

Racers compete in world's longest motorcycle endurance race

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SANDY BEACH

Forty-nine motorcycle and quad teams from across Canada and the United States gathered at Sandy Beach, a summer village 45 minutes northwest of Edmonton, to compete in the Numb Bum 24—a gruelling 24-hour endurance ice race held February 19-20.

Numb Bum 24 organizer, Dan Cheron, said the annual ice race is in its 18th year, and is listed in the Guinness World Records as the longest ice race in the world.

“This is the biggest Numb Bum 24 ever”, beamed Cheron. “We had 174 entries (racers, some coming) from Quebec, Connecticut, Seattle and Texas.” The legendary winter race even attracted one team—the Ice Holes—with 11 riders from Washington, Idaho and Wisconsin who brought a professional chef as a crew member! Team Ice Holes rider, Tim “I don’t have a last name” said this was his fifth year participating in the Numb Bum 24. His team brought three motorcycles to enter in this year’s race.

The track was ploughed and laid out on the frozen lake starting on Thursday, two days before race day. Says Cheron, “We had seven pieces of heavy equipment laying out the track. We even had the (Sandy Beach) mayor helping us! It’s the longest track we’ve ever had—20.7 kilometres long with 158 turns.” The course averaged 30 ft. wide, according to Cheron.

On race day, a dull overcast sky gave



PHOTO: RANDY SNEEP

Quads and motorcycles battled during the Numb Bum at Sandy Lake on the weekend.

way to bright sunshine, yielding bright high contrast lighting conditions that would clearly show every bump, pothole and rut on the frozen course.

At 12:30 pm Saturday, the first line of motorcycles and quads, all fitted with carbide steel racing studs screwed into their tires, were waved off to start the endurance race. The fastest class (over 401 cc motorcycle) occupied the first rows of the starting grid with the slower classes behind. The race started in waves, one

row at a time. Organizers used a Le Mans start. For each row, the riders lined up facing their motorcycle held by a crew member. When the starter’s horn sounded, the racers sprinted to their bike, mounted it, inserted the key, started the engine and accelerated down the long straight in front of the pits. Inevitably, riders in each row would have trouble kick-starting their bikes, because their engines, turned off as required by a Le Mans start, had gotten cold.

Early in the race, lap times were in the 16-17 minute range, giving an average speed of about 77 km/h. According to Cheron, many of the fastest racers reach almost 160 km/h on the one kilometre-long straight section on the frozen lake course.

The Bar Bashers team led the 2005 race for an incredible 22 hours until their race bike suffered a mechanical problem, allowing Cheron’s Team CC Cycle to take the overall win by an approximate ten-

HOW THEY FINISHED

2005 Numb Bum 24 Results 401 c.c. and Over Motorcycle:

1. Team CC Cycle: 76 laps
2. Team Bar Bashers: 75 laps
3. Team Fat Bastard: 74 laps

201-400 c.c. Motorcycle

1. Team WFO: 72 laps
2. Team Scott Richmond: 71 laps
3. Team Rob Gourlay: 71 laps

Quad Over

1. Team Parkland Cycle: 73 laps
2. Team Jay Swan: 66 laps
3. Team Dean Berlinguette: 65 laps

Quad Under

1. Team Alberta Cycle: 71 laps
2. Team Art Low: 66 laps
3. Team Rick Staton: 46 laps

FUNN (Female, Under Age, Never raced before, Not new over 20-year-old machine)

1. Team Brad Shepel: 63 laps
2. Team Fairview College: 49 laps
3. None

Red Eye (No headlight; daylight racing only)

1. Team Chad Johnson: 31 laps
2. Team Archie Peters: 30 laps
3. Team Hugh McCourt: 27 laps

minute margin. Team CC Cycle, racing a Suzuki DRZ 436, completed 76 laps, covering 1573.2 km in 24 hours, eight minutes, 41 seconds. In conjunction with the weekend race, organizers raised more than \$1500 in donations for the purchase of children’s playground equipment in the village. For more information on the Numb Bum 24, visit the Pembina Dirt Riders Association website at www.pdramx.com.