

Clay Sherman

I'd like to share my first meeting with Clay. You see, as I served as your points keeper I would often see a name that I knew of but never met the person. It was such with Clay. I would list his name in the results and move on to the next guy. I remember that he came up through the mini ranks. I never put a face to the name though. That changed last November.

Like many racers, I wanted that "last ride". So I traveled to New Paris, IN for the Turkey Creek enduro. It was the 7th of November. It was cold but dry and it was a great day to race. Skies were clear and I settled with row 17. Clay as it turned out had row 13, four minutes ahead of me.

Like most of my enduros, I struggle in the short sections. It takes me a while to get in a rhythm. But this club laid out a 20 mile section that suits my style. Towards the end of this long technical section I came upon a young kid on a KTM. He was fast but I was a tad faster. I could tell he was young and that he raced hare scrambles. #115x was on his side plates. Since the trail was gnarly, I figured it best to wait for an opportunity. He took a sharp left corner wide (intentionally) so I could get by. From that point he shadowed me. I have used this strategy myself. It's always easier to follow and capitalize on the lead riders' mistakes. So 115 is on my tail screaming his bike as loudly as I'm throttling my 125. So now I'm feeling the pressure. We come out into a clearing and my day ends. My head gasket lets go and coolant goes out the exhaust. Everybody goes by and I'm looking for a ride back to staging.

After the race, Clay rides up to me (he just turned in his score card). Clay says, "That was me in that long section!". I replied I had fun chasing him and was bummed that I couldn't finish. He introduced himself since I asked about his hare scramble numbers. Now, this is what really impressed me about this young guy. He stated, "Think I got C Hi-Point today". He did this with a dead pan expression. I was excited for him so I high-fived him. He said this real calm and cool. I would have been doing cartwheels and bragging up a storm. I soon realized that this young kid was our future. I knew that this kid was on his way to be a champion. He was talented on a bike. He had skills.

That was my first meeting with Clay. I don't know what demons Clay was struggling with. His family has suffered a loss that none of us want to think about. There is no short cut through the grieving process. The only consolation I can offer is this....

Clay Sherman, I remember you and you will not be forgotten...

- Mark "Trash" Becker