a system of roads on ridge tops to provide safety access.

The weather was a very kind, being fine but overcast most of Saturday, and Sunny all day Sunday. There was a light frost Friday and Saturday nights

The Safety Plan was prepared by the organizers. BWRS personnel did not see it, though we did ask for it to be emailed. The organizer had left the event copy at home. The event organizer contacted Oberon police prior to the event.

Administration Tent, Hash House, Safety Base and camping were set up on a private paddock adjacent to the National Park. An experienced management committee ran the event. BWRS provided a team of 4 members to act as the safety coordinator and response teams.

All competitors were provided with an accurate map and checkpoint descriptions. The pre-event briefing covered all likely problems such as hypothermia, dehydration, very steep terrain, slippery rocks in wet watercourses, wild life; vehicular traffic on roads, etc.

It has been the policy for rogainers to head for a road when they need assistance, where they will be eventually attended to by vehicles patrolling the tracks. If a competitor becomes immobilised then other competitors advise the event administration. We followed this model, with the Troopie patrolling the tracks as required. BWRS personnel were the first aiders.

The Safety Team setup a base, with the tent and trailer near the hash house and administration, on Friday night. Base HF radio was set up using a Qmac the NVIS antenna, because the Codan could only be contacted from less than 1/4km. The squad Toyota Troop Carrier 4wd vehicle was used to drive the tracks. We used the Troopie UHF and HF radios. In addition for field work we had BWRS half watt UHF radios, squad gps's, the titanium stokes and a sked stretcher, vehicle first aid kits and supplies. There was no mobile phone coverage at the hash house.

We had the use of a satellite phone available at the Administration Tent. To give us communications to the outside world and probably enabled us to communicate between base and the roving teams as there was some limited mobile phone coverage on ridge tops, if required in an emergency. The satellite phone was kept clear so competitors could communicate with the Administration in an emergency.

Event

I am pleased to say that there were only minor incidents again this year again. One team-member was forced to pull out early in the day with ligament damage to his leg (the other two members of his team

formed a new team, and then competed for only 19 hours and still came second overall), and one female competitor sought assistance binding a slightly strained ankle, after the event

Six sweeps of the course roads were carried out. We also set up the water drops and replenished them during the patrols. These were retrieved at the end of the event. The roads in the area are gravel or dirt and mostly in good condition.

On one patrol we checked the section of road between WD4 and WD 5 to ascertain its suitability for use in an emergency. This proved to be satisfactory although a little chopped by past 4wd drivers testing out their machines. During this sweep a user (probably primary user) constant chatter on the 3m frequency, forced us to change to the 5m frequency.

On Sunday morning we did pass a number of 4wd vehicle convoys, which slowed us down. There was also some convoy related chatter on the 3m HF frequency at the same time.

We set up a Qmac for base HF radio using the NVIS antenna, (as we found the Codan to have only very limited range and we did not have communications during the initial circuit/water drop). The HF between Troopie and base was satisfactory over the whole course even in some deep valleys. We did test a Qmac in the field and this was satisfactory. There were no times when we couldn't communicate by radio (other than the first circuit).

All competitors returned before the cut off time.

Conclusion

A very well run event and only very minor incident reported to Safety Response / First Aid Team or Safety Coordinator. The personnel all worked well together and formed a strong team.

The Troopie HF radio provided good coverage back to base HF over the whole course including some deep valleys, during the road sweeps. The Telstra satellite phone was used by us to contact Mikes Richter, regarding problems with the Codan Radio.

Picking up the vehicle and trailer from the present location is a bit of a chore for everyone when members haven't been inducted and don't have the keys. I hope the new shed happens soon.

A particular thanks to the Geoff, Thais and Jakub for their, professional approach, skills and friendliness and enthusiasm, that contributed to a very successful event. Thank you also the event organisers for friendly contribution to the smooth running of the event from our side.

Jakub and I only got out to retrieve three flags on Sunday afternoon due to time limits, after retrieving the water drops.

Dug Floyd (Safety Coordinator)