

Hofmeyr Tri-Nations 2008



**On Friday 23 and Saturday 24 May,
The Annual Tri-nations South African
Endurance Riding competition
between South Africa, Namibia and
Botswana took place on 23 and 24
May 2008 in the Eastern Cape.**

The competition was held at Hofmeyr, where endurance rides have been taking place since 1979. Hofmeyr is situated 350 km from Bloemfontein, Port-Elizabeth and East London, 60 km from Cradock and 40 km from Steynsburg. The first 100-mile endurance event was organised in Hofmeyr in 1979 by Mr Willoughby Lord and Mr Raymond Gudmanz. Mr Willoughby Lord and Mr Gudmanz's widow, Mariaan, were present at the 2008 Tri-Nations event. Riders who participated in the first Hofmeyr Ride included Lyn Rous (now Lyn Carstens – ex wife of Robin Rous) and several other well-known participants in the endurance sport. Lyn Carstens was as steward at the 2008 event. What is also interesting is that the winner of the 160 km (100 miles) event in the Tri-nations, completed the ride in almost the identical time to the first ride in 1979, which was completed and won by Mr Willoughby Lord in 10 hours, 11 minutes and 28 seconds.

The Tri-nations comprised a 120-km ride for junior riders and young riders on the Friday, and the 160-km ride for seniors and heavy-weights on the Saturday morning. The 120-km ride started at 03:00 and the 160-km at 02:30!. South Africa teams won both the Junior and Senior events, which required a minimum of 4 riders in the team

to complete the ride successfully. The heavy-weight event (for riders weighing in over 95 kg) was won By the Namibian team. There were 5 vet checks in the 120-km ride and 6 in the 160-km ride. Fortunately, no major problems were experienced by horses, although an exciting dice took place in the 160-km ride where were a South African and a Namibian rider competed for 3rd and 4th place,. Both horses pulled up short of the finishing line, with the Namibian rider closer to the end. The Namibian rider managed to get her horse close to the finishing line, but the horse refused to move despite all her efforts to get it across the line. The South African rider passed her at a walking pace and thus came 3rd. In the Junior event two horses competed very vigorously to pass the final line and crossed at a rapid gallop.

The ride started at the show grounds in Hofmeyr, which had been taken over by the equine community. It progressed some distance over relatively flat farmland and then started climbing the mountain – passing through the Uienhoek Pass and then travelling across the Aasvogelberg before coming back down to flat farmland on the Molteno road. A large portion of the last part of the ride is complicated by the vehicles of the grooms or officials having to travel on the same road as that which is being ridden by the competitors. Eleven veterinarians were on hand to assist with the veterinary checks as well as treatment of horses – where this was necessary.

The Veterinary Commission President was Dr Henk Basson, while Dr Paul van Dam was the Manager of the S.A. National Teams. In 1979 at the inaugural Hofmeyr ride, the veterinary panel was headed by Dr Chris Marlow of Cradock.

The Tri-nations competition is an annual event which ERASA has decided will be rotated between its various member unions. Two years ago the competition took place in Christiana, last year at Loskopdam (Mpumalanga), and next year it will take place at Beaufort West – arranged by the Western Cape Union.