

2010 CEC
PREVIEW

Sophomore Season

Looking to build on first season success

By Suzanne Howie with files from Jeff Morgan
Photos by Suzanne Howie and Suzanne Pelletier

The game changed in 2009 when World Enduro Canada ran the first successful cross-country enduro championship. Building on their success the gentlemen of the WEC, Lawrence Hacking, Sean Wiesner, Trevor Wideman and Steven Abel, are looking forward to another fast-paced season, partnering with the CMRC, thus aligning themselves as the premier enduro series in Canada. With a host of new sponsors and a gate full of passionate riders the Royal Distributing Canadian Enduro Championship series, presented by Parts Canada, is going to be a series to watch.

Still excited to have the number one on the front of his RTR Performance KTM, Bobby Prochnau is planning to head into 2010 with a whole new outlook. He knows that the other riders will not be spending their off-season watching Hockey Night in Canada, and neither will he. After the final round of the AMA Endurocross in Las Vegas, Prochnau was looking forward to hiring a trainer to help with his fitness, his self-confessed sore point. While being top dog in Canada hasn't made it easier for the British Columbia native to get sponsorship south of the border, he is still incredibly proud of his accomplishments.





In 2009 Prochnau went south of the border and claimed a victory at the Desert 100; this year the Desert 100 got its revenge and took him down. He received two fairly significant injuries, an infection in his elbow and a broken thumb. It should not affect his 2010 season too much and he is looking to make his return at the Iron Giant, the Erzberg Rodeo. Not only will big bad Bobby Prochnau be back to defend his number one plate, but there will be some new contenders to the game.

Shane Watts, founder of the successful Dirt Wise Riding School, will be hosting events in the days before both the Alberta and British Columbia rounds of the CEC. With the timing and the chance to test himself against the best Canada has to offer, he "just had to go for it."

The Aussie is really looking forward to the chance to run against the top tier of Canadian riders, but he isn't concerned about coming in first: "If I win great; if I come in fifth, great too!" He is truly a man

possessed by the spirit of enduros and competition; it's a test of personal limits and a race against the clock.

Watts has raced in many of the same events as our top 10 riders, but as in many enduro races, it's not a heads up competition. Watts doesn't expect the Canucks to just give up podium positions, but is planning on enjoying his trip to the west. "I've ridden in Kamloops before; they have sensational trails there." Bobby Prochnau and Cory Graffunder agree: British Columbia has some of the best terrain on earth. "I'm just here for a good time," said the experienced master. "And to ride my bike."

With the arrival of Watts for the Western rounds, we gain one Aussie and lose another; Jake Stapleton will not be back for the 2010 season and has opted to attend school full time. We wouldn't rule out seeing Stapleton for perhaps one round, but his attentions have definitely turned to paramedics school.



Returning to the Machine Racing Yamaha team will be Brian Wojnarowski as their number one rider, but he won't be alone. Joining Wojo aboard the blue bikes will be Adam Millson, who is making the jump to the pro ranks from the A Class. After four phenomenal finishes in Quebec and Ontario, Wojo will run the number six.

Jason Schrage has jumped aboard the big red machine to become the first Honda Factory supported rider in the CEC. Schrage will take his number two plate and go play in the E2 sandbox aboard his CRF450R. He has opted for the more nimble, fuel-injected, motocross bike for the enduro duties in 2010. The Honda effort will be supported by Troy Lee Designs, Rider's Edge Suspension and Rekluse Clutches.

With Schrage out of the E3 class, the weight will fall on Geoff Nelson to fight Prochnau for the number one plate in 2010. Both will be aboard big KTMs running in the E3 class. Nelson took home the right to put the number three plate on his orange bike and will be looking to upgrade over last year's position.

Guy Giroux, the man whose big laugh, shoulders and personality are hard to miss in the pits, will be riding for the red and white aboard a Husqvarna this year, with the number four proudly displayed. While there were many age related jabs at Giroux, and the other experienced top-five finisher, Shane Cuthbertson, both riders will now be in the E2 class, and looking to show the younger crowd what a little experience can do. Cuthbertson will contest the E2 class aboard the Hus-



aberg FX450, while Giroux is undecided as to whether he wants a 450 or 250 two-stroke. As of press time, Giroux is favoured to ride a four-stroke for the tough and rocky western rounds, while using the nimble, "flickable" two-stroke at home in the East.

Giroux will be official team mates with Canadian off road legend Marty Halmazna. With Giroux, Halmazna and the Graffunders (Ryan and Nick) all aboard Husqvarnas, the red and white bikes are aligning themselves as both the ride of choice for both the legends and those who will be legends.

Husqvarna is pumping a lot of money and support into the 2010 series. It's a good thing; it shows commitment to the development of the sport and to the riders of their machines. The effort is much needed, and many hope that other manufacturers will be inspired and show the same sort of commitment to the riders who have faithfully purchased, raced and placed their machines on the podium.

Ryan "the Thunder" Graffunder, Inside Motorcycle's Top Finishing Junior, will run the aboard a Husqvarna, much like internationally renowned cousin Cory. The 19-year-old still has another year as a junior and hopes to get another prize. To do that, he will have to compete against the young "Wonder Boy," Ryan Durkee, who hopes to stay healthy this season and compete in all eight rounds. Older brother Nick Graffunder will be racing his Husqvarna in the E1 class, while

Ryan takes another crack at the E2.

Other riders to watch will be Stephen Shannon, who took home the National A Championship. Mark Cahill, of the Vet Pro Class, and Western E2 riders Kevin Pelletier and Jack Sawatzky are all impressive riders who laid down some fast test times and will be forces to be reckoned with in 2010.

And of course, there's always the Womens' class. Victoria Hett came out swinging and smoking in 2009 and is looking to step it up a notch. She, along with Albertan Jillian Bolso (who raced last year as Jillian Kings in the CEC Western Amateur series), are focused and just might be showing off their blue backgrounds in the A class. While Hett wants to defend her number one plate, she will not do so to the detriment of her ISDE training program, and is expected to be running in the A Class with the boys.

The WEC has yet to make a comment as to whether the Women's Class will continue to run the modified course in 2010.

In 2009 Western riders dominated the podiums and the top spot on the box across the board, but the Eastern racers weren't content to let this just be the way of things. A healthy cross-country rivalry is beginning to take shape, one that will hopefully replace the artificial political bitterness that once existed between riders. Riders and fans agree that this can only be a good thing for a once divided enduro nation.