



## New Zealand Motocross Nationals - Pukekohe

Well, with all this weather we have been experiencing, most of the usual riding forests have been rendered closed with fire bans stretching the country. So with nowhere to ride, I had to think outside the square, or forest as it were.

The third round of the New Zealand Motocross Nationals was taking place at Harrisville Raceway – Auckland finally joins the Nationals once again. I hadn't raced at Harrisville, let alone race a National level motocross in well over a year. So I thought, why not, could be fun. And it was.

Now as you all know, my bike of choice for the bush is the ever-impressive WR450F. Now for motocross, you wouldn't expect that the WR would fair all that well. But as that's the only bike I have in the shed, she was going to have to do the job. I would usually race the MX1 class, but as I wasn't sure how the WR would go, and I didn't want to be that guy getting in peoples way and messing their series so I opted to race MX3 and enjoy my day. But it was tougher than I thought.

Out practice was very, very muddy and I cleared maybe half of the jumps on the track. I qualified 18th which gave me 18th gate pick. For race one I lined myself way to the outside, looking for a good line in the start straight. The WR gets such good traction and as the gate dropped the bike rocketed off the line and towards the front straight. I rounded the first corner in about 4th place and slid into third around the next corner. It was a Yamaha 1-2-3 with Darren Capel out front on a YZ450F, followed by Tony Cooksley on a YZ250, then myself on the WR450F. Mid race Tony washed the front, handing me second place. With two laps to go I managed to catch Darren and make a pass stick, winning the first race.

I couldn't believe how good the WR450 was getting around the motocross track. I was now doing every jump except the huge 1.5 jump and clearing them safely. The bike cornered well, jumped really good and got great traction on the hard pack ground. After the first race I knew I could have raced in MX1 and not gotten in other riders way.

The last two races were just as enjoyable. I scored a 4th and a 2nd which credited me with 2nd overall for the day in MX3. The other good news was the team made it a full blue rostrum, with Darren winning the class and Tony finishing third. I may have to do more of this motocross stuff. It was a nice change from the normal bush riding I am used to and it was also good to get the WR out and show people what it is capable of. Though, I don't think the moto fraternity will ever get used to seeing a headlight on their track.

It was also great to see a lot of you out there too. It is not often you get to see me race.

