

NEPG Interview: Jason Raines

Jason Raines is one of the many new Enduro riders who have migrated to the series from another aspect of off-road racing. Raines is a five-time National Hare Scrambles champion and now he is rapidly moving up the ranks of the AMA/Rekluse National Enduro Series.

Q: You made the podium at the Tennessee national, do you feel you are getting the hang of the series?

A: Yes. At the first two rounds I struggled at the start and came on strong in the end but in Tennessee it was just the opposite, I was strong at the beginning and struggled in the end. But I got on the podium and that was good and every race I've been getting better and better and I'm a lot more confident in my pace. I feel I'm riding a good pace and I'm flowing real good. I know what pace I need to run now to be up there with those guys where before I would just ride as hard as I could and make mistakes. I know now you don't need to do that, you just need to be a little bit slower and take good lines and be real smooth.

Q: How has the series gone for you?

A: The first round was going good until I messed up in the final section. At the second round I was just off all day, I kept making frustrating mistakes and stalling the bike and crashing. Every race up until the last one I was getting more and more mentally discouraged, making stupid mistakes and getting mad at myself and then it would just snowball. But the last two races I've been having fun. I'm riding a different bike and any time you have a big change in your program it's like you just got a breath of fresh air.

Q: What bike are you riding now?

A: I've been riding the Yamaha four-stroke and now I've switched back to the two-stroke. I want to thank Randy [Hawkins] for letting me do it. We had a long talk about it and I feel I'm not strong enough in the Enduros to ride a 450 and Yamaha still makes the two-stroke so I feel I'm out here promoting it. On the 450, I just struggled and I couldn't get it to do what I wanted it to do. Now, on the two-stroke I'm having fun again. After the Alligator, I had such a frustrating day I decided I needed to do something different. I was not even looking forward to going riding any more. I was frustrated and I was ready to do something drastic. I think the four-stroke is a good bike and there's nothing wrong with it, I just feel like I was in a dead rut and I just couldn't pick myself back up. But in Louisiana I made the switch and I went from being three to eight minutes off those guys at the first three rounds to being within a minute-twenty. Those guys are tough, I've always been a real strong finisher and these races are just different. At the GNCCs I don't get as tired as I do at these races. This is more intense. I feel the GNCCs just beat you up and these races are so intense that it just wears you down fast.

Q: What other series are you riding this year?

A: Well, I am going to Wyoming to ride the National Hare Scrambles event. For me, my main series this year will be Endurocross and then everything else just kind of fits in. I am having a lot of fun in the AMA/Rekluse National Enduro Series this year and we have been working really hard at it, but if I can win a championship in the Hare Scrambles then I will concentrate on that. The economy is not good right now and I think everyone knows if you don't perform this year you could be out on the street next year.

Q: Do you feel riding the AMA/Rekluse National Enduro Series has helped you in the other series?

A: I think the biggest thing is the mental aspect. That has always been my downfall and I've been doing a lot of research on it and I changed my program up a little as far as doing more mental training and I feel what I am doing now is a lot better than what I've been doing in the past.