

## ***STEVE LEIVAN ~ 2016 Race Report***

**Event:** Round 1 National Enduro – Sumter, SC – February 7

**Bike:** KTM 250 XC

**Result:** 1<sup>st</sup> +40 “A” ~ 4<sup>th</sup> Overall “A” ~ 36<sup>th</sup> OA

The official start to the 2016 season was this past weekend with the NEPG opener in sandy South Carolina. There was rain during the week that kept the soft terrain in awesome condition and despite the threat of snow and rain on raceday, we avoided getting the bad weather and had to deal only with chilly conditions.

I was on row 40 with my buddy Drew Higgins and another one of the Lafferty kids (they just keep appearing). We had a short warm up of 1.5 miles and then the first 10 mile test section. As expected, I got pretty tight right from the start but I tried to talk myself out of that and relax. I found a groove and some was able to hit some of the good lines and ride the edges of the track where it was smoother. I managed to wash the front end out and fall over once - which was probably a ten second screw up - but the rest of the section was clean for me.

The next four sections were all pretty similar I thought. No doubt, they were rough and physical and it was beneficial to constantly be looking for the smoothest route. My set-up was really good - I had MX11 Dunlop sand/mud tires on and there was always a supply of traction when I need it. My Checkpoint Offroad suspension was smooth and predictable and soaked up everything like I wanted. This was my first real race on the SX and it was really good - no struggles at all.

There was a muddy section in test four that was getting pretty bad, but it was rideable. Look ahead and keep the thing pinned and it wasn't a problem. The last section was the Pro/A section and for whatever reason, I struggled in there the first three miles. I honestly think it was too smooth and not blown in as much and it took me a little bit to adapt. The flow wasn't as good either and I fought that, but still rode alright.

Overall, I had a good day. There is a ton of talent that shows up for the opener and the field is stacked. I've never had a result at Sumter that I was stoked with - always rode okay, but not stellar. This is the best that I have ever felt there and my best overall finish there too. The talent pool isn't getting any softer. I think I was in the top 5% of the riders and I've been working hard and don't plan on stopping now. Still some goals.....

Thanks everyone for your support!