

January 9, 2011

MSXC Strong at Perry Mountain M/C Club Triple Sanction

Southern Enduro Riders Association (SERA)

Mid South Cross Country (MSXC)

Southern Enduro and Trail Riders Association (SE&TRA)

By Sandy Carter

Contributors: Thad Duvall, Blake Diessler, Dustin Gibson, Zac Nash, Shane O'Banion, Damon Prince, Chris Summer

Photos: Sandy Carter (File Photos)

The last forty years have seen some pretty sweet riding in the hills of Perry Mountain's several thousand acres. The Perry Mountain Motorcycle Club is one of the most interesting clubs in the South East. A rider when asked the best thing about this race said "Perry Mountain kicks it "old school "and so it has since the early 70's. National enduros, hare scrambles, many ISDT (now ISDE) qualifiers, hill climbs, dual sport events, flat track events, motocross, field events as well as other unique events have been held in Reynolds Pasture named after Millard Reynolds, one of the early founders of PMMC.

Now in it's thirteenth year, this SERA/MSXC/and SE&TRA Cross Country Shootout has grown so large from it's beginnings it now takes two days to accommodate all the riders entered in this event. Saturday was for the youth and ATV's, while Sunday morning was the Master's B & C, over 60 + A&B and 66+ (SE&TRA), Beginners (MSXC & SERA) and Women riders. The Sunday afternoon race was for AA, A and B riders.

Mother Nature usually adds her two cents into this mix and she did not hold back this weekend. Saturday was a great ride day for all. The

Sunday race was quiet another matter and Mother Nature; as they say in the South; threw one hissy fit. For those who don't know, hissy fits are ugly. If anyone has a Southern girlfriend or wife I can't say anything else. I am one and I am speaking from experience.

Sunday morning started with some rain and temperatures holding just above the 32 degrees mark. As the morning race ended, ice pellets or sleet began to fall on the racers who had just battled the last couple of hours in those piney woods. Terrain varies from slick yellow red clay, lots of sand, rocks and blended within the open pasture known as Reynolds Pasture, hills, valleys and creeks.

Chris Summer (MSXC) reported the morning was at the freezing temp when the flag dropped and rose to a scorching 32 degrees by finish.

MSXC's, Steve Lambruno, got a bad start in last place on the front row in Masters A but in spite of that beginning; he rode his way all the way up to 5th overall and a 1st place for MSXC points. The battle for Golden Masters points went to MSXC's Don Rye, who was 3rd overall in Golden Masters class and 1st place for MSXC points.

Chris Summer and Greg Tucker had a great ride from the 2nd row. Chris and Greg, while good friends, really had a good race as Chris stretched out a good lead for 4 laps but then Gregg slipped past him and the battle was on for the next quarter mile for a wheel to wheel battle leading to the scoring tent. They finished 3rd & 4th in Tri-Sanction scoring but 1st for Gregg Tucker and 2nd for Chris Summer in MSXC points.

The afternoon race proved to be a challenge to all with an epic winter storm bearing down on the riders. Freezing rain began to fall as the afternoon race of AA/A and B riders began and continued for the next hour or so. The addition of a gnarly, rock section on the trail behind the

club house called “the rock garden” became even more difficult with a coating of ice.

Mid South Cross Country riders Damon Prince, Dustin Gibson, Zac Nash and Shane O’Banion gave the following account of how the 11.7 mile course was for them. Riders Thad Duval, Steward Baylor and others from GNCC series came South for work and some winter racing in the GNCC off season. They lead the pack of riders and stretched out the lead.

MSXC rider 2010 #1 rider Dustin Gibson was in 4th on the 1st lap. He had been cursed with a blown shock and limped on in and changed the shock giving up 15 minutes to lose his 4th place. Morning rider, Logan Ppoole assisted by providing a new shock, with Dustin replacing the blown one. After the repair Dustin really put his heart and mind into it and throttled up to make up lost time. Dustin was able to turn some impressive lap times and ended up in 11th place, salvaging some MSXC points coming in 4th for this 2011 season and 24th overall.



Gibson

Dustin

Even with the weather deteriorating, the ground was just to Damon Prince's liking. He was in 12th place as he was scored on the 1st lap and that was not to his liking. He worked hard and on the third lap Damon's luck ran out on his Suzuki RMZ-450 with the newly installed big tank on the first race. Mileage was a question that was answered on the 3rd lap when Damon ran out of gas. He stopped at the 9 mile marker as the rest of the pack passed him by and waited for a course worker from PMMC to bring gas to finish. He finished that 4th lap in 13th place.



The hole shot was little compensation for Shane O'Banion, the current point's leader for MSXC series. He was hardly riding up to his skills due to illness. He did lead the way until 11 miles and crashed and falling back to 4th place fading to 5th. Conjuring up energy from whatever dregs he had left, he piloted to a 3rd place finish AA Overall Tri-Sanction and 1st for MSXC points.

Zac, “The Ice Man”, Nash rode well and ended his ride with a 1st place in Heavy A/Open A in Tri-Sanction scoring as well as MSXC points and a 10th place finish overall. Zac was the “ice” man because when he finished the race and tried to get off his KTM he found he was frozen to the bike with ¼” coating of ice and the tent had ½” of ice on it. The Indiana place he calls home looked pretty warm and inviting after this day.

Thad Duval won Overall at the Tri Sanction and the GNCC Champion from West Virginia had only ridden at Maplesville once several years ago in much friendlier weather conditions. Thad is well known for his skill and abilities making him a Yamaha factory rider for GNCC. He just happened to be “in the neighborhood” in South Carolina for work and thought he & his girlfriend would spend a relaxing weekend racing at Maplesville. He had ridden at Perry Mountain once before and like most off-road racers, loved the place. The Tri Sanction at Maplesville sounded just the thing for a mid Winter break and headed west to Alabama. Mother Nature just smiled.

The 250F was to Thad’s liking over the 450 he usually rides and thought it much better suited to the tighter woods and sandy soil even with the cooler conditions. He didn’t get the hole shot but did move into first place and stayed there for the rest of the race with head down and zoned out, 4 laps down for the AA and Overall win. The shortest way home was the longest way home taking 10 hours traveling East through Atlanta, straight into one of the worst ice storms that area had seen in some time. A sheet of 6” of ice coated roads and crippled anything moving. The arm pump Thad got was not from Maplesville but a parting gift from Mother Nature as he drove his motor home and trailer back to warmer climate of South Carolina.

Back in Maplesville, as the parking lot emptied out and the scoring tent was being packed up, riders were trying to beat a hasty retreat from that advancing ice storm. No matter which direction people went home by, they could not escape the effects of that winter storm. The South has not faced weather of this nature for quite some time. Make no mistake, Maplesville and Perry Mountain is challenging even in perfect weather. Travelers back home from this race took five times as long as it took to travel to Alabama but everyone finally arrived home safely.

More than one racer commented on the excellence of the event and the club. The Perry Mountain Motorcycle Club has been doing many motorcycle events for many years, in all kinds of conditions. It has been stated before, they “kick it old school” and things are done right.