

INTRODUCTION

THE WRITER ~ GLENDA SUTTON

In 1998 I travelled to the United Arab Emirates to gain the knowledge and skills necessary to race camels. Since then I have devoted my life to Camel Racing, as a camel owner, breaker, trainer, jockey, and educator of cameleers new to the industry. Over the past 20 years I have played an active role in many sectors of the camel industry, including the evolution of Australian Camel Racing. As a result of the positive changes made to race programs, procedures, racetrack set up, and starting systems during this time, the Australian racing camel is now being given the chance to show its true speed and athleticism, with record race times being set at a new elite level of competition.

I am providing you with this information in the hope that the efforts made in the past by cameleers and previous race organisers will be of valuable use to you now. I am also trying to help you understand the reasons why particular procedures exist in certain aspects of Camel Racing. It is important to me that camel race organisers have access to helpful information directly from an experienced camel person. As I understand the needs of the racing camel and fellow cameleers, I would like to share this knowledge with anyone interested in holding an elite level racing event.

Camel Racing is not a well known sport, and may appear intimidating or complicated to a first time race organiser. Therefore I have set out the following information factually and with easy to follow instructions, and placed great importance on directing you away from making any decision that could have an unexpected or problematic outcome. A camel race is not a difficult event to organise once you have gained a proper understanding of how the sport works. My primary objective is to balance the best interests of race organisers, competitors, camels and the public, with an increase in the number of camel races held in Australia, and to work towards building new annual camel race circuits.

AUSTRALIAN CAMEL RACING

THE BENEFITS OF HOLDING A CAMEL RACE

Many people are not aware that Camel Racing exists in Australia today. Over the years those who have attended race meetings have thoroughly enjoyed the experience. Spectators follow the participants with interest, are always keen to take away souvenirs, and love to return to annual events. The appeal for all ages seems to lie in the sheer size and unusual characteristics of the camel, and the ever intriguing spectacle of the camel race. There is also the added element of excitement in trying to comprehend the fact that riders are willing to mount and trust such a large animal, with no method of control available to them during a race, when in fact racing a camel is far safer than racing a horse.

Camel Racing tends to attract fun loving people who enjoy and participate in added attractions. Camel tagging and Rodeo events are always popular. Bookmakers and the running of a Calcutta before the Cup Finals are an advantage. Bar facilities, food vans, bands, rides ~ especially camel rides, stalls, and fireworks all contribute to attracting the general public. Foot races, wood chopping, yabby races, tug of war, closest to the tee, hay bale rolling, and lolly drops, keep the entertainment flowing between races. These ideas have proven to be successful at past race meetings. A well coordinated camel racing event will draw attention to your town and chosen venue, and provide good returns.

THE RACING CAMEL

It is important to recognise that the thought patterns of the camel are very different to that of the horse. This is the reason why the racetrack must be set up specifically to work with the mind of the camel. The camel jockey has virtually no rein control over the racing camel at any time, therefore fencing and sight barriers **must** surround the racing area at every angle. The camel is led to the starting barriers and set free by a camel handler when the starting pistol is fired, and will only gallop towards other camels positioned beyond the finish line of the racetrack. Most of the camels racing today are highly trained and power down the racetrack in fierce competition. However there are occasionally camels competing that provide an element of unpredictability to some races, with a display of weaving from one side of the racetrack to the other as they gallop. This is nobodies fault, and does not dislodge riders. It actually has an effect on the crowd of excitement and amusement. Racing camels perform well in the correct setting.

RACETRACK REQUIREMENTS

THE RACETRACK SURFACE

It is essential that the suitability of the racetrack is assessed before any plans towards running a race are put in place. Camels are soft footed animals. They are able to race on sand, dry soil or green turf, but **never** on a surface where rocks, sticks, harsh gravel or other sharp objects are present. They will also slip over easily in mud or on dry grass. Following rain on black soil, it is vital that the surface is prepared to a soft consistency to avoid camel foot damage.

THE RACETRACK SHAPE

Camels can only ever be expected to race in a straight line or a half circle. **Never** plan races to go around a full circle. If the starting line is too close to the finishing line in a circle, the camels will cut across the centre of the racetrack the shortest way home with no regard for fencing. Most camel races are held in a clockwise direction in Australia.

