

## BOUDHEIB ENDURANCE HAS DEVELOPED ITSELF AND CARRIES ON

### THE NEED FOR COMMUNICATION

After more than one year of existence, the necessity of building a structured communication network has become obvious to convey what is happening in Bouthieb.

We have seen and we know that names and designations are not always easily transcribed from one language to another, mainly when different alphabets having nothing in common are concerned (in this case the Arab characters and the Latin ones with English phonetic predominance). This is why the spelling fluctuates between Bouthieb, Boutheib, Bouthib or even Bou Thib according to the transcribers' will more or less phonetically right. But if you really wish to communicate, you have to decide which spelling is suitable and stick to it. This is why Sh Sultan bin Zayed Al Nahyan has decided that, from now on, the right spelling in English is "Boudheib", which phonetically speaking is the nearest possible way to write it in English.

Then a logo was created to clearly identify the Organizing Committee and avoid calling it "the one of Bouthieb" or "the organization of Bouthieb", etc.



"Boudheib Endurance" has become the official name of the entity managing and promoting the innovations taking place in Boudheib.

The Bouthieb Protocol has become the "Boudheib Endurance Challenge Award" or "BECA".

But orthography and a name are certainly not enough. Communication is more demanding, otherwise nothing or almost nothing of what one does has a true existence in the eyes of others. Of course, the articles written and distributed throughout the world, with the multiple developments it generates are an efficient means, but it does not replace the other media anchor which penalized the action.

It has now been done with the opening of a Facebook page ("Boudheib Initiative") and a website to come soon ([www.boudheib.ae](http://www.boudheib.ae)). This website will broadcast the live results of the events taking place in BIEV (official abbreviation of "Boudheib International Endurance Village"), situated among the dunes, next to Al Khatim in the center of Abu Dhabi. These results are at present exclusively broadcasted through the ATRM website which has a worldwide extent and shares the diffusion of the Boudheib Endurance events and will continue doing so.

Being aware that images have a tremendous power on the public, Boudheib Endurance has decided to have the BIEV events broadcasted on a live mode. Broadcasting live by streaming on Internet was preferred to the

"traditional" TV process which is heavier to handle, more expensive and has less geographical extent than what the Internet network easily provides. The rides of January 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> 2017 were a successful test of that mode.



2. Live TV broadcasting through Internet.

## INFLUENCE OF THE "PROTOCOL" ON THE QUALIFIER RIDES

One could note during the qualifier rides of January 5<sup>th</sup> (40 & 80 km) that the BECA did influence the riders' behavior. The rules governing those rides set a compulsory speed limit between 12 and 16 km/h. The BECA constraints added to them are a maximum compulsory heart frequency of 56 bpm (in place of the former 60 and 64 admitted before) and a recovery time limited to 10 minutes (instead of the 20 minutes granted before).

During the former years the riders used to run at high speeds on the trails (around 25 up to 30km/h or even more) and to congregate in front of the finish line waiting for the right time to come in. Thus they reached the maximum authorized speed of 16 km/h. This was a kind of administrative speed not related to what the horses had experienced.

Although the results include no ranking, the riders used to ask for them at the end of each phase to know who was ahead of whom, thus leading astray the function and the meaning of the qualifier rides.

This season it was noted that the riders had a regular speed on the track and that they modulated it according to the distance and the maximum allowed. They are not trying to run at full speed to overtake others on the trail any longer. One can now see true qualifier rides and not anymore underground competitions against the clock inside the qualifier rides. The horses are the true winners of this new and intelligent behavior.

Now the results are printed only at the end of those rides and the riders seldom ask for them. The BECA combined with a significant amount of natural tracks seem to have deeply modified the competitors' behavior however indirectly, since no points are awarded in this type of rides. This is a victory.

## TOUGHENING THE CONTROLS

The overall number of the riders attending the rides of January 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> was close to 300.

Knowing that substituting riders on the track is relatively frequent, a permanent and systematic reinforcement of the controls was implemented. Pictures were taken in case of doubt. IDs were asked and verified on the tracks and on the finish line, etc. Thus no less than 6 riders were caught and disqualified for substitution. This, of course, led to dishonest disputes leading nowhere. We even heard a trainer defending himself by saying that he did intend to qualify only the horse, not the rider !!!



**3. Check after the crossing of the finish line at the end of a phase.**

There was also a disqualification because of insufficient weight. 8 kilos "only" were lacking. A trifle.

The riders and trainers tempted by this type of cheating could see that it is not possible any more in Boudheib. This should dissuade them in the future. It is clear nonetheless that the level of control will not be lowered and everyone is fully aware of it.

The shaded rest areas were enlarged as we mentioned in a former article.



