



THE POWER OF HEALTH

The Mongol Derby The Adventurists Remote Medical Support



"Iqarus have been an incredible partner for the Mongol Derby, the world longest and toughest horse race. We operate in some seriously remote regions, often hours off road from the nearest help and in a country without full medical provision. Working with team at Iqarus has helped us to deliver a world class event with world class remote medical assistance."

Tom Morgan - Founder of The Adventurists.

Background

The Guinness Book of Records states that the Mongol Derby is the longest and toughest horse race in the world. The 2018 race, the 10th in its history, featured 17 men and 27 women from 12 countries, who bravely rode across 1,000km of Mongolian steppe aboard the region's famously tough semi-feral ponies. Documented in history, these ponies carried the all-conquering Mongol warriors across routes first used by Genghis Khan's mighty messenger system that connected half the planet. Fearless, sturdy, semi-wild and unbelievably tough the Mongolian ponies have changed very little over the centuries.

Derby competition riders were a considerable distance from significant healthcare throughout the event duration and with past event injuries including broken bones, concussion, torn ligaments, dislocations, and a vast array of temperature and gastro related complaints associated with challenging events in extreme climates, cohesive medical cover for the event was essential at all times.

Event organisers, The Adventurists selected Iqarus for the second time to provide strategic advice, first aid training and remote medical cover for the duration of the world-renowned ultra-endurance event.

Challenges

Covering just over 340,000 square miles, the Steppe is an immense stretch of grassland that dominates the Inner Mongolian landscape.

With the event covering such a vast expanse of challenging environments, riders could find themselves up to seven hours away from substantial healthcare facilities should they need them.

Additionally, there's virtually no cellular network coverage on the steppe, and with clear communications essential for medical and veterinary assistance, reliable satellite communication is crucial.

All event participants, organisers and medics also would be facing extreme climate conditions, from hail, snow and fog to boiling hot sun, monsoon storms and flooding.

The race route is 1000km long, the Iqarus medics would need to cover remote terrain and significant distances quickly, as well as being positioned strategically for rapid and effective medical emergency responses.

Solutions

Medics from the Iqarus training and development team were carefully selected to cover the event based on their previous remote medical experiences, professionalism and their ability to keep a calm and relaxed approach in all situations. Iqarus delivered critical remote first aid training to over 50 people prior to the event, this included all riders, vets, vehicle drivers, translators and organising team members. Not only was this the first time in over 10 years that all personnel connected with the event received medical training, working groups of event managers, vets and translators were also created and trained together forming effective working teams for the duration of the event.

The Iqarus operations centre (OSC) was used in collaboration with the Mongol Derby Chief, to monitor the progress of the medics, maintain direct access to them when needed and respond to any given situation with speed and appropriate action. Additionally, medics had clear satellite phone access to clear and concise medical advice with the Iqarus Telemedicine support system – a 24/7 service that's available to all MOET course Students worldwide.

All medics were strategically placed across the remote Mongolian steppe and were re-positioned frequently to keep SOS response to a minimum.

Outcome

Iqarus medics carried out just four medical related evacuations for the duration of the event, a 50% reduction on previous years, and this can be attributed to the remote medical training all riders and crew members received prior to the race commencing. Each rider was fully aware of the potential medical risks and hazards of the event, and subsequently took fewer risks and better care of themselves.

SOS response times were significantly reduced to 30mins or less, this was due to the way medics were positioned and repositioned across the steppe for the duration of the event. Feedback from the riders mentions that while Iqarus were there on the Mongolian steppe supporting them, the medics were also far enough away for the riders to feel alone while taking part in the event.

The Iqarus Medics highlighted the riders own responsibilities from the outset and also provided easy to understand First Aid information to all event participants. The guys were quick and effective when situations arose, and for me, they were an essential key in completing the race and finishing in the top 10. The smile I received, the hand on my shoulder or the question 'how are you really doing' made me feel supported and safe during the race. Thank you, guys, for just being there at the right place and time, hope to see you in the future! All the best! - Hinke van der Werf, Mongol Derby Rider 2018.