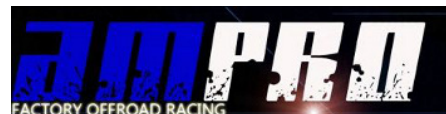




YAMAHA



Race Report: Mid East Rnd 5, Airport, Hickory

Rider: Paul Whibley

Team: AmPro Yamaha

Bike: Yamaha YZ450 F

Result: 1st



Lining up for the start the turnout was visibly less than usual at the popular Airport round. But that was to be expected with steady rain falling for the last 24 hours.

I grabbed the start and was the guinea pig that had to lead the way through all the standing water. It was tough the first couple of laps as you try to work out which puddle is a foot deep and which is 3 feet or more, and where the rut lay under the water. Once I had a couple of laps under my belt I stopped trying to tiptoe through and began to up the pace, opening a buffer from the chasing pack. The lap was short too; just over five miles and we were quickly into lapped riders. Some were struggling and getting by wasn't too tough although I had ditched my goggles early and the gritty roost really felt good in the eyes.

Brakes soon began to fade as the abrasive soil was grinding on the pads at an accelerated rate. By the fuel stop I'm sure I was down to steel both ends. Katherine and Joy handled the pit stop, although I'm sure it was a miserable day for them both, huddled under the Yamaha pit tent for two hours while we played out in the monsoon.

After gassing my lead grew steadily. I started to back it down a little, trying to nurse the bike home. With next to no brakes I had no choice in slowing in some spots, on the rocky downhill I had little choice in what speed I was going at the bottom, just ride it out. Some ruts began to get pretty deep and a few bikes were getting hung up and wedged in watery graves. I would try to remember what rut was deep from the lap before and avoid it a lap later.

Water really was everywhere. Running down the track, sitting in each rut and any low spot just became a pond. By the time I took the checkers I had worn through the knees and the butt in my pants. Definitely got my money's worth of seat time at this one.

1st: Paul Whibley

2nd: Casey Leatherman

3rd: Dylan Bean

Pic; Ryan Brehob

Paul Whibley is supported by:

AmPro Yamaha, Monster Energy, Shoei, Sidi, Smith, G2, Asterisk, Moto SR, Vortex Ignitions, EC3D, Bush Riders MCC, Darbis, GHQ, Sargent Motorcycles, Yamaha NZ, Rosscos Start Up Services, Works Connection, Pro Taper, Race Pace Services, Unabiker, Leatt Brace, Tire Balls, bikesportnz.com, Stuk, KettleClamp, Alliance Offroad, Ride Eng.

The AmPro Yamaha Team is supported by:

FMF Kenda Yamalube Asterisk CV4 Cycle Gear Factory Connection GYTR IMS Leatt Brace MSR Pro-Clean Rekluse Shoei Slavens TM Designworks Cybra Twin Air Wiseco ZipTy Racing AllBalls Racing Pro Taper Stuk Ride Eng Braking, Moto seat