THE RACETRACK FENCING

In order to prevent any camel escaping into an unsafe area during a race, the entire racing area **must** be surrounded by highly visible fencing. The railing used around horse racetracks is ideal, but often only present in part. It is imperative that fences are put in place on both sides of the racetrack for the full length, and also erected at each end. Sight materials such as flag line, bunting and hessian can be attached to capped pickets 4 - 5 feet high wherever railing is absent. The width of the racetrack should be consistent, and no less than 40m wide. A sight barrier of thick appearance is needed spaced behind the starting barriers to avoid camels pulling backwards out of the barriers and galloping away from the race. This scenario upsets bookmakers, endangers riders, damages camels, and can be easily avoided. Camels are often still at high speed immediately after a race and need a clear message to stop, therefore a high fence is also required well beyond the finish line. Portable cattle panels are ideal for this purpose. All fencing needs to be in place the day prior to racing to allow the trainers to familiarise the camels with the course.

CAMEL RACE DISTANCES

The distance a camel race is held over is often determined by the size of an existing racetrack, or the area allowed for a purpose built track. In Australia the most common race distances are 400m, 600m and 1000m. A camel has the ability to race 3 – 4 times in one day if the distances are relatively short. No race program should ever include eligibility for a camel to be entered into more than one 1000m race in the one day, as this may injure camels. The most successful type of race program is outlined in the following information, and is suited to middle distance races.

THE CAMELEERS CAMPING AREA

The cameleers need to arrive with their camels a couple of days before the race meeting. The camping area must be located at the finishing line end of the racetrack. This will ensure the camels become familiar with the area, and gallop in the right direction in a safe manner on race day. There must be adequate space provided to accommodate several large vehicles, and access to soft surfaces in the area for the camels to sit down comfortably. Shower and toilet facilities need to be unlocked and operational when the cameleers arrive. Camels intended to give public camel rides must also camp in this area and set up for work in a position that will not distract the racing camels on race day. Australian cameleers are obliging people, and very appreciative of a race organiser who has researched their needs.

THE STARTING BARRIERS

IMPORTANT POINTS FOR THE USE OF STARTING BARRIERS

Camel race starting barriers are a line of free standing panels with a sight wall constructed just behind them. This simple, yet safe and effective design has taken years of experimentation to perfect. The barriers send a clear message to the camel as to where it is supposed to start. They provide much needed protection for the handlers from the camels either side of them. They show the starter whether or not each camel is in its correct starting position, and provide an isolated view of each race competitor so a quick and safe decision can be made on when to fire the pistol.

A race run without starting barriers can spell disaster. The camels find themselves unclear on where they are to start, which can cause them to run in the wrong direction or behave in an unruly manner. The handlers are open to injury from their own camel and the camels starting either side of them, as camels are difficult to face forward without starting barriers. Jockeys are slammed together and sometimes dislodged. Camels take fright when they are hit by another animal, spin around the handler or break. Ultimately the camels are unnecessarily spoilt for future race starts.

These sorts of problems leave you open to unwanted disputes, as camels will start unevenly and break away from handlers. Please be aware that any suggestions made by a camel person to use an alternative starting system will not be for the good of all concerned. Well constructed starting barriers contribute greatly to a happy, trouble free event.

STARTING BARRIER CONSTRUCTION

The following is a list of the equipment required in order to build **EIGHT** starting barriers: A load carrying vehicle, at least three workers, eighteen 5 x 8-10' steel cattle panels, nine steel panel pins, eighteen star pickets, a roll of twitching wire, bolt cutters, twitching pliers, a picket driver, a tape measure, a string line and a witch's hat. Several more panels and pins will be needed to build a fence a few metres behind the barriers the full width of the racetrack.

Camel race starting barriers are simple to construct if you have all the right equipment ready. Begin by running a string line across the width of the racetrack, and taper it a little if the start is on a bend. Measure **6 foot** sections, and bang the front row of pickets in deep enough to stay upright if a camel leans on the panel. Have the first panels against the inside rail of the racetrack to avoid the rail being dented, or a camel trying to leap over it. Each starting barrier needs to be 2 panels long and an even 6 foot wide. Twitch the two panels tightly between two pickets. Following this, build the sight fence behind the barriers. Place the witch's hat 50m down the racetrack on the outside.

