

swack a rider in the chops, so this is a breakthrough of sorts. Only handicap was that guys who tried to jump the rubber band got caught under the chin and nearly lifted off the saddle.

Once the band lifts, riders smoke it for the first turn — about 60 yards out. Normally, the pack makes a sharp right, but the course was being run backwards on Saturday and we had to hang a left. Crashes were common here, as not much in the way of room was available. There were two lines — and two lines only. Still, the riders were going so slow when they tangled, no one got more than a few scratches and bruises. In order to make the turn at all, you damn near have to stop the bike and wrench it physically around.

All of the front half of the track is well watered and has snow fencing lining the straights. In the more remote back sections, there are dusty sections — little pockets of sand that turn into wheel-grabbing ruts after a few races. Most of the track in the back section is tree-lined and is by far the most interesting part of the course. It's too bad more spectators didn't wander back there and take

a look.

The big conversation piece at MOTOMASTERS is Devil's Drop—a diabolical drop-off jump that launches riders off into the air for many long seconds. The brave ones — that is. Taken backwards, like we took it on Saturday, it's an abrupt whap in the back and a near straight shot up into the air. The harder you hit it, the more height you get—not distance.

Sunday, the fast riders were soaring 40, 50 and 60 feet off the lip of the ski-type jump. Ooohs and aaahs from the spectators.

Around a great deal of the track are water hoses, and announcer Donfrio invites the folks to . . . "go ahead and water the track if you're not doing anything else; keep that dust down for the riders. . . ." So the folks pick up the hoses and do some imaginative sprinkling. They always seem to just miss the riders, but get other spectators more often than not. Two kids got in a water fight near the far end of the track. I don't think they saw more than five minutes' worth of racing the whole day, but they had a good time.

Trophies and money are awarded

the same day and most riders go home happy. It appears that a weekend at MOTOMASTERS is more than just two days of racing. Many stay overnight and the low-key partying is good fun. Big campfires light up and lots of mosquito repellent is sprayed in vain. Some music, a fair quantity of beer and the finest bench racing that side of the Mississippi.

Using the excruciatingly accurate DIRT BIKE course rating sheet as a guide, we can safely call MOTOMASTERS a good course. The start should be modified slightly (perhaps radiused) for less congestion and some water is sorely needed in the dusty back sections. It's a bumpy, rutted course, but it features lots of traction and is a challenge to ride. And that's what racing is all about, anyway.

Having spent some time with the guys who run it, I feel that they'll keep improving MOTOMASTERS until it's beyond reproach. They told me some of their plans and they're steadily pumping money and time into improving an already good track. Which is what you'd do if it was your track, wouldn't you? ●

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