

# Burro Race Etiquette, Expectations, and Helpful Hints

## General Information, Tips, and Tricks:

- These events are fun and we want everyone to enjoy themselves and make wonderful memories, but remember: **safety always comes first. After the safety of humans, ALWAYS consider the safety, welfare, and wellbeing of the burro.**
- If you need help at any time please don't hesitate to ask a BRAY representative. For more helpful tips and tricks in getting prepared for BRAY races please follow BRAY Club on Facebook and join the Dusty Donkeys Facebook group. Remember: everyone was new to donkeys, and donkey racing at some point; it's better to ask questions than to end up in a crisis.
- BRAY expects all teams to arrive at the event with a reasonable amount of training. If you haven't participated in an event before we suggest you meet up with other donkey or horse owners in your area to practice. If you have questions about what is expected of you and your donkey please do not hesitate to reach out to BRAY via Facebook or email at [BurrosRock@gmail.com](mailto:BurrosRock@gmail.com).
- While you are likely not wearing the typical equestrian footwear of sturdy boots, you should choose closed toed shoes (running barefoot or in sandals is a poor choice) and be cognizant of not just your own burro's hooves but also the hooves of all the burros around you.
- You may choose to use gloves on course. Breathable fabric such as weightlifting, cycling, or riding gloves will likely be more comfortable than leather work gloves.
- NEVER wrap a lead rope around your hands, body, shoulders, or around your head or neck. Race volunteers have expressed a general distaste for seeking misplaced appendages left on the trail.
- Costumes are best left in the costume class. Many BRAY races will have additional fun and games before or after the main event, if you choose to adorn your burro in their finest marabou boa or tutu please do so in the costume class. Feathers litter the trail and tutus or other costumes can become bothersome for your burro and can lead to kicking, biting, and other sour behavior. Instead express your team spirit with color coordinated or themed halters, saddle pads, panniers, twinkle toes, or livestock chalk
- Hydration packs with room for basic first aid supplies such as band aids, salt tabs, vet wrap, gauze, a hoof pick, and cholla plucker are encouraged. You are responsible for not only your own health and comfort on the trail, but also that of your burro.
- There's a good chance you will be on the trail for longer than you expected. This is the nature of burro racing. Be sure you have plenty of water, nutritious snacks, and possibly some to share with your burro.
- Leave it better: do not litter on the trails. If you see trash please pick it up.
- Pay attention in the pre-race meeting. If you have questions please do not hesitate to ask them, either publicly in the meeting or by pulling aside the Race director or another BRAY representative.

- Read all information on the signup website, including all information contained within links. Read all the information contained within the pre-race email. Be sure to download any PDFs of maps or additional information, and print it out if needed, prior to race weekend. While BRAY representatives and the Race Director will likely have a phone on their person for emergencies, it is unlikely they will have time to check emails and text messages and solve your IT issues while checking in runners.

### **Veterinary Miscellaneous:**

- All BRAY races will have a qualified equine veterinarian present before the race for the vet in, and throughout the duration of the race to both vet out donkeys, and to assist should any animal become ill, distressed, injured, or otherwise require veterinary intervention.
- All BRAY events require every donkey present to have a current negative EIA/Coggins test, in the name of the current owner. Sale barn Coggins tests are not considered valid. You can present your negative coggins test at the vet in or you may email them to [burrosrick@gmail.com](mailto:burrosrick@gmail.com) prior to the event. If BRAY has previously received your Coggins test for the year, we have the expiration date in a spreadsheet and you need only present the new certificate when the previous certificate expires.
- The purpose of the vet-in is to ensure all animals are physically sound and healthy enough to race, and are healthy enough to minimize the likelihood of communicable diseases or maladies being spread due to the congregation of animals both at the race and in burro camp.
- The vet-in consists of a trot for soundness and a visual inspection of the animals to ensure they do not have any outward signs of communicable illness, or issues that would prevent them from safely and comfortably congregating with other donkeys and participating in the event.
- The vet has the final word regarding the fitness of an animal to participate in an event.
- Pestering, arguing with, harassing, or otherwise being unpleasant to the vet may result in disqualification from the event.
- The vet out will consist of the vet watching donkeys cross the finish line. If a donkey appears unsound, sick, injured, unseen to, or otherwise unwell the vet may pull the animal aside and deem they have failed the vet out, resulting in a disqualification.
- “Unseen to” can include but is not limited to: rocks in hooves that should have been removed causing mild lameness, cholla imbedded in the animal or tack, galls or wounds caused by ill-fitting or poorly adjusted tack, or any other issue that should have been resolved for the safety and comfort of the donkey on the trail.
- If your animal becomes lame, unsound, or injured on course, or if they are simply acting as if something is amiss (diarrhea, colic symptoms, general concerning atypical behavior) you may call the race director or send word with another participant to the nearest aid station, and the sag wagon will pick you and your donkey up at the nearest vehicle access point with the veterinarian in order to assess your animal.

### **Race Starts:**

The start of the race can be hectic and, if you're not prepared, dangerous. Here are some tips to make sure you, your burro, and your fellow teams stay safe and make it onto the course in an orderly fashion.