If camels are expected to race over more than one distance at a race meeting it is crucial that you provide a second set of starting barriers, and be sure they are able to be set up ready for any race that is run as a part of the program. **It is not acceptable under any circumstances to ask cameleers to start racing camels without starting barriers.**

MAKING THE DECISION TO HOLD A CAMEL RACE

The facts presented so far have been chosen in a particular order to serve as an introduction in helping you make an informed decision as to whether or not you are able to provide the appropriate facilities to hold a camel race. If you are happy with the requirements regarding racetrack set up, the cameleers camping facilities, and starting barrier construction, please read the following information. If you have any questions regarding Australian Camel Racing or require assistance, please contact the writer Glenda Sutton on Mobile: 0438 247 446. If I do not specialise in a specific area of concern (eg: acquiring trophies) I will try and supply you with a point of contact. Other important considerations include insurance, sponsorship, extra attractions and advertising but will differ between race meetings.

RUNNING A CAMEL RACE

IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

SETTING A DATE – It is wise to first consider when and where other events are being held. Camel Races are more successful when they are held as part of a circuit. A common misconception is that another event of the same variety in the same area will reduce crowd numbers and profitability. On the contrary unless you are offering an exceptionally sizable amount of prize money, it can be difficult to attract competitors to a race meeting without others to support it. The reason for this is the distance cameleers travel, training, preparation and expenses before an event. The fact is several camel race meetings held on consecutive weekends as individual events, but timed as part of a race circuit, is the most affective path to success for all concerned. Another important consideration when you are dealing with a soft footed animal that may fall in muddy conditions is to choose a dry time of year in your region.

THE RACETRACK- Consider the location, size, surface, camping area, facilities, and wether or not you are allowed to drive star pickets into the racetrack surface. Trotting tracks were used in the past, but are no longer suitable for Camel Racing, as starting barrier construction damages the surface. They are also generally too small to cope with the speed today's racing camels reach with any degree of safety. Turf and dry soil racetracks are an ideal choice.

HORSES- Are there horses stabled at the racetrack you intend to use, and are they trained on it on a daily basis? Horses can be frightened of camels. When first approached horse owners are often apposed to the idea of camel races being held on their local racetrack. It is wise for you to be ready for this reaction with helpful information. Inform them of exactly when the camels will arrive, where they will stay at night, where they are going to be exercised, and that the cameleers are not able to leave the racetrack the night of the races. They also need to know that camels are a soft footed animal, and will not damage any kind of racetrack surface. It is important that the people involved in both the horse and camel industries keep the lines of communication open, show respect for one and other and recognise we are not in opposition with each other. We all have the right to compete at a shared facility in our chosen sport. Let horse owners know that both yourself and the cameleers would greatly appreciate their support, and suggest that they meet the cameleers and their camels when they arrive. In fairness, and in recognition of any inconvenience, provide the horse owners with a number of free passes to the event and access to VIP areas. It is common to see a reassured horse person embrace Camel Racing through participation in the event.

PERSONNEL & EQUIPMENT – Your race meeting will run smoothly if the following people and equipment are arranged well before race day. It is important that each person involved in the running of a camel race has a full understanding of what is required of them where, when and why. The key to running a happy and successful race meeting is early and thorough organisation, and to have as many people working towards avoiding problems as you can.

