

A sport that has made a great development in the past years is the endurance, or long distance riding as its sometimes called.

A SPORT THAT THE ARABIAN HORSE EXCELS IN THE MOST!

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What exactly is endurance riding? Endurance riding is all about having a bond between rider and horse, to seek boundaries and cross them as a team. With endurance riding the level starts with one loop of 20km. Then the further you go, the more loops you have to complete with 160km being the longest distance. The loops need to be completed in the fast possible time with between every loop a small break of 30–45min for both horse and rider. However, it is not just the fastest time that counts. The horse also need to be in a good physical condition. Before the start

of the contest and after every loop, the horse is checked on heartbeat, lameness and overall condition. Also at the finish line, the horse and rider that finish first is not the winner until he or she is cleared by the veterinarian.

During the loops, there are several groom points where the grooms are waiting for their horse and rider to provide them with water and other care when needed.

Endurance, cooperation, trust and care are the key to a successful combination. The competitions mostly are ridden in some of the most beautiful parts of a country, which makes the competition even more fun!



The toughest competitions known in the endurance world are the Tevis Cup in America; a 100 miles endurance race through tough mountain terrain and The President Cup in Abu Dhabi; 160km through desert sand where the winner has an average speed of 26 km/h!

Competing at the highest level of endurance takes a lot of training. Most of these horses ride around 16 hours a week, to get in form. Also the rider needs to be in top condition. Being at the top of endurance means making sacrifices. Seen the number of hours you need to be on top of the horse, working a full time job is almost impossible, let alone have an active social life! Competing at 160km endurance races is top sport! Most of these horses train all year, but compete at not more than an average of two 160km races a year. It is hard work for them, physically and mentally!

Lately, the endurance sport has been criticized as some complained about the speed most horses are pushed too in order to win the race. Especially in the middle east, some

horses don't even make it to the finish line due to dehydration or exhaustion. The horses are either pushed too much or not properly trained. The FEI (Federation Equestre International) is now trying to improve the rules so horses are more protected. I agree this subject needs serious attention. Luckily, 90% of the Endurance riders are still going for the original goal which is finishing a certain track together as a team in the fast possible time without forcing the horse to go over its limit. Finishing a 160km ride with your horse in good health is the best feeling in the world and makes all the long hours of training and all the sacrifices well worth it!

The ASE Endurance team

That endurance is not only for the sport bred Arabians is proven by the horses of the ASE Endurance team. Here, mainly show bred Arabians compete at different levels of endurance. The ASE Endurance Team is a non-profit foundation which also has a special program for children







who doesn't have the economic possibility to ride a horse, but who do have the passion, dedication and enthusiasm to reach the top. Especially for these kids, the ASE Endurance team is providing horses, training and material to reach the highest level! Already one of these kids is now being selected for the Dutch National Endurance team to compete at the 2016 World Championships Endurance! With the help of friends and the support and sponsorship of Soul-mate Nutrition, Hidez compression suits and Country Mill horse supplies, these kids are now able to fulfill their dream! After all, the main slogan of endurance is: To Finish is to win! □





Vanessa Teepe
Fotografie