

Queensland All Codes Racing Industry Board trading as Racing Queensland

HOT WEATHER POLICY – THOROUGHBRED RACING - JOCKEYS

DATE THE POLICY WAS MADE

23 March 2016

COMMENCEMENT DATE:

29 June 2016

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to implement a “hot weather” management strategy that will cater for circumstances that may arise at a race meeting affected by extreme heat and ensure the wellbeing of the riders competing in races during times of hot weather.

POLICY STATEMENT

In any sporting activity, heat stress increases as air temperature builds.

This is strongly reflected by increased discomfort, but also by increased sweating. Stress also increases with rising absolute humidity which impairs sweat evaporation.

Vigorous exercise in sport places participants at risk of heat illness which in hot and humid weather is greater because;

- During high intensity exercise in hot weather people may not be able to produce enough sweat for adequate cooling
- High humidity may prevent adequate evaporation of sweat

Extra caution also needs to be taken during unseasonal heat waves or unusually hot or humid weather whereby participants lack acclimatisation

APPLICATION

This Policy provides recommendations to all riders (jockeys) competing in Queensland race meetings as well as the RQ Stewards and race club staff at any given event.

TEMPERATURE MEASUREMENTS

The Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) website provides reliable temperature readings, which are updated throughout each day.

Ambient temperature is the most easily understood guide available, and is most useful on hot dry days.

| Ambient Temperature | Relative Humidity | Risk of heat Illness | Possible management for sustained physical activity |
|-------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|---|
| 15-20 | | Low | |
| 21-25 | Exceeds 70% | Low - Moderate | |
| 26-30 | Exceeds 60% | Moderate | |
| 31-35 | Exceeds 50% | High – Very High | Uncomfortable for most competitors, increase vigilance, monitor competitor stress |
| 36-38 Level 1 | Exceeds 30% | High - Extreme | Very stressful for most people consider implementing Hot Weather plans including delaying activity to cooler part of the day |
| 38 > Level 2 | Exceeds 20% | Very Extreme | Consider at this point whether abandonment or modification of a race meeting is advisable. Continue to closely monitor conditions throughout the course of the day. Modifications of a race program might include the postponement, advancement or delay in a schedule if it appears likely the extreme conditions might ease or be avoided |

Wet Bulb Globe Temperature (WBGT)

Further guidance might be gained from what is known as the WBGT index. The WBGT is useful when the humidity is high.

| WBGT | Risk of thermal injury | Possible modifying action for vigorous sustained activity |
|-------------------------|------------------------|---|
| < 20 | Low | |
| 21-25 | Moderate to High | |
| 26-28 Level 1 | High to Very High | Consider implementing hot weather plans |
| 29 > Level 2 | Extreme | Consider at this point whether abandonment or modification of a race meeting is advisable Modifications of a race program might include the postponement, advancement or delay in a schedule if it appears likely the extreme conditions might ease or be avoided |

Level 1

This policy will apply all days where the forecast temperature is 35°C (ambient temperature) or 26°C (WBGT) “shade” or above. On these days, the following lists of actions are recommended:

Race clubs:

1. Jockeys room should be air-conditioned or at least have good ventilation and fans which provide evaporative cooling through air flow.
2. An ample supply of fluids including ice, cool water and sports drinks is available in jockeys/drivers room.
3. Cool water to be available to riders behind the barriers.
4. Whenever possible a medical doctor or trained medical/first-aid person on course be available to monitor the condition of jockeys.
5. Ensure ample water is available in the jockey's room showers.
6. Turn off heating elements in spas.

Stewards:

1. Obtain the forecast conditions and monitor Thermal Comfort Observation as provided on the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) during the race meeting.
 - a) <http://www.bom.gov.au/qld/observations/index.shtml> (see attachment 1 for guidance)
 - b) Land Areas / Thermal Comfort
2. Consider liaising with the race club to ensure the protocols for racing in the hot weather are in place before the commencement of racing
3. Consider minimising the time that the jockeys are in the direct sun light by shortening the pre and post race parades of horses and the period horses are behind the starting barriers.
4. Consider conducting discretionary checking of jockeys who have riding engagements at low weights looking for general symptoms of fatigue, nausea, dizziness and irritability. Alert medical attendants to review any jockey where there is a concern.
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Jockey's:

1. Ensure that riding engagements agreed to do not extend to weights below the jockey's minimum riding weight.
2. Proper weight management in the days leading up to a race meeting with the avoidance of using home saunas or spas on the day of racing.
3. Do not take extreme “last minute” measures which will result in the jockey being unduly dehydrated or whereby use of the race day spa is needed to meet weight requirements.

