

2010 Loose Moose Enduro - Some Random Thoughts

By Mark "Trash" Becker

The theme of this write up is, "If you're gonna be stupid then you gotta be tough." That sums up the Marquette enduro for me. I drove 8 hours to race this (no, ride it). This is the gnarliest race one could find in this part of the country. But most riders know this going in, so there is no surprise. I decided to adjust my bra strap and man-up for this. You see, I love Marquette. It is amazing for all forms of recreation. I raced the Ore-2-Shore mtb race there last year. That was 48 miles. It seems the Yoopers want everything they do to be tough. Girly-men are not welcome and are publicly ridiculed. So why was I there then you may ask? Here comes the stupid part.

I figured if I can race a 3 hour hare scramble why not a 4 hour enduro with multiple breaks. This race was 39 miles, that's it! A typical hare scramble will get me 50 miles. I was so happy it was over at 39 miles. Those are the toughest miles I ever put in. The reality is the Sandstormers gave us the girlie version of their epic enduro. They use to give us 60 miles. These guys positioned themselves at the more technical spots to assist us. Thank you for that. I especially liked it when the most vocal member called me a dipstick (not the actual word but close) for not riding the line he pointed out for me. I seem to recall a different version of the events that transpired but it was funny either way.

Yoopers are a tougher breed than us flatlanders. However, they offer great hospitality. I have gotten to know a lot of them and I'm honored to call them friends. The course was deceiving. The start was fun; we had a few miles of sandy single track (what I call "Hero trail"). Then a harsh reality check into the moon rocks. That is a humbling experience. How can I ride one type of terrain so well and suck so bad at another? Welcome to Marquette. The Yoopers are proud of their rocks and enjoy sharing them. So here I am riding the trail at a reduced pace knowing there will be another 6 foot ledge to scale up around the next blind corner. You want to go faster but I was afraid to. In case you were wondering, your hare scramble suspension settings don't work well for rocks. The only right idea I had was to inflate my tire pressure to 15 lbs. A few guys will run trials tires but I can't see spending money on a tire that's good for only one race. Now, the hot ticket to me is a product called Tub-Liss. The mtb'ers have been doing this trick for years. You convert a tube-type tire into tubeless. The benefit is less rotating weight and much lower pressures which dramatically helps traction. How does 7 to 8 lbs sound with no chance of flats? Mr. Dick Burleson educated me on this product. I'm thinking this guy knows what he's talking about. I will try to budget this in for next year.

I hate to say this but downed riders help. When you come up to a 15 foot rock wall with stuck riders strewn about it forces you to seek an alternate line. Otherwise I would have been that sorry guy muscling his bike around on the arrowed trail. Also, did you notice that the "W" markers were sometimes the better route to take on the moon rocks? Is that Yooper humor?

When it was all over I only had a crushed pipe to deal with. If you are new to the sport and want to be tested to your limits come to Marquette. If you like Enduro-Cross come to Marquette. If you're a guy that thinks he's tough (like me) and wants to be humbled, come to Marquette. I recommend you wear your best pair of man-panties.