



AMA MSXC Youth Cross Country Championship Series



Round 12 'Little Egypt'
Marion Ill. 5/20/12
By Rich Thurman

Thurman Triumphs

The 2011–2012 AMA Youth Cross Country series came to a close in Marion, Illinois at the OHV riding park known as “Little Egypt”. The riding park has trails and an MX track. Little Egypt is open on the weekends for riding, camping, and having fun with friends and family.

Round 12 of the MSXC series was actually Round 6, but due to bad weather, was re-scheduled for May 20 and ended up becoming the last round of the season. Little Egypt usually runs in December and most races here have seen some nasty, cold, and snowy weather. This round was 180 degree opposite as the temperature rose to about half of that!

Ninety-degree heat and dusty conditions were going to rule the day. All but one of the Youth Championships had already been decided before this round.

The Junior A Class was the only class up for grabs. In the beginning of the series, Sam Thurman enjoyed taking the first 5 wins of the season. Behind him were a talented bunch of racers capable of winning at any moment.

Justin Lenard came close at Round One and was a threat at any race until he jumped up to the big bikes two-

thirds of the way through the season. Lenard started out on a KTM 50 and raced the MSXC Youth Series for 8 seasons with his wonderful family in tow.



Justin Lenard
“J-Law Jr.”

Round two was a fight also with series-regular, Dalton Riddle, stepping up and almost ending Thurman's winning streak at one! Riddle got hurt

halfway through the season, not racing dirtbikes, but injured his shoulder wrestling on the high school team. This kept him out a few rounds but Riddle and his family have always been a class act. “The Riddler” has raced the Youth Series many years and was always a top competitor with great family support.



Series regulars, Harrison Hardin and Kyle Tiesler, added much excitement to the Junior A Class also. Both had some great races this season and are great kids to boot.



Carly Vogel came out strong at every race, rode with determination and the heart of a champion. She represented the ladies well in speed and character! She too has spent many years in the MSXC series.



Carly Vogel

Meanwhile, Sam Thurman had done his job and won the first half of the season out with five straight wins in the Junior A Class.

Clint Watson missed round one due to a nasty pre-season wreck that scared us all. He jumped in at Round Two although he was not 100 percent and still managed a painful/wonderful third place finish. Watson had been inching closer and closer to victory with each passing round.



Clint Watson

At Round Six in Hurricane Mills, Tennessee, Watson came on strong and ended Thurman's 5 race win streak...and started an amazing winning streak of his own. Watson would go on to dominate the Supermini Class at the next 4 rounds.

Sam Thurman only needed one more win in the last 4 rounds to win the championship after winning the first five. This weighed heavy on his heart as the series wound down. Round 11 landed at Tumbling Creek. Sam Thurman grabbed the holeshot but laid it down in the first turn. Watson took over from there and as lap one ended the two were neck and neck. They raced wheel to wheel until Watson dug down deep and pushed the last two laps for his sixth win in a row!

Sam 'The Man' Thurman



This set up the last round at Marion. Watson had the momentum, great family support and the heart and ability to win out. Thurman was no stranger to the pressure of a “last round winner take all” having done so in the Mini A Class a couple seasons ago. Thurman needed to win and Watson just needed Thurman to finish second or worse. 'The Riddler' could be the spoiler for Thurman. As the pressure mounted for everyone,

Thurman grabbed the holeshot, with Watson right behind followed by Riddle. The trio dove off into the woods and out of sight. Four miles of track, one hour of racing left and several nervous parents. Thurman was racing for his seventh MSXC Youth Championship, Watson was looking for his first and Riddle was hoping for a well-deserved first win on the season. As the racers entered the scoring tent on the first lap, it was Thurman by about 20 seconds, followed by Watson, with Riddle right on Watson's rear tire.

On lap two Thurman still held the lead over Watson and Riddle, but with a bit more of a cushion now. On lap three, Thurman was in the lead by about two minutes, Riddle was now in second, and Watson was missing. Watson had crashed and bent his brake pedal under his case and it was now up to Riddle to keep Watson's championship hopes alive. He would have to make up two minutes on Thurman now, but anything can happen.

As the checkered fell, a triumphant KTM/Performance Supercycle/NashBFit/Racing Nutrition/96 Small Engine/Factory Friedli Racing/KTM Powerwear/Powerparts backed Thurman revved his motor and pumped his fist and claimed what may be his last MSXC Youth Championship!

Riddle finished in second, Harrison Hardin had his best finish of the season in third and Watson nursed his bike around two more laps for fourth. Carley Vogel came in fifth.

It was an awesome Youth Championship Series.



The MSXC crew hopes to see everyone at the Banquet in July!