4. If feeling unwell or experiencing dizziness or undue dehydration advise the stewards who will arrange medical attention.
5. Between rides reduce their core temperature by sponging with cold water or cold showering. There are a number of cooling garments and cold packs that are commercially available for jockeys that can be applied between races.
6. Maintain a regular fluid intake during the race meeting to replace fluid losses from excessive sweating. Appropriate fluids include water, and sports drink preparations with electrolyte additive. The partaking of soft drinks containing sugar or caffeine based energy drinks are to be avoided as they will further add to dehydration through their natural diuretic effects.

Level 2

This policy will apply to all days that the forecast temperature is 38°C (ambient temperature) or 28°C (WBGT shade) or above and are in addition to the measures listed in Level 1 of this policy. On these days, the following lists of actions are recommended:

Stewards:

1. Consider at this point whether abandonment or modification of a race meeting is advisable. Continue to closely monitor conditions throughout the course of the day. Modifications of a race program might include the postponement, advancement or delay in a schedule if it appears likely the extreme conditions might ease or be avoided.
2. Consider contacting the race club at the earliest appropriate time prior to the race meeting to ascertain whether a doctor or suitably trained medical/first-aid person is available to monitor the welfare of jockeys with such person to be stationed in or close to the jockey's room.
3. Consider restricting to a minimum the time a jockey is required to be out in the direct sunlight by abandoning pre and post-race parades of horses and restrict to a minimum the period horses are held behind the starting barrier.
4. If a jockey is dehydrated during the course of a race day and particularly if medical advice indicates it is advisable for a jockey to rehydrate, consider taking a sympathetic view to any application to ride ½ kg overweight.
5. Consider adopting a sympathetic approach to an application for a jockey on medical grounds to be permitted to forgo any or all riding engagements on that day.

Jockeys:

1. Jockeys should endeavour to regulate riding engagements so as not to over commit themselves with regard to the overall number and spacing of race rides.
2. Report to the Stewards and/or medical attendants any symptoms which might indicate heat illness.
3. Report to the official veterinarian if the rider is concerned with the condition of a horse post-race.

4. Due to extra weight loss caused by sweating during the course of strenuous race riding jockeys can afford to increase their fluid intake without increasing their weight.

Symptoms of heat illness which may not appear obvious may include:

- light headedness, dizziness - confusion
- aggression or irrational behaviour - nausea
- fatigue
- later symptoms indicating more profound dehydration include:
 - cessation of sweating - collapse
 - ashen grey pale skin - altered consciousness
 - obvious loss of skill and coordination/clumsiness or unsteadiness

(These symptoms may indicate heat stroke which requires immediate medical treatment. Heat stroke must be treated as a medical emergency)

Factors that increase the risk of heat illness may include:

- high exercise intensity
- lack of fitness
- previous history of heat illness or heat intolerance
- high air temperature
- low air movement
- heavy clothing and protective equipment
- lack of acclimatisation
- dehydration
- illness (including virus, flu, gastro)
- medical conditions (including asthma, diabetes etc)

Measures to minimise the risk of heat illness during rest period include:

- reducing clothing and resting
- assisting evaporating cooling with fans and water spray
- wetting/sponging of the skin

- applying ice packs to groin and armpits
- drinking cool water or sports drinks or taking ice

If in the opinion of a jockey the conditions are becoming extreme to the point that it is detrimental to their health and safety immediately approach the stewards.

Review

Next review date will be March 2017.

REVISION HISTORY

| Version | Date | Description |
|----------------|-------------|--|
| 1.00 | March 2016 | Draft Policy to RQ Board for approval for consultation. |
| 1.01 | June 2016 | Final Policy to RQ Board for approval after industry consultation. |