

Hangtown Motocross Classic Race Report - Team MicroBilt PRBC Rancho Cordova, CA



KENNESAW, GA, May 22nd, 2017 / Did someone say, “let’s take this outside”? It’s hard to believe that after only one short weekend off after Monster Energy AMA Supercross, an FIM World Championship we’ve made the transition to “The Great Outdoors”. Round 1 of the Lucas Oil Pro Motocross series kicked off with the 49th annual running of the Hangtown Classic in Rancho Cordova, CA – just east of Sacramento. The track is known for its rough and rugged terrain, traditionally warmer temperatures, and thousands of enthusiastic fans covering every inch of the hillsides. This year did not disappoint! Fans began filling in to the General Admission and Specialty Ticket areas armed with coolers, signs, umbrellas, custom t-shirts, and even air horns, ready to get the party started before qualifying practice even began – and they were in for a treat.

MicroBilt PRBC Yoshimura Suzuki Racing is proud to have both the #606 of Ronnie Stewart and the #645 of Cheyenne Harmon on the roster for the entire Lucas Oil Pro Motocross series. In contrast to Monster Energy Supercross, the fast forty riders who qualify to race a Pro Motocross National are combined for a full forty man gate paired with not one, but two, thirty minute + 2 lap motos – usually in brutal temperatures, like the ones we witnessed this weekend. Operating at near max heart rate in the extreme heat for more than 30 minutes at a time while also navigating the demanding terrain means that it is essential that riders be in peak physical and mental condition before entering into competition. To earn a position into the “Fast Forty” is nothing short of commendable – with the top 36 qualifying directly to the Main Events and the remaining riders contesting a consolation race.

It’s almost always a toss up for the first race of a new season, especially when the break between Supercross and Motocross is so sparse, which gives riders a very limited time to test and adjust the bike to get it properly suited for battle for “The Great Outdoors”. The morning began with Ronnie Stewart and Cheyenne Harmon qualifying in 38th place and 39th place respectively. Where these positions would place our riders directly in the “Night Show” in Supercross, in Motocross they would head to the Consolation Race for one last chance to earn their gate pick come Main Event time.

Harmon and Stewart fought hard through the treacherous terrain, giving it their absolute top effort. Unfortunately, the huge list of competitors left the #645 of Cheyenne Harmon scored just barely outside of the top 40 at the end of the Consolation Race. The #606 of Stewart, however, earned himself a gate for the Main Events.

When the gate dropped on the first of the two Main Events in the 450 class, temperatures reached 90 degrees as riders prepared to battle for what would be a 35+ minute race from gate drop to checkered flag. With Cheyenne having to wait until Round 2 to try again at earning his place in the top 40, all eyes shifted to the #606 of Ronnie Stewart. In the spirit of good sportsmanship, Harmon suited up in his team pit shirt and grabbed a headset to offer extra support and encouragement to Stewart as he navigated the rugged hills of Hangtown.

Ronnie Stewart would go on to complete 15 laps, finishing in a respectable 26th place. Once the checkered flag was waving, riders would immediately take the opportunity to return to their pit area to rest and cool their core body temperature before lining up again for Moto 2. As the day progressed, temperatures continued to rise, reaching 93 degrees when the gate dropped on the second 450 class Moto. Ronnie Stewart would fight hard and ultimately finish 28th in the second moto for a 29th overall.

With such an abrupt transition from Monster Energy Supercross to Lucas Oil Pro Motocross, it is challenging for even the top riders to be 100% prepared for the first outdoor gate drop – especially considering the adjustments that need to be made to bike setup, suspension, and even racing format.

MicroBilt PRBC Yoshimura Suzuki Racing is eager to head to Round 2, the FMF Glen Helen National, taking what we learned in Round 1 and building a foundation for a great season. Ronnie Stewart and Cheyenne Harmon are ready to charge forward into the long Pro Motocross season with the goal of putting their Yoshimura Suzuki RM-Z450s into the Top 20 on a consistent basis.

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