

JR Schnabel Daytona Report:

Let the Racing begin-

I'm not talking about some parade race in a roll cage, or some 200-mile paced out lemonade sipping marathon. I'm talking about 25 laps of WFO throttle cable stretching roost flying handle bar to handle bar (not just the old cliché but the real deal) sideways sliding gloves off racing you have ever seen. I'm talking about the AMA Grand National 2009 Daytona Short Track.

Here is how the Daytona Short Track works:

Start with a tight slick short track. Take 80 riders that have been prepping for the past 4 months. Most of those riders are from the Northern States with their brains still frozen. Toss them on new shiny bikes that have way too much horsepower for the tire/chassis/track combo. Pack the stands with fans and all the key players in the motorcycle industry. Mix in some new additions like 10-second board girls, MX bikes, and fireworks. Starting to get that dry feel in your mouth? Blood pumping chest pounding it's Showtime.

NIGHT 1:

Man I love sitting in the practice line waiting to go out at Daytona. Hot sun beatin' down, race fuel burnin', engines revin', 102dB WHAT? Let's get it on!

My heat had some heavy hitters with J. Halbert and K. Coolbeth. I got off the line second behind Halbert. Coolbeth and I battled over second for a few laps until I found my line. I would enter high and square off the corner and exit really low. I caught Halbert about ½ through the 10-lap heat and made the pass. I went on to win the heat.

The heat win put me on the front row for the main and in the dash for cash. The dash is something new this season. In the dash we earn points towards the championship (1st 5, 2nd 4, 3rd 3, 4th 2, 5th 1 6th 0). Entering the first turn for the dash Brandon Bergen hit the deck and I had to take evasive action. With the dash only being 4 laps I put myself in a hole. I was able to catch the pack and make one pass to end up 4th. I was not worried about the 4th but I was excited with how quickly I was able to catch back up after the first turn incident.

MAIN Event:

You know what I need to work on? MY starts. I got off the line 5th. I stayed focused and slowly worked my way to third. Jared Mees was running second with Henry Wiles leading. I started working on making a pass on Jared as Wiles inched away. After about 5 laps I finally completed the pass on Mees. By this time Wiles was about ½ a straight-ahead. Henry is not one you can give a lead like that to. I made my mind up right there that I was going to put it on the edge and go for it. I slowly inched in lap after lap until lap 22 when I pulled past him for the lead. Henry quickly retaliated and cut back under me. I waited until the last lap to make another attempt. I pull up the inside on the back straight and had everything going perfect. I had him trapped on the outside and at my mercy. I waited for him to brake and then I keep him to the outside. Nothing to do now but exit turn four and pop some wheelies. Oh and miss that big rut. Not to be as I hit the rut, went sideways and swapped around like a rookie. Henry drove off with the win and I

was second. I was disappointed for minute but then I thought about what all just happened. First it was a hell of a show for the fans. Second I came through the pack ran down the leader and put myself in a position to win. Third my bike is scary fast and the rest of the season should be fun.



NIGHT 2:

After our battle last night Wiles and I ended up in the same heat race. Joining us was Halbert, Johnson, Carr, and others. Wiles pulled the holeshot and I was second. I made a pass on lap 2 and he came right back at me. We raced clean back and forth for 5 or 6 laps. I made a slight mistake and Henry gapped me a little. I was able to catch back up but not make a serious pass attempt. The second in the heat still put me on the front row for the main and in the dash. I was excited for dash because they water the track. My excitement was short lived as I found some excess moisture and fell. I quickly remounted to get a few laps in before the main. Good thing I did because both Kopp and Wiles crashed on the freshly watered track. I ended up 4th and still earned some points.

MAIN Event:

You know what I need to work on? MY starts. First start I nail and I lead the race for the first two laps. Of course some riders go down and we get red flagged. Restart: When it counted I was the last one off the front row. Remember that part about frozen brains? Here was my moment. Running 5th or 6th on lap 2 I panic thinking the leaders are going to get away. I run it into the turn so hard that I need to bounce off three riders to get stopped. I end up 13th after all the slamming is done. Completely my fault, now I have some work to do. I picked my way through the pack until I was up to fifth. While coming through the pack I was actually catching the leaders. Once I got to fifth it took

me too long to get by. I got in a five-lap battle with Jared Mees and we were slowing each other down. I finally got by just past the ½ mark in the race and pulled a little gap on Jared. I was not that far from the leaders, less of a gap then I made up the night before. However, the track was brushed off and very slick and there was no way to make up that kind of time tonight. I ended up forth and left Daytona 3rd in the championship point's race.

This season is going to be a slugfest. We have at least 7 guys that are ready to do whatever it takes to win. For me I couldn't be happier. My bikes are so good right now all I need to do is work on my starts and we will have some wins.



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