

Kimberly VanDuyn

Rebecca Smith

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Race Ready

An Enduro is an off road motorcycle event where I am racing against the clock. I have grown up riding and being at races my whole life and have been racing for six years now. When preparing for a race I have to combine all the knowledge and practice that I have worked up to try to get the best score possible. Being able to race is much more than just getting on the bike and going. It takes skill, practice, endurance, patience and so much more to be able to finish a whole race successfully.

Being physically ready for racing is extremely important. A regular work out routine can mean the difference in being last place to having a respectable score. Riding a motorcycle is much harder than most people expect. I know that being a girl in the sport, this is much harder for me, and I don't have the same physical strength as a man does. For this reason I have to make sure that I have as much endurance, arm strength, and lower body strength as possible. After a few hours of standing and my arms pounding through the tough terrain, I have to keep going and can't give in to my aching muscles. I also have to be able to pick up my bike if I fall. Falling on a bike happens quite frequently, and most the time is not too big of a deal. The hard part is getting the bike back up. On average a dirt bike weighs about two hundred and fifty pounds, so imagine trying to get a pretty big guy, who is sleeping, to their feet. Picking up a bike after riding

for a few hours and are already tired, is exhausting. This is when it will help to be in physically good shape for a race. I also know that when I am down, all of my opponents are gaining time on me and I could be losing a position.

About a week before I have a race, I start drinking a lot of water and eating foods that are packed with carbohydrates. If I am not properly hydrated before a race, it is easy to get heat exhaustion. Eating well also has a huge effect on the performance of my race. Junk food is in no way helpful when I'm looking at a seventy mile ride. It has no good ingredients in it that will produce energy and will only make me more tired. To prevent getting tired I eat a lot of spaghetti and bread. This kind of food is full of carbohydrates that will keep up my energy through the entire ride.

Having the bike prepared is one of the most important steps. I spend the week before the race making sure that everything on the bike is running ok. First I wash my bike and start it to make sure the engine is running clean. Then I always check all the fluids that make the bike run. It has to have oil so that the engine doesn't bind up and the gears can move without damaging anything. When the bike has been running for a long time it gets hot and needs antifreeze to cool the engine down so that it is not damaged by the heat. Then I fill up tank with high octane gas to keep the bike running strong. After that I check for the elevation that I will be racing at. Depending on this we have to change the jetting in the bike. When there is a change elevation, the amount of oxygen in the air changes, so I have to adjust the amount of gas that is getting fed into the engine. The amount of gas effects how big of an explosion that will occur in the cylinder head when oxygen, gas, and spark are all combined. Keeping new tires on the bike is important

for traction. The tires that are used for dirt biking have little “knobs” all over so that the tire can dig into the dirt. When a tire is “bald” it will just spin in the dirt. The morning of the race I check for tire pressure. I have make sure that I have enough air so that if I hit a rock or anything else at a bad angle, I will not get a flat tire, but at the same time I do not want to put too much so that I’m bouncing off of everything, not allowing the tires to dig into the ground.

The night before a race is when everyone signs up and gets their assigned minute for the ride. After that we put big black numbers on the number plate to show our minute, and a scorecard on the front fender so when we go through each checkpoint they can mark our time. In Enduro racing we do not race head to head. Our competition is spread throughout the course and we may never even see each other during the whole race. Basically, the way we are scored is by timing us through sections. Then at the end of the race we see how our opponents did compared to our own score. We try to study what the race will be like and see where we need to be pushing our hardest, then where we might get a little time to relax. We also have to make sure that we put our gas cans on the gas trailer. A dirt bike can go about forty to fifty miles before it runs out of gas, our races are typically sixty to seventy miles long, so we have to stop for gas about half way to make sure we can finish the whole ride. We go to bed early, a good amount of sleep is very important. I have to try not to be anxious so that I am able to sleep, it is easy to get excited and not get any rest.

The morning of the race we wake up at six forty five for the seven o’clock riders meeting. At the meeting, they tell us about the course and what we need to expect. The

course is typically marked with orange arrows or pink and orange ribbons. The danger areas are marked with two arrows pointing together, and potential areas that we might go the wrong way are marked with a white sign that has a big black W on it. They tell us to have a good ride and send us to suit up for the race.

After I have eaten something for energy, I usually go with a plain half of a bagel, I put on my gear: I start with my long socks, then knee pads, and over that thick pants that are durable to a pretty good fall, my jersey, and big steel toe boots incase I hit a rock, tree, rut or anything else with my foot. Then I braid my hair so that it does not get tangled and stays out of my way. I make sure I have my camelback full of water and have a power bar ready. Right before I start my bike I put on my chest protector, always wear a helmet, then gloves and goggles. At eight o'clock the first rider begins, we usually have a later minute, so I wait anxiously for the start of my race. I always leave for the starting line ten to fifteen minutes before my minute. After lining up for my turn to start I try to clear my mind. Anticipating anything in the ride is a bad thing. I start thinking about an obstacle more then the actual ride which slows me down. Each minute of riders moves through the starting line quickly and I feel anxious for my turn to go, like a lion being let out of a cage. Finally, the line in front of me goes and I pull up. They give me thirty, ten, five seconds to go. Then when the hand waves I drop the clutch and twist the throttle and I'm off, going as fast as I can, ready for an awesome race.