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Big Sky Cross Country
Big Sky Resort

Cross Country Comes to Big Sky Country

BY JOE MILLER

BIG SKY, MT, SEPT. 19-20

For the first time ever, Big Sky Resort opened its mountain to off-road motorcycle racers on Saturday and Sunday, September 19 and 20. The resort is well known in the snow-sports world for its extreme ski and snowboard terrain, and after the weekend of racing, word spread quickly that it is equally as fun on a motorcycle. With the iconic Lone Peak looming directly ahead and ski lifts dangling above, all race courses started in the ski base area. The racers then funneled into a single-track course that included rocky switchbacks, wide-open service trails, steep downhill, technical climbs, and the much-talked-about A-class-only rock garden.

Saturday's busy day of racing was highlighted by Ryan Shields of Stevensville, Montana, in the 50 (4-6) class. After taking the holeshot, Shields was misdirected by a spectator and took a wrong turn that sent him to the top of the ski mountain on a service road. Shields made it up to the top of the ski lift and back and missed the race's restart but still managed to win his class!

After a dusty day of racing on Saturday, nature's alarm clock sounded at 5:30 a.m. on Sunday morning with window-shaking thunder that rumbled on the second day of racing. Luckily, along with the thunder and lightning came some much-needed rain, creating perfect racing conditions for Sunday's B and A classes.

The inaugural Big Sky XC AA class included many talented racers from Montana and surrounding states. At the end of lap one, C.J. Hymas of Pocatello, Idaho, was a minute and a half ahead of Cameron Weaver. A local favorite, Weaver looked comfortable on his bike early on, but mechanical problems unfortunately ended his day at the start of lap two. At the halfway point, most riders arrived at checkpoint

two already looking exhausted. When hearing the announcement that there was an hour and a half left in the race, Klim rider Max Gerston from Arizona gave the checkpoint attendant a high five, let out a whoop of approval, and wheeled the entire length of the start straight. Gerston put on an inspired comeback that left him less than a second behind Hymas at the end of the three-hour race. Mason Harrison of Medford, Oregon, finished third, ahead of Scandia, Minnesota's Matt Stavish and Bozeman, Montana's Kevin Miller. Gerston proclaimed afterward that this is his new favorite race.

Hymas took home the weekend's top prize, an engraved rock taken directly from Lone Peak. This special award earned new meaning after many of the A riders struggled in the race course's uphill rock garden.

There was buzz around the racers' pits of this event being nicknamed the "Little Erzburg." The promoters are confident that the Big Sky XC will become a classic in its own right and are looking forward to watching it develop its own unique reputation. While everyone agreed the course was tough, the word "fun" was the most popular description.

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RESULTS

Black Diamond Course

AA: 1. C.J. Hymas; 2. Max Gerston; 3. Mason Harrison; 4. Matt Stavish; 5. Kevin Miller. **250 A:** 1. Wesley Luly; 2. Rowdy Baker; 3. Eric Shields. **450 A:** 1. Jason Smoot; 2. Eric Nadeau; 3. Dave Resengren; 4. Chad Street; 5. Jason Combs. **VET 30+ A:** 1. Scott Fisher; 2. Branimir Peterson; 3. Buck Dolan; 4. Kelly Fisher; 5. David Brown. **MSTR 40+ A:** 1. Steve Luly; 2. Alden Anderson; 3. Mark Weirich; 4. Tom Stark; 5. Darly Reimers. **SR 50+ A:** 1. Tom Torpen; 2. Phil Egbert; 3. John Vehrns.

Blue Square Course

250 B: 1. Tyler O'Neill; 2. Cole Schneider; 3. Evan LePard; 4. Brady Vix; 5. Dylan Reed. **450 B:** 1. Zane Kuhl; 2. Hoyt Walker; 3. Jared Hass; 4. Trevor Clark; 5. Brad Jameson. **VET 30+ B:** 1. Joe Boisvert; 2. Jim Sprague; 3. Jeremy Storm; 4. Lucas Paul; 5. Brandon Mueller. **MSTR 40+ B:** 1. Eric Klas; 2. Bill Wilson; 3. John Clark; 4. Tom Finlinson; 5. Marty Zaluskii. **SR 50+ B:** 1. Ken Justus; 2. Steve Inabnit; 3. Stephen Sullivan; 4. Danny LePard; 5. Bob Mullenix. **S/SR 60+:** 1. Gordon White; 2. Mike Carson; 3. Darrell Swanson.

Green Circle Course

OPEN C: 1. Chad Hunter; 2. Andrew Schreiner; 3. Jeremy Williams; 4. John Summers; 5. Mike Unruh. **WMN:** 1. Andrea Holacher; 2. Lisa Hill; 3. Alix Clark; 4. Krista Eklins; 5. Dani Kabisch. **OPEN MINI:** 1. Zeik Gordon; 2. Grant Hudspeth. **85 A:** 1. Micah Lawhorn; 2. Bjorn Schroeder. **85 B:** 1. Mchi Gordon. **65 B:** 1. Cal Gibson; 2. Brider Babcock; 3. Leif Schroeder; 4. Charlie Johnson; 5. Jacob Roberts. **50 (7-8):** 1. Curtis Burrington; 2. Blayne Lawhorn. **50 (4-6):** 1. Ryan Shields; 2. Mazy Schreiner; 3. Tony Gilpin; 4. Kyan Smith.