

Washougal Race Report

Sunday, 26 July 2009

Last Updated Sunday, 26 July 2009

With temperatures raging into the mid nineties the boys from Canidae Motosport Kawasaki sweat it out and showed their true potential at the Motosport.com Washougal National in the first set of motos. And what a better place to do it than in Washougal, in front of over 20,000 screaming fans and at the team's title sponsor race.

With temperatures raging into the mid nineties the boys from Canidae Motosport Kawasaki sweat it out and showed their true potential at the Motosport.com Washougal National in the first set of motos. And what a better place to do it than in Washougal, in front of over 20,000 screaming fans and at the team's title sponsor race.

With the return of PJ Larsen and the recent surge from Kyle Cunningham the feeling heading into moto one of the 250 class was that of optimism and excitement. As the field of 40 lined the gate Cunningham's focus remained clear. He put down some of the fastest practice times of anyone on the gate and his determination to make good on his top three times became apparent early in the moto. A top five start quickly led to two early moto passes. As Cunningham sprint his way into the top three he soon found himself with a comfortable gap ahead of the rest of the pack. He settled in after the initial chaos died down and set his sights on reeling in Blake Wharton and Ryan Dungey. He continued to inch closer and closer to Wharton until finally making the pass to move into second around the mid-way point in the moto. After a late moto crash on behalf of Dungey, Kyle was able to cross the finish line within striking distance of the moto win, earning his first podium of the year.

While Larsen may not have been able to pick up where he left off before his injury, considering he is still suffering from a sore wrist he had a successful weekend. He put his Canidae Kawasaki inside the top ten off the gate and was able to fend off 25 other riders for a top 15 moto score. This was more of a test moto for Larsen, as we were still finding out how his wrist would hold up under the rough soil at Washougal. With two weeks off and the series picking back up on the East Coast, Larsen's home turf, look for the South Carolinian to get back into the top ten.

Tommy Hahn's momentum outdoors hasn't gone unnoticed and he found a way to impress even more in the first moto at Washougal. A stellar

start turned into an even more stellar finish as Hahn was nearly able to pull the holeshot as he put on an early moto sprint that was good enough for second. Chad Reed was the only rider quick enough to overtake Hahn off the start, but was not quick enough to build a comfortable lead throughout the moto. Hahn kept the points leader honest in this one and finished the moto under four seconds behind the Suzuki ace.

If Lady Luck fell on the side of the Canidae team the first motos, then she forgot that motocross is run on a two moto format. With the exception of PJ Larsen, who toughed out a 14th moto finish after starting off in 18th, the curtain was called for Cunningham and Hahn, as neither rider was able to even finish one lap.

With so much momentum heading into the second set of motos it was an unlucky roll of the dice for the boys in Green once the gate dropped. Cunningham was taken out of the race early into lap one. "I jumped down off a double behind [Darryn] Durham and someone came over on me and cleaned me out," stated a noticeably disappointed Cunningham to Erin Bates after pulling off the track. It was his best shot at a podium this season, but rest assured; he will turn this into a positive. The speed of the top three is there and his will to win is stronger than ever. Look for an even stronger Kyle Cunningham to return to racing once the series heads east to Unadilla.

As for Hahn, he wasn't even able to make it as far as Cunningham. A first turn crash put him out of contention and into the Asterisk medical unit with a sore hip. It was a roller coaster of a weekend, but in the end it could have been worse. The speed of the team is there, the confidence is climbing every weekend and consistent podiums are only a step away.

With the pro team taking the next two weeks off be sure and stay logged on as our amateur line-up of Dean Wilson, Malcolm Stewart, Zach Freeberg and Justin Bogle take to Ponca and Loretta's in search of more amateur titles.