- You will need - a full race committee to hold regular meetings and carry out organisational duties
- an ambulance on course
 - starting barrier builders, vehicle and equipment
 - a ute for the starter to stand on, and to bring the camel handlers back to catch the camels after racing
 - a working starter's pistol or gun – the loudest you can obtain, with new quality caps/ammunition
 - a race starter with a thorough knowledge of the rules of camel racing and camel behaviour
 - a race starters assistant/steward also with a thorough knowledge of camel race rules
 - a video camera and operator **directly in line with the finish line** if no photo finish is available
 - two judges familiar with camel race rules who will confirm race placings and deal with any disputes
 - a race caller situated where each entire race can be seen clearly
 - a stop watch and time keeper who must relay times to the race caller for broadcast after each race
 - an on course veterinarian with drug testing equipment if possible
 - arrangements in place for the whereabouts of sponsors and prizes to be presented after each race
 - a box of bright coloured spray paint to have the camel owners paint numbers on the camel's necks
 - an office with everything organised to carry out race draws and secretarial and treasury duties
 - gate personnel selling event arm bands (different colours for over and under 18), race programs etc.
 - security to individual state requirements (follow rules regarding bar licencing and facilities)
 - any other persons required to run a canteen, bar, stall sites, parking, amenities and other attractions

THE RACE PROGRAM

THE BEST PROGRAM FOR ALL

When organising a race program it is important to consider a format that will work the best for everyone concerned.

In order to please the crowd it is best to run no less than 8 races in a day and time them as close together as possible. Try to avoid starting the races too early in the morning, as on weekends people rarely rise early and may miss races in the lead up to the big cup final, which when held last on the program holds the crowds interest throughout the day. As soon as the last race is complete, promptly inform the crowd of further entertainment to keep people at the event.

Cameleers are always in support of a race program that offers an opportunity for camels at varying levels of training and ability to be eligible for prize money, ribbons and trophies. Presentations involving sponsors after each camel race provides an opportunity for both race organisers and competitors to show their appreciation, and increases the likelihood of repeat sponsorship. It is also a spectacle that increases the likelihood of good news and media coverage.

As an organiser, if the camping area, racetrack, starting barriers, photo finish, paperwork, race officials, race draws, camel numbers, prizes, camel rides area, ambulance, race caller, veterinarian, times, race program and rules are set up correctly, there should not be any reason for you to experience problems with the camel racing side of the event.

Camel racing is currently experiencing problems associated with book makers. Queensland Racing recently declared one race meeting in its 22nd year 'a Sporting Contingency' and allowed betting on Camel Racing to go ahead, however other race meetings were denied. Alternatively or in conjunction with betting holding a Camel Cup Calcutta is always very popular and successful. **Please do not ask cameleers to parade camels for the Calcutta.**

PROGRAM DESIGN AND BREAKDOWN

The following program is becoming increasingly popular on the camel race circuit as a one day event. It is set up to ensure that every camel has a chance to compete at least twice in one day, and for the majority to take home prizes. This program, along with the prize money amounts suggested should bring you enough nominations for good fields.

Plan race distances around the most suitable/spacious starting area on your chosen racetrack where possible. Race distances for a one day event should be minimum 400m and are best not to exceed 800m. 600m races are generally well accepted by trainers with camels still in a strong gallop as they cross the finish line, which is spectator friendly.

CUP AND PLATE EIGHT RACE ONE DAY EVENT PROGRAM. FOUR HEATS MUST BE RUN

Run races 30- 45 minutes apart depending on distance. The race caller should call the camels to the marshalling area allowing enough time for the jockeys to mount, and the camels to be led at a walk to the start for races to run to time.

EXAMPLE – Race 1 - Heat 1 – 600m – 1st \$800, 2nd \$400, 3rd \$200, 4th \$100. Present ribbons for all placings
 Race 2 - Heat 2 – 600m – 1st \$800, 2nd \$400, 3rd \$200, 4th \$100. Present ribbons for all placings
 Race 3 - Heat 3 – 600m – 1st \$800, 2nd \$400, 3rd \$200, 4th \$100. Present ribbons for all placings
 Race 4 - Heat 4 – 600m – 1st \$800, 2nd \$400, 3rd \$200, 4th \$100. Present ribbons for all placings
 (prize money offered to all nominated camels @ \$1,500 per heat = \$6,000)

Race 5 - 600m Consolation Final
 1st \$800, 2nd \$400, 3rd \$200, 4th \$100. Present a trophy for 1st and ribbons for all placings
 (\$1,500 prize money offered to 5th to last place getters in the heats)

Race 6 - 600m Plate Final
 1st \$1,800, 2nd \$900, 3rd \$500, 4th 200. Present a Plate for 1st and ribbons for all placings
 (\$3400 prize money offered to 3rd and 4th place getters in the heats)

Race 7 - 600m Open race
 1st \$800, 2nd \$500, 3rd \$300. Present ribbons for all placings
 (\$1,600 prize money offered to any camel at any level including a 2nd chance for breakers)

Race 8 - 600m Cup Final
 1st \$3,000, 2nd \$2,000, 3rd \$1,000, 4th \$500. Present a cup for 1st and ribbons for all placings
 (\$6,500 prizemoney offered to 1st and 2nd place getters in the heats)

THE ABOVE PROGRAM IS BASED ON \$20,000, including \$19,000 in prize money and \$1,000 in race prizes.

