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LOVELLS RECLAIM XRRR NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

Brad Lovell reclaimed the XRRR National Championship in high flying style at the legendary RAM Off-Road Park dethroning 2008 champion Shannon Campbell. The RAM Park features the largest jumps and most demanding course on the XRRR circuit. The effort was a repeat of Roger Lovell's championship on the same course only two years ago.

The morning's round of racing featured two laps without the chance to hit the biggest jumps. Due to Brad and Roger finishing 4th and 5th (respectively) in the western series, they were forced to race one another. The situation created a challenge as Brad and Roger spot for each other, but the team took the setback in stride. "During the first run I got pretty worked up and was really hard on the truck," Brad recalls, "I hit the same hole on both laps and was worried I hurt the suspension. I was surprised but everything held." Brad's times were among the fastest as were Roger's. Even on the more technical course, Roger finished only a couple seconds behind his brother. Half way through regular racing, the brothers were sitting in 2nd and 5th.

The race course was reversed for the afternoon runs thus opening a series of jumps that clear a 15' ditch followed by a 20' rock staircase. The consequences for coming up either long or short were dire, the timing was crucial. The AMSOIL / Torchmate Fords sped head to head from the start line before Roger, with only 250 hp, was forced to work his way around the jumps. Brad was able to clear all the jumps but overshot the staircase and almost went end over end. "I was in the air and kept waiting," explained Brad, "The truck went nose down and I knew I was in trouble. I hit incredibly hard. I can't say enough about the tires and Spidertrax axles that lived through it." The massive jump can be seen on youtube:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FKFcrUDa6H8&feature=player_embedded Roger suffered a worse fate when his wheel lugs sheared off in a rock notch. He recalls, "I didn't quite realize what had happened in the rocks. I kept my foot in the gas and got out of the rocks before I realized my hopes of a win were gone."

What was a detriment to Roger ultimately gave the team an advantage. Roger could now act as a spotter and coach for Brad. The top six teams were announced and the pressure of the final round set in. #232 Brad Lovell was seated 9 seconds behind leader Rick Dermo and mere seconds ahead of the rest of the field. Brad explains, "There was not much strategy. We had three 2nd place finishes this year and came in 2nd at the national championship last year. We wanted the win. We are pretty tactical, but it was win or break for sure." Brad lined up against the same jump that nearly wrecked him earlier in the day and focused on the task at hand. With Roger's coaching Brad kept a cool head and timed the jumps correctly. The effort was far quicker than Dermo and put the Lovells in the lead. One run left, one chance to make it or break it. "I kept thinking, don't screw it up, be smart! I knew I had a few seconds to burn and concentrated on clean run. In the end, I had a smaller margin than I thought but it was good enough for a win. I took a lot of gambles today and it paid off. I am really proud of our family and team!"

The pace of the 2009 Torchmate Racing campaign has yet to slow. Brad Lovell will navigate for #7231 Bill Kunz in the Silver State 300 desert race on Sept. 26th. The team has spent weeks preparing for the race and got a great look at the course only a week ago in the team's new Ford Raptor pre-runner. More news soon!

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