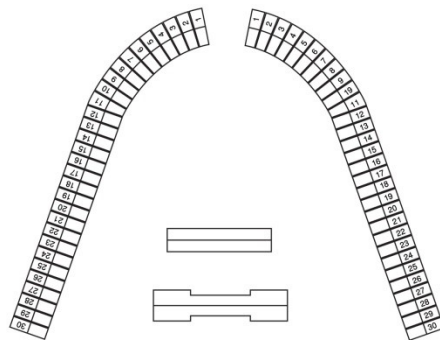
**4. Vast shelters for the rest of horses during the hold times.**

From now on each section bears a number and no more than four horses are allowed in each of them. This makes a total of  $60 \times 4 = 240$  horses. It aims at eliminating insane crowds of horses in some parts while the others are empty. It also allows a better command of the situation and possible "undesirable" practices.



5. Numbered spaces to get a better distribution of the horses.

The first enforcement of this policy on January 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> was not exactly a full success. This is why during the events to come the stables will be assigned to numbered zones and will not have the possibility to choose where they wish to stay. This will lead to a better distribution.



6. The map of the numbered shelters to help assign places to the stables.

The deterring cctv cameras are placed in staggered rows to avoid what happened during the past season when a few "naughty" ones, hiding carefully in the blind angles, modified the angles of the cameras with a stick in order to be "safe" during the rest periods of the rides.

In the control center the person in charge can zoom on any image in case of necessity and everything is recorded for a possible after check.



7. Display screens in the control room.

## IMPROVING THE RULES

The rules in effect the past season were amended to be better and simpler. The aim is still to better the horses' welfare and to educate oriented for a real change of mentalities. The modifications made aim at eliminating possible abuses and having a better balance among the criteria.

The concept of optimum speed for the CEIs (no speed limit which would be in opposition with the FEI rules) is still enforced, but it appears that it is today in full resonance with the "functional" speed on the natural tracks which requires more technicity from the riders. It is an important contribution.

From now on the heart frequency level is not taken into account any more. The Cardiac Recovery Index replaces it. It consists in the measurement of the difference of heart rates before the 2 x 40 m trotting and after it. This gives an indication of the tiredness of the horse if any. The bradycardic horses (very low natural heart rhythm) are not favored and this disposition shuts the door to a possible doping.

For the rest of the modifications one can note a simpler calculation of the metabolism and the highlighting of the final trotting, the intermediate ones not awarding any points now.

## SPOTLIGHTING THE HORSES AT THE PRIZE GIVING CEREMONY

As the FEI rules so well state, the competitors are a combination made of an athlete and a horse.

But the prize giving ceremonies were always held in the latter's absence. This is incorrect and depreciates his role.

It is obvious that if the horses finish the ride exhausted or in bad condition, it would be very negative to make them visible. It would be a way to show that they should have been stopped before reaching such a bad condition. Endurance is certainly something else.

After making use of the BECA one can note that the horses finish their ride in good physical form. Only one dozen of horses out of 300 were sent to the clinic, but only one had serious metabolic problem. The majority went out after what could be called a "hand shake", while the rest were given small and superficial treatments.

That is to say that, unless some possible problems substantial to the notion of sport occur, the filling rate of the clinic remains modest. This bears no comparison with what used to happen before.

That is to say also that the horses are in good form and can be presented without shame. Then why not be proud of it and have them participating in the prize giving ceremonies?

This is how and why on January 6th 2017 for the first time ever, the prize giving ceremony was held with the horses. It was funny to see people hesitating, not knowing exactly what to do and where to be as if they had never attended any prize giving ceremony before. But a kind of special attention mixed with obvious open joy could be seen in the faces of the participants. It was at the same time new and merry. The spirit emanating from the situation was in complete rupture with what it used to be before. It was very noticeable.





8. The first prize giving ceremony ... with everyone.

During the coming event, Boudheib Endurance plans to provide the horses with rugs bearing its colors to emphasize the new way.

During the prize giving ceremony we also noted a very interesting link between the BECA ranking and the FEI one:

- 1<sup>st</sup> BECA also 1<sup>st</sup> FEI
- 2<sup>nd</sup> BECA, 3<sup>rd</sup> FEI
- 3<sup>rd</sup> BECA, 2<sup>nd</sup> FEI

It is the very first time that such a "natural" consistency has been reached. This is of course what was aimed at since both ranking systems are indeed part of one unique and same family, respectful endurance.

During the past season those who were in the lead of the FEI ranking were usually the last ones in the ranking of what was called at the time "Bouthieb Protocol".

One can openly rejoice and wait impatiently for the results of the events to come and see if this remains true as every one hopes it will be. We have every reason to believe it will.

François Kerboul

FEI 4\* Judge, TD & CD

Architect dplg

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