

Gardnerville, NV

March 30,2009

Bolton racing's Brad Bolton and Kevin Repan headed out to Toulon, NV for round two of MRANN's spring series.

We got in the night before the race, and from that point on I knew it was going to be interesting. The winds were howling through the open Nevada desert. Pop up tents were being ripped apart, dust was everywhere, and I thought our 5th wheel was going to tip over. Race day wasn't much different, the winds were still strong, but other than that it was a nice day.

Brad Bolton, 723t

Coming off an injured shoulder I made a conscious decision to take the race as a trail ride and avoid crashing at all costs. This idea went out the window once the banner dropped. The new idea was to get a small lead, ride a slower pace, and keep the possibility of hurting myself to a minimum. I started in row 4, the first row of amateurs. This meant that I was going to start three minutes after the experts. Once the banner dropped I jumped on my bike and took off. When I finally had a chance to look behind me I saw the closest rider about 100 yards away. I couldn't believe I got the holeshot and I couldn't feel my shoulder at all.

The first few miles went by really fast with no mistakes; I caught to the back of expert pack. Once I got to that point all I could see ahead was a huge cloud of dust; I looked back and only saw dusk in the distance. From my past experience I knew it was way more dangerous to be riding at the back with all dust than to be the leader of the pack so I decided to hammer down and ride a little harder so I could get out of the dust. Passing was really dangerous because my new Carson Motorsports KTM 530 was so quiet, people didn't hear me coming. I decided to start yelling to get people's attention, but that didn't last long so I had to start taking new lines. This was my first race on my new bike and couldn't believe the power it had, it made the passing really fast.

With my pace I seemed to be catching people every minute thinking to myself, "wow, now I have to pass this guy...then the next." The course was really tight in sections making traffic really back up. At times I would have to work my way around 10 people all at once. At about mile 30 I noticed I was working my way into the faster experts, they were making it really hard for me to get around them. As I caught them they would decide to run and it didn't take long for me to take a rock to the face and split my lip open.

Once I caught up to Paul Ziegler, we went back and forth with each other, each time with a wave. This made the race more fun, being with Paul made me treat the race more like a trail ride than an actual race. I rode with Paul the next 10 miles to the finish of lap one. My intentions were to just do one lap, get points for the race, and call it quits. I felt really strong and wanted to go back out and follow Paul around for lap two. It took me a few miles to catch Paul because he had such a fast pit.

The second lap got really technical with no definite trail just a rock pile and a canyon that we were forced to go up. I thought to myself, "What was I thinking?! I should have stayed in the pit." It was key to look ahead and keep a steady pace; you couldn't follow people too closely or else you would have been trapped. At one point I was stuck in traffic at a waterfall section, there were people everywhere and no place for me to go. Paul and I sat and waited, but the impatient people behind us tried to get around and, as I expected, it didn't work out too well for them. Paul and I rode side by side for the next few miles on a graded road; as it started to get tight again I made my way around Paul and put a good lead on him.

About 17 miles into the second lap I thought my camel back was leaking because my gear was getting wet, but I looked down and saw gas sloshing out of my tank. My gas cap came loose and fell off, pouring gas all over me. It took me a little bit to figure out what to do, but luckily I had a zip lock bag and a zip tie which doubled as a gas cap for the rest of the race. When I started going again, I was so far behind I couldn't see any dust in front of me. I thought that was the end of my race. I pushed hard the next couple miles making up some time, but feeling it in my shoulder. Because most of the course markers were knocked down it was making it really hard to see where the course was going.

As I got to the top of the famous Toulon 2-step downhill I could see many riders deciding which way to go. I looked over and saw some people with cameras so I figured to go balls out and if I crashed it would at least be on camera. I made my way around four people by the end of the hill and felt pretty proud of myself. Later I heard about 80% of the racers fell on that part of the course. With only half a lap left in the race, I rode smart to keep myself from crashing and saved my energy for a final sprint to the finish. The rest of the race went really smooth and was uneventful until I crossed the finish line. I was the first amateur motorcycle across the line and 16th overall MRANN motorcycle with a time of 3 hours 3 minutes and 28 seconds. I am really happy about our finishes and would like to thank everyone who made this race possible.

Kevin Repan, 440x

After some confusion of finding my spot in the line up, the race was about to begin. It was a dead engine start with 10 different rows, starting about a minute apart. I was in row 7, the 1st line of the novice riders. My whole plan was to make it out in one piece, and make it a trail ride. But once the flag dropped that all changed.

I was riding a 2006 KTM 250 xc two-stroke. The bike started right up and I was off. To my disbelief I got the holeshot, and had a clear trail in front of me. From that point on I knew I wasn't just going on an easy trail ride, I couldn't just give up my holeshot!

The clear trail didn't last for long, I started to catch up to some of the amateurs. The course at this point was pretty fast, but rough and full of loose rocks. Each pass I made was pretty sketchy in this terrain, but somehow I was making it work. I then came to one of the many bottle necks on the course. It was a decent hill climb that about 15 people were either on, or trapped at the bottom of. No one was going anywhere. I didn't want be

stuck in the mix and feel like cattle, so I turned up hill and gave it a fistful. It wasn't the cleanest hill climb, pulling a wheelie most of it with my legs going everywhere, but I made it around that mess. From that point on, it was more of the same; rocks, dust, wind and more riders. My biggest problem was my hands. They seemed to immediately get tired. Every time that I tried to give them a break there seemed to be another rider up ahead making dust that I wanted to get around. Every time I passed I would just make myself more tired. I knew it was going to be a long 90 some miles.

After the first lap I fueled up, and gave my hands a much needed 30 second rest. The first lap was around 60 miles and was supposed to be the easy fast section, so I knew that the second lap of 30 miles was going to be grueling. It was supposed to be much more tight and technical. I soon found that to be true. I started to catch up to riders with the same number plates as me, white numbers on black back grounds. This whole time I thought that I was in the lead of my novice class, so I thought that these guys cut course or something, which made me really want to pass them. So I really yolked it out to pass these guys. As it turns out (which I learned after the race) that these riders were experts, but from District 36 which had a different numbering system than MRANN. These guys were way out of my class but I was hell bent determined to pass them.

Parts of this course were not really a trail, but a super rocky creek bed full of waterfalls and bottle necks. It was fun, but tedious. The last major obstacle was a steep congested down hill. Riders were dropping like flies, including myself. After that I ended up falling off a cliff into a bunch of rocks which slowed me down a little bit and made me want to just finish the race in one piece. I ended up breaking off a piece of my helmet and bruising what still feels like everything, but luckily nothing major.

I don't know if I've ever been happier to finish something. It took me 3 hours 20 minutes and 34 seconds. I ended up being the first novice across the line. Not too bad for my first full off road race. Mentally I can't wait for the next one, but my body and my bike may think differently.

Thank you,
Team Bolton

Special thanks!

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