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Paris-Brest-Paris 2011 Australian Quota Allocation

Those with an interest in Paris-Brest-Paris 2011 will have probably seen the information in Checkpoint and on the Audax Australia website concerning the implementation of rider quotas for certain countries for the next edition of Paris-Brest-Paris.

This article explains the process by which the Australian quota will be allocated and aims to explain the rationale behind the system adopted.

To briefly recap on the reason why a quota is being implemented, Audax Club Parisien needs to limit the number of riders to maintain the quality of the event and to ensure that organisational capacity to provide supported controls, sleeping facilities, course management etc is not overwhelmed by the sheer volume of riders.

Consequently, 13 countries (including Australia) which sent the largest number of riders to Paris-Brest-Paris in 2007 will have the number of places available for the 2011 event determined by a formula. The formula is based on the number of riders in PBP 2007 but adjusted for the growth in riding for each country relative to the growth for all 13 countries.

Audax Club Parisien will be measuring growth based on the number of Brevets de Randonneurs Mondiaux (BRM) rides homologated by ACP in the 2009/10 Audax year against an earlier year. For those not familiar with the technicalities of the rides offered by Audax Australia, all of our calendar rides of 200km to 1000km (except for the fixed pace Brevet 22.5 rides) are homologated, that is, ratified, by Audax Club Parisien.

The impact of the quota system is that we are most unlikely to be able to repeat the 50% growth between the 2003 and 2007 editions in the number of Australians attending Paris-Brest-Paris for the next edition. Interest amongst Australian members in participating in Paris-Brest-Paris 2011 is nonetheless strong and the National Committee must therefore establish a way in which the Australian quota can be allocated in the event that the number of Australians wishing to participate in PBP exceeds the number of available places.

In addition to establishing the quota system, Audax Club Parisien has also advised that rides completed in the 2010 Audax year (being 1 November 2009 to 31 October 2010) will determine when individuals can register for Paris-Brest-Paris. Complete:

- a BRM 400 km in 2010, the rider may register from 15 April 2011;
- a BRM 300 km in 2010, the rider may register from 1 May 2011;
- a BRM 200 km in 2010, the rider may register from 15 May 2011;
- no BRM event in 2010, the rider may not register until June 1, 2011.

The National Committee has considered a range of options for allocating the Australian quota including do nothing (so riders simply register at the earliest opportunity provided by Audax Club Parisien with places being allocated to those who register the earliest), a random ballot and a ranking system.

The first two options were rejected as they do not encourage riders to complete anything more than a single ride to enable "early" registration or to increase the Australian quota.

The National Committee has decided upon a ranking system based on kilometres ridden in the 2010 Audax year which will encourage riders to complete BRMs, which count towards the Australian quota, but is designed to balance other considerations.

In very simple terms any Audax Australia ride of 200kms or longer (except Raids) ridden between 1 November 2009 and 31 October 2010 will count towards a rider's kilometre tally. A maximum limit however has been set for the kilometre tally of 2500kms.

Specifically, the following ride types will count in a rider's kilometre tally:

- Brevet Randonneurs Mondiaux (1200km or more)
- Brevet Randonneurs Mondiaux (200km-1000km)
- Brevet Permanent (only 200km or longer)
- Fleche Opperman (for 360kms)
- Brevet 22.5 (only 200km or longer)

It is important to note that ***only Brevet Randonneurs Mondiaux (200km-1000km) events count towards to the Australian country quota*** as the other types of rides (with the exception of the Oppy) are not homologated by Audax Club Parisien.

Should there be at any stage in the registration process more Australian riders registering than places available, the places will be allocated based on the km tally. Places will be allocated first to those have attained the maximum km tally (2500km or more in rides that count) and then in descending kilometres. In the event that places have to be allocated between riders with the same km tally, the rider(s) to first register will be allocated the place(s).

A Quota Allocation Scenario

In 2007, 125 Australians registered for Paris-Brest-Paris. Let's assume the Australian country quota for 2011 is 140.

During the 2010 Audax year, 100 Australians hoping to participate in Paris-Brest-Paris complete a 400km BRM event and another 60 complete a 300km BRM event.

Of the 100 riders who have completed a 400km BRM, 95 register between 14 and 30 April 2011. All 95 riders received a confirmed place as the number of rider registered at the conclusion of the first registration period is less than the quota.

This leaves 45 places to be allocated in the subsequent registration periods. 50 riders who completed a 300km BRM register between 1 and 15 May 2011 and 2 riders who completed a 400km BRM also register between 1 and 15 May. The remaining places are allocated based on the km tally; it makes no difference that 2 riders completed a 400km BRM when allocating the places.

Of the 52 riders, 30 completed 2500kms or more of rides and the remaining 22 riders completed between 300 and 2499kms. The remaining 45 places are allocated first to the 30 riders who completed 2500km+ and then to the 15 riders with the next highest km tallies and 7 people must miss out. When allocating the final 2 places, there are 4 people with the same km tally. The 2 places go to the 2 riders who registered first.

What happens if the 3 riders who completed a 400km BRM but have not yet registered try to register after 15 May? They will miss out because they did not register early enough and all the places have been allocated.

Similarly, riders who completed one or more BRM 200km also miss out. A rider who even completed say 13 x 200km BRMs and reached the maximum km tally limit will miss out as the rider did not complete a longer BRM to enable early registration.

Why include Permanents and other rides that don't count towards the country quota? The Committee did not want to distort the ride calendar by creating an environment where organisers and riders focussed solely on BRM 200 to 1000km events. Riders living outside of the major metropolitan centres would have fewer opportunities to undertake rides which count towards the quota if only calendar events were included. Additionally, shift or weekend workers would also be disadvantaged if only calendar events, which are almost exclusively held on weekends, counted.

Why have a maximum limit on the km tally?

The Committee sought to avoid creating a quota allocation process which turned into a race of its own. A maximum tally of 2500kms is achievable for someone aiming to complete Paris-Brest-Paris, including first timers but also shows a commitment to endurance riding. It is equivalent to riding the BRM400 to enable registration at the earliest time plus 11 x 200km brevets; one ride per month aims to strike a balance between endurance riding and riders' other commitments. It also lessens the risk of less experienced riders over-training or burning out. If a rider completes a super randonneur series then it is even fewer rides by number.

Setting a maximum km tally means that we may forgo an opportunity to absolutely maximise the Australian country quota however while riders may not get an individual benefit by riding more than 2500kms, we would nonetheless encourage members to ride as many BRM events as possible. Available club data shows that in the 2005/06 Audax year, 18 people rode a total of 2500kms or more in 200km and longer brevets versus 32 people in 2007/08. If a large percentage of those who fill the Australian quota ride 2500kms or more (and with BRM 200-1000 events being most of the rides), Australia should record a healthy growth in homologated rides.

When will the Australian quota be known?

It is anticipated that the Australian quota will be known in January 2011.

When will I know my position in the km tally and how many people have achieved the maximum km tally?

This information will be available in December 2010.

Does this allocation process replace the usual qualification requirement?

Definitely not. Intending participants will still have to complete the Super Randonneur series of qualifying rides during the designated period (November 2010 to May 2011). Those failing to do so will not be able to participate and the places will be allocated to others in accordance with the quota allocation process.

In conclusion, your National Committee has endeavoured to put in place an allocation mechanism that is fair to all PBP aspirants and that mitigates some disadvantages while maximising the overall Australian quota. We also wanted to get it in place early so that members are clear on the requirements and can prepare accordingly. Inevitably, if there are more applicants than places available some riders will miss out.