



North Island Moto-Trials Champs, Rounds 3&4.

On the weekend of the 26th/27th of May, Manawatu Orion Motorcycle Club hosted the 3rd and 4th rounds of the North Island Moto-trials Champs. If Wellington's Ixion MCC set the bar with rounds 1&2, MOMCC most certainly didn't shy away from the challenge! Held at 888 Kahuterawa Rd. Palmerston North, a Trials mecca with plenty of rocks, creeks, banks, logs and hills, basically everything required to run an event such as this.

It was clear that a lot of work had been done by club members in preparation for the weekend, in particular, MOMCC Trials stalwart, Kevin Pinfold, and the property manager, Andrew Jurgens. Each day had a 12-section loop, each with six lines, one for each grade, from the easiest-T6, to the most difficult-T1.

DAY 1

Despite rain during the week, Saturday was a perfect day for Trials riding. No rain, and a bit of cloud cover from time to time to keep the temperature down.

Probably the most difficult of the rounds so far, eight of the day's sections were in and out of rocky creeks. The remaining four all involved rocks, pine trees and hills of varying grades. Throw in some slippery logs, increasingly (as the day went on) greasy banks and lots of other unpredictable features, and the points continued to add up all day long.

T1 saw Matt Foster (Taranaki) and John Haynes (BOP) sparing for the top spot. With lap scores of 26, 23 and 11 for a total of 60, Matt was clearly in his element and steadily improving over the day. John's first two laps of 29 and 22 were also very competitive, however a final lap of 29 put paid to his chances. His speedy descent from a high rocky bank followed by his bike in section 2, may've contributed to this. He landed on a square edged rock and was sporting a large bruise on his thigh afterwards. Apparently, it was a pretty dramatic crash to watch. John finished the day on 80.



T2 was contested by Warren Laugesen (Hawkes Bay), Phil Shilton (BOP) and Wellington's Stu Lawton. With laps of 13, 15 and 14, and only a single 5, Warren was his usual consistent self, finishing on 42. No surprises there. With laps of 25, 19 and 26, Phil had some outstanding rides, but unfortunately, he lacked the consistency required to challenge Warren, 70 total. In third place, Stu had laps of 35, 23 and 31. Stu was struggling after a crash in section 3 on his section lap, so his final score of 89 was quite credible in what was a relatively difficult Red day.



T3 saw Wellington Junior rider Finn Pearce take out the day on 39. With laps of 11, 10 and 18, it was a great result on what were difficult Yellow lines. Manawatu Orion's Connor Newton took out 2nd with laps of 20, 11 and 12. He finished only 4 points behind Finn bringing back memories of their tight competitions in previous years. South Island's John Ross finished only 2 points behind Connor on 45, with laps of 19, 17 and 9 (best T3 lap of the day). Some very tidy rides from John, he's always one to watch. Wellington's other Junior rider in T3, Zack Furniss, had bike problems all day and finished one point behind 4th placed Kevin Pinfold on 61. T3 had a total of 10 riders, including two Junior riders and three Vet2 riders.



With 23 entries for the weekend, T4 was the most contested class of the event. It was tightly fought at the top of the class, but Taranaki's Richard McKenzie sealed the win with his very consistent riding. His laps of 7, 6 and 1 were outstanding. South Island's Brendon Wadsworth had laps of 5, 9 and 7 which secured him 2nd place. Only 3 points behind him, Taranaki's Mike Owen on 24 (7, 8 and 9) took 3rd place. Other riders worth a mention in T4 were Taranaki's Junior rider Abe Herbert, who missed out on 4th place after a countback against Paul Symons, both finishing on 36 points. Abe's going to be a rider worth watching in the future. And after a good start, BOP's Grant Thwaites DNFed with mechanical problems and had to wait for Day 2 to show his metal.

T4 had a total of five Junior riders, eight Vet1 riders, three Vet2 riders and one Air-cooled Mono.



T5 had eight riders, a little down on previous years due to some riders moving up a grade to T4. Wellington's James Lawton once again took it out with a score of 25, and only one five all day. He's looking really tidy and will definitely make an impact in T4 when he moves up. Vet2 riders Jim Henderson (Hamilton) and Francis Sydenham (BOP) took out 2nd and 3rd on 41 points, with Jim winning a countback by one clean. Two Vet2 riders and 6 Junior riders made up T5. 5th place was taken out by Isabel Hopkins from the South Island, the only female rider this round.



T6 once again saw Taranaki's Rob Cochran as the only entrant, he's looking pretty safe for a series win. With lap scores of 26, 25 and 9, his riding was clearly improving throughout the day.

South Island's Leo Hopkins was the only Mini rider and rode the T6 line. His laps of 9, 15 and 13 for a total of 37 was very commendable considering his small wheels.

