

MyEventTracker debuts at Championships

Safety, accountability, and live updates are all features of this new ride tracking software

by Ed Czajka, with Shawn Polke

A new tracking system, called MyEventTracker, was featured for all of the crew/spectators to track the 237 riders of the 2019 National Championships in Ridgecrest, California.



This system was originally developed to aid radio operators who maintain accountability of everyone on the course. It was expanded to an online-based system for everyone to be able to see the valuable data.

MyEventTracker not only shows the times of participants at checkpoints, but computes their ETAs to the next checkpoints. This allows those watching to raise concern when participants do not arrive at the expected times. Speed profiles are also projected per participant to show their performance over the course.

MyEventTracker uses information that is pre-staged by an event organizer. It requires detailed information such as checkpoint names, checkpoint distances in miles, and hold times in minutes. This information is critical to how MyEventTracker calculates the speed of the participants over the course and produces the ETA projections, so the distances must be as close to accurate as they can be (GPS or odometer measured).

Once an event is created, it's a matter of having some data entry accounts added to the event, so data can be entered at multiple locations during the event.

The NC rides utilized communications from a local amateur radio club to relay arrival/departure times to a central point where it was entered into the MyEventTracker.

Having MyEventTracker in use during the AERC ride made it really easy to track the pulls as well as project when volunteers needed to be at the checkpoints using the



Left: Ed Czajka's MyEventTracker replicates a complex manual tracking system with a computer program. Right: Shawn Polke logs the times of horse arriving at Vet Check 1; afterwards he entered the times into MyEventTracker on his iPad.

Checkpoint Planner.

In addition to the amateur radio operators relying data, we had volunteers entering data in real time at checkpoints. This allowed for the tracking of arrival and departures of participants, so the ETAs were accurate within a few minutes throughout most of the ride. This information was used to estimate arrival times at the next checkpoint and for ride crews to coordinate support gear placement.

MyEventTracker began while I was supporting the 20 Mule Team ride and logging times to a large whiteboard. Information packets were generated for the amateur radio operators at the checkpoints with detailed information of the course to assist the participants if they ask questions (i.e., "How far to the next checkpoint?").

While we had some volunteers at a checkpoint who were getting concerned about the last two riders in the event, I figured out how to use the waypoint information—combined

with the logged times at the checkpoints—to estimate the ETA to the next checkpoint.

The concept was proven when the math was within five minutes of the time projection, because the participant was traveling a similar speed as between previous checkpoints. At later events, the whiteboard was digitized to perform time estimates automatically, and now it has been modernized to an online system that everyone can see.

The first test of the online system was at the Twenty Mule Team ride in January 2019.

Future enhancements that are being considered include integrating a type of RFID tag that the riders would carry that could be read at the checkpoints for data entry, reducing errors and volunteers needed.

MyEventTracker is free to use at the moment but donations are gladly accepted to keep the website operational. More information, including tutorial videos, can be found at MyEventTracker.net.

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