CAMEL NOMINATIONS

APPROACHING THE CAMELEERS AND INFORMATION THEY WILL NEED

If you choose to use the program design set out on the previous page, you should receive a positive response from the cameleers. Obviously the more prize money you are able to offer at a race meeting, the greater the attendance will be. The cameleers are obliging and appreciative people when approached by an organiser who has researched their needs. The race program you offer simply needs to be presented to them in writing with assurances that the format will remain the same. Make sure you provide each cameleer with a copy of your camel race rules and make it clear that all participants associated with racing must understand and abide by them. When communicating with the cameleers it is acceptable to discuss any of the subjects I have covered within the information I am providing you, but do not disclose any information contained on any trainers camel nomination forms to another trainer at any time. It is acceptable to tell the trainers how many camels will attend the event, as they may help provide more if needed.

EXAMPLE OF A NOMINATION FORM

LOGO HERE CAMEL RACES

20.... RACE REGISTRATION

- Forms must be completed and received by.....*Date and Time*.....
- All persons registering must agree to abide by the rules and regulations set by the committee.
- Draws will be held..... *Date and Time*..... witnessed by.....*Officer of the law*.....
- Camels are granted permission to arrive at.....Racecourse no earlier than.....*Time and Date*.

TRAINERS NAME _____
 ADDRESS _____
 PHONE _____ EMAIL _____

RACING COLOURS _____
 NAMES OF JOCKEYS _____
 NAMES OF HANDLERS _____
 CAMEL NUMBERS (if raced this circuit, otherwise to be allocated) _____

ENTER THE NAME OF EACH CAMEL YOU WISH TO REGISTER IN EACH PARTICULAR HEAT

All heats will be run over a distance of00m

Heat1 - Camel 1	_____	Camel 2	_____
Heat 2 - Camel 1	_____	Camel 2	_____
Heat 3 - Camel 1	_____	Camel 2	_____
Heat 4 - Camel 1	_____	Camel 2	_____

Heat results determine eligibility for finals. 1st and 2nd place getters are eligible to enter the CUP. 3rd and 4th place getters are eligible to enter the PLATE. 5th to last place getters are eligible to enter the CONSOLATION. Any camel at any level is eligible to enter the OPEN regardless of heat placing or break. Race order on*Date*.....: Races 1-4 Heats, Race 5 Consolation, Race 6 Plate, Race 7 Open, Race 8 Cup.

Forward nominations to.....*Secretary*.....Address.....

SIGNATURE _____ Date _____

CAMEL RACE BARRIER DRAWS

WHY BARRIER DRAWS ARE IMPORTANT

Each camel trainer will have suitable jockeys and handlers pre-arranged to suit the individual needs of their camels.

It is vital that the barrier draws are carried out with each trainer's camels entered into the correct heats in the order they were registered in on the nomination forms. If any of the heats have an uneven number of camels entered into them it is not acceptable to make changes on behalf of a trainer or to discuss moving particular camels to a different heat. This opens you up to a number of problems, including safety issues if particular camels are raced in an unplanned heat and clash with the handler or jockey intended to control or ride them on race day. Over the course of the day there will naturally be several different field numbers. A good race caller can work nicely with any size field.

It is important to consider the fact that with any race start it is far more difficult for a camel to win a race from an outside barrier than an inside barrier. Barrier draws ensure that race starts take place in a fair and orderly manner for all concerned. Under no circumstances should the same barrier draw be used more than once. Every race **MUST** start with a new barrier draw. Any trainer that starts a camel from the wrong barrier or swaps camels is to be disqualified.

