

STEVE LEIVAN ~ 2014 Race Report

Event: Round 3 Missouri Hare Scrambles; Westphalia, MO; April 27

Bike: 2013 KTM 250 XC

Result: 2nd Overall

Event Info: There was another free weekend in my schedule and there was a Missouri HS round being held at an old venue where I enjoyed a good bit of success, so I headed to the race site after work on Saturday afternoon and spun a lap on my mountain bike. I wasn't too pumped with the organization, marking, and trimming - but the conditions were excellent.

Sunday morning practice offered a chance to see the track from the saddle of my Freedom Cycles 250 XC and I was timid in the untrimmed cedar tree sections. It was sketchy and dangerous and I wanted to stay away from the spears and daggers that were along the course. Beyond that, my bike was working well and I felt pretty confident. There were big rain chances all afternoon so I opted to switch to a MX31 front Dunlop and go with X Brand Zip Off goggles.

I entered the woods in fourth position after staging all the way on the inside and it took me a bit to move up any. About three miles in I took over second position but Brian Blauvelt had checked out. I stepped up the pace a bit and reeled him in about the same time that Kole Henslee reeled me in. I felt that I had an opportunity to close in for a pass in a fast section but my over-eagerness saw the bike step out from under me while going 50'ish. I slid on both arms, peeled some skin off, nearly hit a t-post, and ended up going through a sticker bush.....and did NOT take the lead.

My clutch lever/perch rotated above the handguard and I couldn't get it back down. I decided to deal with it but the lever was hitting the handguard and the clutch wouldn't totally release so I was careful the rest of the lap, trying not to burn up the clutch. My slowed pace allowed the pack to reel me in and I pulled in the pits for a t-handle. I quickly fixed my problem but dropped back to eighth in the process.

With much of the track being "old trenched in' trail, going fast wasn't a problem but making passes was, since it was difficult to go faster OUT of the main line. I did what I could and got back up to fourth by the end of lap two but had lost more time to the top three in the process of following while searching for opportunities. I pitted after three laps and my mom informed me that I was 45 seconds out of second (Henslee was gone out front).

Lap four was good and I was able to bridge the gap to the two guys in front of me. With a lap to go I knew that it was time to do work and I started pushing a bit harder. I was able to move into third early on and then take over second just before the end of the lap with a sick line up a gnarly creek bank. From there on I tried to stay mistake free and I was able to finish in the runner-up position.

Overall, it was a good result but I was pretty bummed that I crashed early on and gave away an opportunity to ride at the front. I'm still feeling good, still working hard to improve, and still continuing to push.

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