

STEVE LEIVAN ~ 2014 Race Report

Event: Round 4 Missouri Hare Scrambles; Americus, MO; May 25

Bike: 2014 KTM 250 XC

Result: 3rd Overall

Event Info: Even though it was Memorial Day weekend (and that's normally a time to NOT race) I decided to go to the Missouri HS round and check out a place I had never been to before. The drive seemed to take "forever" and so did the mountain bike ride on Saturday afternoon to check out the track.

I was bummed to find a track with zero flow to it and a gazillion slick rocks. The weather and conditions were supposed to be good so I had been optimistic that we would have a good race, but when I saw the track that optimism quickly vanished. Rain on Sunday morning made it slicker and even less "flowy". Any new trail was a combination of off camber rock and 120 degree awkward turns. The old stuff was mostly rock gardens.

The highlight of the day for me was a good start and I was second to the woods. I took over the lead in the first mile but had no desire to ride very fast and risk busting my ass. So I methodically rode at what seemed to be about 50-60% of my ability. I hoped that with more tire tracks, the course would come around and it would become racey. Not far from the end of lap one I missed a short line and dropped to second behind Caleb Haynes and then I played it safe through a rock garden and dropped another couple spots.

Lap one took 27 minutes (17 mph average!) and I considered pulling in. My thought was "I drove 250 miles for this - just four more laps" and I kept going. I quite easily moved back up to second position and "cruised" until Andrew Smith caught and passed me while looking much more comfy than me. That second lap was really no better and I decided just to tough it out. The remaining three laps were just "going through the motions" and I was happy to see the checkered flag.

Post-race was spent listening to a lot of un-happy riders that were hating on the course. I was one of them. I am "very involved" in promoting nine races a year. It IS a lot of work. But in reality, it isn't much more work to create a good course than it is to create a crappy one. You just need to listen to the racers, look at it from a racers view point, and care.

That's three MHSC races for me this year and I've finished 1-2-3 and I'm second in points while counting a zero still. I don't know how many more rounds I will go to since there are lots of conflicts with other races that I want to do (NEPG & OMA events). I have proved to myself what I needed to - that I have the pace to run at the front and that I could be a contender for the championship if I really wanted to.

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