

Scottish Border Enduro Club's Hare & Hound at Wollrig Farm, Ashkirk July 2011

On Sunday 3th July, the sun truly shone on the last round of the Scottish Cross Country Championships run by the Scottish Border Enduro Club at Wollrig Farm, Ashkirk, and what a scorcher of a race it was!

A relatively low entry caused the organisers to consider postponing the race, a consequence of too many events scheduled close together, but in the end the club decided to run it anyway (even if it was at a financial loss), and it turned out to be a fantastic day for those who did take part.

Last year the message from the riders was 'what a great course' and this was despite the horizontal rain and high winds which had added to the challenge. So this year the course builders decided to stick with the winning formula but this time in the reverse direction with some additional new tracks to keep things interesting, and what an excellent course they created. Tight twisty woods, open grass tracks, jumps, off cambers, descents and a couple of climbs this course had it all. The dry weather meant that most of the exposed tree roots weren't as treacherous as they could have been and those who were willing to push the pace through the trees were rewarded with a fast and flowing blast.

Pushing the pace all the way was Fraser Flockhart who put in a very classy ride to take the overall win as the only rider to complete 17 laps. The tight and twisty woods didn't seem to slow him down one bit as he put on a display of balanced, confident and very fast riding. Drew Harvey tried his best to match that pace with a strong 2nd overall but this time youth overcame experience.

The clubmen class featured a ding dong battle in the early stages of the race between Steve Currie Jnr, Dean Reid, Hamish Patrick, and Ross Hamilton. By the mid point it was becoming a 2 horse race as Steve Currie Jnr and Dean Reid started to establish a gap but Hamish was never far behind until disaster struck when he overcooked it, had an argument with some nettles (they won!), and he hit a gate! Some wires were severed in the crash and his bike was gubbed. That left Currie Jnr and Reid to slug it out for the win and the Championship. In the end Steve Currie Jnr had too much pace in the woods and he dominated the later stages of the race to take a well deserved win, however Dean Reid had played his cards well so the champagne was broken open and shared at the end because although Steve took this win, it was Dean who took the Scottish XC Championship after a season long battle.

The race for glory in the Over 40's class was a cracker with an excellent field of 18 riders lining up for the fight with the added spice of the championship still to be decided between James Harvey and Mark Ritchie.

It was Mark who got the best start and in his customary no fear approach tore round the first lap with Steve Currie Senior and Gary Tulloch on his tail. The pre-race banter between Steve and Gary was which type of curry was the best race preparation (true Scottish athletes!), and it was Gary's lamb bhuna that proved to be the ideal race food as he put in a stellar performance taking 3rd place on the day. Steve's Jalfrezi proved his undoing as a bout of illness caused him to pull out after 3 laps. (Steve, is there a Health Food shop in Lauder?). Several riders had bruises to show for their efforts; Alex Kirk hit the same fence post twice and rode half the race with a glove filled with blood...hard core!

In the meantime James Harvey was gaining ground as he fought his way through the pack after a poor start. It took him 5 laps to get through to 2nd position with the frantic pace and so few places to pass in the woods. Unknown to James, Mark's engine wasn't 100%

having wrongly fitted his power valve actuator (this Newcastle lad is a canny rider but he cannae fix his bike!!), which was no disadvantage in the tight woods but was a problem on the faster sections of the course. Bottom line, James was hunting him down and gaining with every lap..... in the end Mark just held on to a 39 second advantage to take the win after 3 hours of hard racing. This leaves both riders tied on points for the Scottish Over 40's XC Championship and so the jury will now have to check back all results / wins to clarify who is crowned champion, it just couldn't be any closer than that!!!

The race for Clubmen B honours saw a very tight battle in the first half of the race between Dean Barr, William Beaty and John Austin. William Beaty ran a strong 3rd until late in the race when he smacked a tree breaking his ignition switch so he had to push the bike out of the woods!!

Scott McKune had been held up in traffic after a poor start but he came through very strongly in the second half of the race displaying excellent pace and fitness on a very hot day. He overhauled John Austin (who finished a fantastic 3rd), to claim a strong second place but it was Dean Barr who dominated having started well and kept up a relentless pace right to the end and in doing so he takes the Clubmen B Scottish Championship just ahead of Scott McKune.

The Sportsmen class was a two way battle between Nial Patton Snr and Graeme Armstrong. These two set the early pace and swapped the lead numerous times throughout the race until Nial established a gap after lap 7 which he held onto until the end, both riders completing an excellent 14 laps. Leslie Bertram was never far behind taking a solid 3rd place on 13 laps. (Note: The Sportsman class points tally for the Scottish Championship have yet to be finalised but will be announced as soon as possible)

This event almost didn't go ahead due to the lack of entries so a big thank you to all the riders who supported this event, hopefully you will spread the word about how good it was and encourage others to take part next year. Thanks to ABC ambulances who were very flexible in response to the low entry in allowing us to cancel one of the ambulances at very late notice to help us avoid an even bigger loss!!

A massive thanks to all the organisers and helpers from SBEC who put in some serious hours to make this event a success. In particular thanks to Paul Carlyle, the Ross family, Peter Nixon, the Patrick family, and Jimmy Ballantyne, the lap-scoring girls Ruth and Vicki Ross and Linda Ballantyne, the marshals Allyn Scotland, Steve Gilhooly, Ian Hedley, Iain Bell, Mark Arres, Steven Forteath, and Stuart Ross during what turned out to be a cracker of a race. Also a special mention to our resident computer genius Colin Ross who not only put in many hours to set up and take down the course but also his top effort creating a fantastic 'results' programme which provides fast results and detailed lap information for the riders.

A big thank you is also in order to the land owners Adam Skeldon and Stewart McIntosh, and best wishes to Murray Thomson for a speedy recovery from his injury at Pathead enduro.

Looking forward to many more SBEC events,
Cheers,
Iain Laing



James Dods & Tim Irwin elbow to elbow.



Steve Andrews looking good.



Andy Gray (The hare), chased by the hounds!



Pete Nixon at speed!



Dean Barr going for the win!



Graeme Armstrong & Duncan Norrie



Hamish Patrick chased by Ross Hamilton



Niall Paton snr winning sportsman!



Laing...get a move on ya auld codger!