### **Before the Race:**

- Arrive on time. Be sure to have plenty of time to find parking, tack your burro, warm up, and walk to the start. If you are borrowing a burro be sure to ask the burro's owner when and where you should meet up with your burro.
- Be reasonably adept at driving your truck and trailer, including backing and parking. If you are not confident driving your trailer please consider carpooling with someone who is.
- Mandatory meetings are mandatory meetings. If the race has a meeting beforehand, or if your burro owner has a meeting beforehand, make sure you attend. At BRAY events bibs will be handed out at the conclusion of the pre-race meetings. If you aren't present you don't get a bib. If you don't get a bib you don't run.
- If you see a burro with a red ribbon on its tail or a red line on its tail BEWARE! That burro kicks. Give the burro extra space at all times.
- If you have a burro who kicks please be sure to have them appropriately marked with red ribbon, chalk, dye, yarn, etc. Red yarn is always available at the BRAY check in booth.
- Check your tack and equipment before the start.
  - Make sure your halter is appropriately snug, and all straps and tails are in their keepers.
  - Check your pack to make sure it's in the correct place, and your cinch is snug, but not too tight. A good rule of thumb is you should be able to fit three fingers, laid flat against the burro's side, snugly between the cinch and the animal. Burros are notorious for puffing up when you tack them, letting out their breath when tacking is complete in order to keep the cinch loose. Be sure to check, and if needed tighten, your cinch 2-3 times prior to the start. You may also need to check and adjust your tack on course.
  - If you have questions about your tack, ask a BRAY representative. It is best to do this, if possible, the day before the race, if not earlier. Don't forget: you can always race without a pack if you're unsure of how to comfortably tack your donkey.
  - If your tack is incorrect or incorrectly adjusted in a way that is likely to cause discomfort or injury to your animal and there is insufficient time to correct it before the start, the race director or vet may determine your tack needs to be pulled and set aside. Examples of this include: no saddle pad, a standard mule sawbuck on a mini donkey, cinches too large to be appropriately tightened, leg wraps or boots that do not fit, etc.

### **Start Corrals:**

BRAY runs will have four corrals at the start. They are as follows, please be realistic about your speeds and abilities when choosing your corral:

- Elite Runners: this corral is toes-on-the-start-line. These runners will be fast off the block and may have some sassy asses as they jockey for the front of the pack heading onto the trail.
- Runners: these teams are expecting to run the entire distance of the race. You should be able to at least do a trail run at the distance you are signed up for without stopping to walk if you're in the runner's corral.
- Run/Walk: this is the ideal corral for first timers who are expecting to run the course. Most teams in this corral will run at the start and slow to a run/walk within the first 1-2 miles
- Hikers: walkers and hikers on the course to enjoy the outdoors at a stroll and spend quality time with your donkey should go here. Perfect for short course walkers, groups of friends, young or old burros, and first timers. If you have a particularly strong burro who may be difficult to handle at the start, you should likely start in this corral and calmly walk your burro until such time as the pack has thinned out and you can safely jog off without losing control of your animal.

### And They're Off!

- Don't crowd other teams. Burros can become very excited at the start of a race and may bolt or kick; allow for one burro length behind the burro in front of you, and 3-4 feet from the burros beside you
- Your lead rope should be held in both of your hands, with your right hand 2-6 inches below the snap for a standard or mammoth burro and your left hand holding the remainder of the rope, folded, so as not to create a trip hazard. If your partner is a mini donkey you want to ensure light contact through the leadrope but be sure to continually check in with your donkey to ensure the halter has not rotated in such a way that it's bothering their eyes. If your donkey is too strong you may choose to grab ahold of the halter at the chin.
- If they get too strong, **slow down**.
- If your burro is pulling you or you are losing your footing **STOP**. You may choose to make your way to the edge of the course, in a controlled manner, and stop and stand with your burro until the rest of the field has passed. Proceed on at a walk until you are comfortable your animal is under control before asking for a trot.
- Do not start the race behind your burro. You will have the most control of your animal by positioning your body near their head or neck. If you begin the race behind your burro and they are not trained to run holding a straight line, it is very likely they will swerve in front of the rest of the field and you will be disqualified for interference.

### On the Dusty Trail:

- Allow faster runners to pass you. Move off the trail or to the side if you are able.
- Use your words. If you wish to pass a team, let them know with a friendly "on your left" or "on your right!"

- If you see someone near you struggling to control their animal or losing control of their animal, the kind thing to do is to stop and stand until such time as they regain control of their animal before proceeding once more. As herd animals donkeys may rush to catch up with others on the trail, causing a loss of control.
- Do not block the trail or impede other teams. We understand sometimes your burro unexpectedly puts on the brakes, or you need to put on the brakes for the sake of controlling your burro, but if you are choosing to stop to adjust gear, check hooves, take photos, strip layers, etc, please move aside so others can pass.
- If your gear needs adjusting, move off the trail, stop, and adjust it. Things can shift and move throughout the duration of a race and may need revisiting. Any animal coming across the finish with galls or soreness from ill-fitting or poorly adjusted tack will fail the vet-out and be disqualified.
- Always ask before urging another runner's burro.
- If your burro is moving forward at an acceptable pace it is not necessary to continue to urge them on using voice cues, it becomes problematic for those around you who use the same voice cues for their burro.
- Do not "wrap in" or otherwise anchor the burro to your body with the expectation of the burro pulling you along. This is not only against the rules, but it is physically detrimental to your burro.
- When going downhill it is safest to slow your burro to a walk and keep them behind you.

### Trail's End:

- While it is a thrill to finally cross the finish line, be sure to continue on beyond the immediate area of the finish so as not to impede other runners.
- If you wish to greet family members, give your donkey a pat, take a celebratory selfie, adjust your tack, or other post-race undertakings, please do so at least 10-20 yards beyond the finish line.
- If you've finished the race at a speedy pace you should walk your burro until their respiration rate slows to around normal. If you need to walk out, they need to walk out.
- If your burro has a pack it is kind to loosen the cinch/girth one or two holes upon completion of the race.
- When your burro is walked out and cooled down, untack them (if necessary), pick their hooves, and return them to their pen for rest, water, and feed. They have put in a lot of work for you at this point, and would appreciate some downtime to recover. Do not tie them to structures, signs, benches, etc around the finish area, or expect them to wait on the street or at the trailer while you partake in post-race refueling, celebrations, and libations.