WHEN TO DO THE BARRIER DRAWS

The barrier draws for the camel race heats are to be carried out on the date and time written on the nomination forms.

The draws must be carried out in front of pre-arranged witnesses if you have received them prior to listing the camel race fields in your race program. If you are doing the barrier draws a couple of days prior to the race meeting it is acceptable for the cameleers to be present, provided they do not act in any way that affects the outcome of a race draw for personal gain. The trainers will need printed copies of the fields and barrier draws the day prior to racing.

As the outcome of the heats determine each camel's eligibility for the finals on race day, the next barrier draws can be completed shortly after the heats are run. This is also the time for trainers to nominate for the open race and relay any scratchings to the secretary. It is a good idea to allow a representative from each stable to be present when the race day draws are taking place, as this builds trust between organisers and competitors and safeguards all concerned.

When setting out the race program booklet, leave spaces for people to write the camel's names, barrier draws and placings down for the Consolation, Plate, Open and Cup races. The race caller can announce the fields for recording.

THE SIMPLE BARRIER DRAW PROCEDURE

Prior to the camel race meeting set up a grid on a computer for use as each nomination, race field, barrier draw and placing comes in. Printed copies of all fields need to be made available to competitors, officials and the race caller.

Once the fields are in, use clearly numbered ping pong balls in a dense coloured bowl held high to allocate each camel's barrier number by having a person reach into the bowl and read the number written on the ball out aloud. The numbers can then be typed in a space on the grid beside the camel's names in the order they were drawn out.

Race	Camel Name	Trainer	Camel #	Colours	Jockey Name	Barrier #	Place	Time
5	Humpster	Don Arabia	23	Blue	Dee Rider	4	2nd	58.01
	She Bop	Bree Oasis	7	Yellow	Glenda Fast	3	4th	1:05.00
	Tree Eater	Jim Bambino	16	Red	Bob Low	1	1st	57.23
	Colossus	Steph Knee	20	Orange	Kristelle Ball	5	5th	1:15.02
	Great Scott	Max Smart	12	Pink	Jock Strapper	2	3rd	59.00
	Shin Dig	Matt Adore	3	Green	Flo stream	6	6th	1:25.07

Note the order the barrier draws came out in the above example. Camel number 16 started closest to the inside rail.

THE DAY BEFORE THE RACE MEETING

PERSONNEL, EQUIPMENT AND PROCEDURES MUST BE READY FOR ACTION

All fencing, starting barriers, banners and other necessities must be completely in place on the racetrack as early as possible the day before the races. This will allow the trainers to properly familiarise the camels with the racetrack setting. Trainers walking groups of camels up and down a racetrack is an important process in the preparation of the racing camels. It shows the camels where they are expected to gallop (no rein control), allows them to overcome any fearful reactions to unfamiliar surroundings, and helps to avoid confusion or behavioural problems during the event.

All of the camel's registration number should be allocated and painted on their necks the day before the races. Provide the trainers with cans of different brightly coloured spray paint for visibility on different coloured camel's coats. If the camels have already been racing at other meetings they will need to keep the same numbers, as new numbers painted over old ones are unsightly and difficult to read. Correctly numbered camels are important in racing.

Confirm that all personnel and equipment listed on page 4 are prepared for the race meeting and that staff know what time they are expected to begin their duties. One of the most important tools for success you can have at your race meeting is video camera footage/photo finish to record each race as the camels cross the finish line. This MUST be set up directly in line with the winning post, NEVER on an angle, as many camel race placings involve a decision made between a camel running close to the inside rail and another running on the outside rail of the racetrack. Keep a check on the space needed to set up the camera and ensure that nothing is placed in the area needed to position it.

Double check that the race caller and time keepers view of the races will not be blocked by any last minute placement of objects on the day, taking into consideration the areas that the crowd may form. To avoid other problems use paint on the ground anywhere you plan to have particular attractions set up if they have not arrived.

Make sure each trainer has a few printed copies of the race fields and barrier draws for the camel race heats next day. Make sure you have provided enough copies of the camel race rules and regulations to be allocated to all participants. If you plan to have a meeting between the cameleers, officials, organisers and race starter make it clear exactly when.

