

Motorcyclists Enter Mauna Kea 200

By Matt Kresser

Once again, the OCC motorcycle team ventured to the seemingly prehistoric slopes of the Big Island for the 15th Annual Mauna Kea 200 Enduro, May 26-27.

This is a race which pits man and motorcycle against the clock and the treacherous terrain of the ever changing Big Island.

Starting at sea level in Hilo and winding its way circuitously up to the top of Mauna Kea and back down again, the riders are faced with a wide diversity of environments.

The lower regions of the course include dense rain forests with saturated jeep and mule trails providing quick-sand like mud holes and gaping water crossings. Herein lie log jumps, rut traverses, limb duckings and the infamous Koi Pond.

After the steamy depths of the jungle, speeds increase over a section called Planter's Road. This fast section roller coasters over moss glazed rocks and shale.

Once past this section, the riders face consecutive lava crossings over fresh, jagged flows. One fall and you could be out of it.

On through the foggy elevations, the course climbs up to the crater where vegetation thins out until there is nothing but barren, wind swept and snow topped cinder cones speckled with the fallout of moonstones and over volcanic spews.

At this point, the air is cold and biting and breathing is difficult. Ironically, this is the most coveted part of the race. The majesty of The Mountain is so incredible that the race becomes insignificant. Win, lose or draw, the trip across the crater makes it all worthwhile.

The crew for this year's event had Walter Guild, Brant Ackerman, Brenton Block and Matt Kresser making the assault, while Al Serafin, Mark Kennedy, John Beaumont and Aaron Ackerman provided the backup and support.

Tiare Finney, alias "Mama Moto", a legend amongst local riders because of her pit-side prowess, surprised the troops with a finish line appearance as well.

Day one ended with Matt Kresser and Walter Guild each at 12 points and firmly in the top 10. Brant was forced to pull out because of an injury and Brenton, though completing the ride, was out of the running because of time consuming mechanical difficulties.

The speeds on day two picked up and so did the casualties. The infamous Koi Pond trail took its toll on many riders including

Walter who suffered a double-drowning and was forced to play catch up for the remainder of the race. His point total was 44, good enough for fourth in his division.

Matt finished with 24 points and a ninth overall standing. The competition this year

was stronger than ever with 125 entrants. Riders from all over the world were entered, making it a truly international event. Word has it that ESPN will cover the event next year, and you can bet that OCC will be there, ready to go.



Team OCC at the starting line—Walter Guild, Matt Kresser, Brant Ackerman.



The OCC Motorcycle Team include front, Matt Kresser, Brant Ackerman, Tiare Finney, Walter Guild. Back, Brenton Block, Al Serafin, Mark Kennedy and Aaron Ackerman.