

STEVE LEIVAN ~ 2015 Race Report

Event: Round 5 National Enduro; Park Hills, MO – May 17, 2015

Bike: 2015 KTM 250 XC

Result: 1st +40 “A”

Event Info: It had been a while since I'd been to a NEPG - the Texas round was cancelled in March and I skipped the Tennessee round in April. In that time, I decided to convert my 300 XC into a 250 since I was having a hard time "gelling" with the 300. This was my first ride on the "new" 250 and I was looking forward to it - and then it rained.

I was on row 30 and a light rain was falling when we left the line. The transfer trail was already a little dicey and slippery. The first test was "decent" for me and I was able to keep goggles the entire way (which was an accomplishment). The trail wasn't too bad - I just struggled a little bit trying to identify where there was traction (or where there wasn't).

Test two was old trail that was very hard packed. There were a lot of big exposed tree roots and the trail pace was fast in that one. I knew that I wasn't going too good in that test - I seldom do when we race "in the park" - so I just tried to limit the damage and get the test over with. It's not that the section is horrible, it's just pretty sketchy and with the rain, even more so.

With the mud getting packed on the bike and some of the slow going in the rutted sections, my bike seemed pretty lean during the third and fourth sections. I tried to pay attention to the way it sounded and not abuse it any more than needed. Those sections were pretty good and most of the trail was holding up and allowing for a good pace. I didn't have any major issues and managed to miss the deepest holes.

We were back at camp after test four and I attempted to switch the main jet. That was a disaster and I just managed to get things back together and arrived at the start of test five with a minute to spare - and with the same main jet still in the bike. That test was pretty nasty with plenty of ruts, lots of slick trail, and many opportunities to screw up. I babied the bike, passed about a hundred worn out riders, and fell a time or two myself.

I was glad to be at camp again before the last section. We decided to move the needle this time and that process went much better. I could tell straight away that the bike was basically "fixed" and I was able to abuse it a bit more! The beginning of the last section was fast and boggy and a lot about line selection. Then we got into some of the tighter stuff that didn't have a lot of tracks on it, which was a nice change. The waterfall was, well, wet, but I negotiated my way down without throwing the bike down and then pinned it to the finish.

It turns out that I won my class in every section and that's about all I could ask for. It seems like every NEPG event has been wet this year. Actually, nearly every event regardless of series has had plenty of wet stuff this year. I'm sure that will change, but for now I'm getting better at picking lines and washing bikes.

Thanks for the support!