RACE DAY

THOROUGH PREPARATION EQUALS A SAFE AND SUCCESSFUL RACE MEETING

Be aware you are dealing with a lot of different personalities in a high energy sport where prize money and prestige are involved. If you know your side of running the event well, then you have prepared yourself to handle any situation put before you with a proper understanding of the needs of all concerned. If you remain focused on the program, procedures and rules you have prepared and be strong with your decisions your race meeting will run well.

Every participant must sign a waiver release form before the race meeting commences.

MAKE SURE THE AMBULANCE IS READY FOR THE FIRST RACE. If handlers are asked to hold racing camels for long periods after leaving the mounting area in order to wait for anyone who is not ready, they are at risk.

The race caller will need to call the camels to the marshalling area early enough before each race to allow the jockeys to mount the camels, and the handlers to walk the camels calmly to the starting barriers over the set distance.

After each race the official placings must be announced, along with the winning camel's race time (at least twice).

Presentations of ribbons, trophies and prize money, including sponsor involvement and short interviews, with the camel present, are welcomed by the public and media when held immediately after official placings are announced.

Following the running of the camel races it is important to direct the crowd towards follow up entertainment offered.

POINTS OF INTEREST

INFORMATION THAT MAY ASSIST YOU FURTHER

The Queensland Camel Race circuit revolves around the date set by the Boulia Camel Races held annually on the third weekend in July. The Bedourie Camel and Pig Races are always held the week before the Boulia race meeting, and the Winton Camel Races are always held the weekend after. The Tara Festival of Culture and Camel Races is held biannually (odd number years), always on the first weekend in August, which sometimes sees a 2 week break between the Winton and Tara meetings. The Boulia and Tara meetings are 2 day events and Bedourie and Winton 1.

Other competition Camel Races held at Marree S.A. and Alice Springs NT do not use starting barriers or abide by the same rules as the above race meetings, and are often held on the same dates, therefore it is difficult to count on them as a part of a race circuit. The Forbes Camel Races NSW are held annually on Good Friday and run differently.

There is another type of camel race program that is suitable to run as a 2 day event when a large amount of prize money is offered. This is a double cup program with no plate final for mid-level camels, targeted more at exposure for the higher level racing animals. Four 400m sprint heats and four 1000m distance heats are run on the Saturday and two cup finals, a consolation and open races are run on the Sunday. For a large scale event such as this, the camels must be trained for distance, and many other attractions need to be arranged for Friday and Saturday nights.

It is acceptable to run a race program involving several races open for nomination, but in order to attract competitors to this type of event the sponsorship dollars have to be very high. Many different programs have been tried out over the past two decades with ideas used such as, maiden races, male or female camel races and very short distances, but they have proven to be too complicated. These trials prompted the design of the well accepted cup and plate program.

CONCLUSION

THANK YOU FOR YOUR INTEREST IN AUSTRALIAN CAMEL RACING

For many years now camel racing has been my passion. I entered the sport early in its development and have witnessed its progression through countless challenges over the years. Working through these challenges and finding appropriate solutions to improve race procedures and safety was a lengthy process of experimentation and many adjustments had to be made. However through continued perseverance we finally established a system that works exceptionally well for the racing camel, cameleers, and race organisers. Camel Racing now needs more exposure.

Within the previous pages I have tried to explain how and why this simple but effective system works, and I sincerely hope it continues to be used at every competition level camel race held in Australia.

I have presented you with this information so you are able to benefit from the positive outcome of our efforts in the past, and to help you avoid any unnecessary hardships associated with entering into a sport that is not well known. This information is also intended to help organisers and cameleers come together and increase the number of camel races held in Australia with confidence and positivity.

If you do choose to organise a camel race and run your program according to this information, I am confident you will have an enjoyable and rewarding experience that may be an exciting beginning to the running of an annual event.

If you require further information on any issue regarding Camel Racing please do not hesitate to contact me any time on 0438 247 446. As I have more hands on experience as a camel owner, breaker, trainer, jockey and handler competing in races, if I am not 100% sure on any subject I will endeavour to find the right person for you to contact.

GLENDIA SUTTON.

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