DAY 2

Another fine day (any day riding is a "fine" day) and it was all on again at 888 K road. After briefing and prize giving for the previous day, the rider's all set off for another 3 laps of 12. This day saw four of Saturday's sections reconfigured and re-used. Saturday's section 5, the notorious "Waterfall" section, became section 1 and continued taking plenty of points all day, seeing more than one rider

go over the bars before even reaching the creek part of the section. Section 2 was the previous section 6 in reverse, this worked well, although may have been a touch on the soft side. Infact, most of the day was set easier than the previous one, mainly because Saturday's sections were maybe a little bit on the "too difficult" side. There's a very fine line between too easy, too hard, and just right. Sections 5&6 were Saturday's 6&7, a couple of the properties most challenging, but also most rewarding, sections. Lots of rocks in the first one, and a challenging creek in the second. Warren Laugesen commented that this creek section was his favourite of the weekend. Once again, the day consisted of plenty of creek sections (9), with two sections staying out of the water but including plenty of tricky lines with lots of rocks to negotiate, and section 12, being somewhat different, on the side of a grassy hill... and some rocks, of course.

Sunday saw a different result from the T1 riders. Despite a pair 5s, John still managed to edge out Matt by one point on the first lap, 16-17. Lap 2 saw Matt with a five when he slipped off a rock and took out a marker, no 5s for John and a tie 18 all! With one point separating them it was down to the last lap. No 5s, and another tie at 8 all saw John take out the day by a single point. John 42, Matt 43. Interestingly, looking at the points breakdown, they each accumulated their points in different sections, and yet the result couldn't have been much closer. Matt commented after that he didn't really gel with Sunday's sections, while John showed me a large multi coloured bruise on his thigh from the previous day's crash. Apparently, it didn't affect riding.



T2 once again saw Warren Laugesen on top with laps of 9, 15 and 8. The two 5s in his second lap were the only ones of his day, one of them was in section 8 which, and with 3, 5 and 3, certainly took it's toll on his scorecard. Total 32. Phil Shilton was riding well once again, with laps of 17, 17 and 16 for a total of 50. Only a single 5, very consistent. He continues to improve and has clearly been working on his technique. Stu Lawton rode part of his first lap but then pulled out due to the previous day's crash. He spent the rest of the day following his son James around, offering advice and encouragement.

T3 saw Finn Pearce at the top again, with laps of 8, 4 and 11. No 5's, Great riding! Total 23. Zack Furniss was still having bike issues (turned out to be a failing fuel pump) but fought through them and claimed 2nd place with laps of 7, 10 and 11. Only one 5, on the notorious section 10, a section that only Finn managed to clean. Total 28. John Ross again took the third slot, with laps of 14, 14 and 13, total 40. He beat Kevin Pinfold on a countback, 19 cleans to 16. John one 5, Kevin zero 5s. 5th went to Saturday's 2nd place getter Connor Newton on 53.



T4 once again had a great turnout with 21 riders. And again, Richard McKenzie showed he knows how to keep his head in the game with laps of 7, 1 and 3 (One 2 and nine 1s). However, Saturday's DNFed rider, Grant Thwaites, gave him a serious challenge with laps of 4, 3 and 4. Richard won on countback, 26 cleans to 25. (Grant had eleven 1s). Brendon Wadsworth took 3rd with laps of 5, 2 and 10, total 17. A 5 on section 8 in his third lap dampened his chances, and he was fortunate to beat 4th placed Brent Neilson (Hawkes Bay) who had laps of 8, 1 and 7, but copped a 2-minute penalty as he'd been riding with, and assisting, his son Jacob, who at 9 years old, was one of the youngest riders at the event, and handed their cards in at 3.32.



James Lawton again dominated T5 with laps of 15, 0 and 2. Maybe Stu should've ridden with him all day, who knows what his score might've been? Watch this space! Francis Sydenham finished with 17, 9 and 14 (40 total) and only one 5. This time Hawkes Bay Junior rider Freddi Robson pushed through for 3rd place, beating his cousin Sebastian by 4 points. Unfortunately, Isabel Hopkins DNFed with an ankle injury near the end of her second lap. She's hoping it will be healed in time for the Kaikoura 3 day on King's Birthday Weekend.



Rob Cochran had laps of 11, 12 and 10 for a total of 33. Only one 5 for a missed marker in lap 1. You only do that once! His dominance of T6 is currently safe.

Leo Hopkins had laps of 30, 21 and 16. With four 5s in lap one (he missed the same marker as Rob), and only one in subsequent laps, he clearly improved over the day, finishing on 67. It's a shame he had no competition this weekend, but we see the Mini rider numbers go up and down each year, so hopefully the class will be stronger in the future. Meanwhile, plenty of previous years Mini riders are taking podium spots in senior classes. That's the nature of the sport and we can only do our best to encourage our younger riders to stick at it, the rewards are there if they do.

Here's a link to the full results from Trials.NZ, Harry Dredge has done a great job of getting it all collated and well presented.

https://www.trials.nz/_files/ugd/631f5a_7344f5488b0648bb8d393108d11a34f4.pdf