

1993

CORDUROY!

Blair Sharpless wins the Cord a seventh time!

by Warren Thaxter

Bobcaygen, Ontario, Canada 9/19/93

Blair Sharpless, Brooklyn, Ontario (Suz) has won the Corduroy Enduro for an unprecedented seventh time. This combined with the three wins by his father Bill, brings the total of Sharpless names on the Premier Log Trophy to ten. This exceeds the nine wins by the notorious Penton clan from Lorain Ohio, John, Jack, Jeff and Tom. This seemed to be a satisfying accomplishment to Blair as he graciously accepted the win on September 19 at Bobcaygen, Ontario. Blair explained that he is giving up competition and will resign himself to working on the Corduroy for the next few years.

During the years between 1957 and 1980, the Corduroy was dominated by Americans with names such as Penton, Scirpo, Hulse, Markowitz, Cooper and Krehbiel. Jamie Stevens turned the trend around in 1981 and our own Canadian riders took over. Maybe I should say, our own "rider" took over. That rider being Blair Sharpless with his seven wins since 1983.

Two more Americans, Brian Mull and Drew Smith, snuck in and won in '85 and '86. However, these people always brought the trophy back! This brings us to last year's winner, Kevin Hines. Kevin won the event last year, took the log and hasn't been heard from since! Maybe after Blair's dazzling performance's in the U.S. hare scramble series (presently sixth overall), Kevin did not want to compete heads-up.

Maybe Kevin didn't understand the rules. The rules being that an American may win, but you gotta bring the trophy back! If you grow attached to the "log", you have to win it again. John Penton, five time winner, could explain how this works. Skipper say's Hines is just a "wanker" anyway, maybe he's right. At any rate the RCMP have been notified and they should be at Kevins door any day to reclaim this national artifact. (Since this has been written, Hines relented and mailed back the precious log, which is now back in Canadian hands)

The Corduroy was a joint effort this year,

in as much as two clubs shared the organizational responsibilities. The British Empire Motor Club president, Art Mosley said, "Without Steel City's involvement this year the Cord probably wouldn't have happened."

BEMC has organized the Corduroy since 1953 but this club has not recruited young members through the years, and the age of

the rock gardens were just as God had created them. Lots and lots of square edged rock, flat rock shelves with step-up and step-down ledges. Some ledges were 4 foot to 6 foot steps. Many of the ledges had crevices and groves, some groves at right angles and some parallel to the direction of travel. To say this trail required concentration, would be an understatement. A bottle neck developed when some cross timbers on a rickety bridge slid out leaving gaping holes and butt end logs sticking up. Some impatient riders opted for the swamp on the left, a possible but somewhat difficult choice as this winded writer can attest.

Alan Randt from Lansing Michigan, had his hopes for a top finish squashed when he derailed a chain and was effectively out of the event by check four. "I'm just having fun now", he said.

The scores in this section were double digit, the best being 11 as posted by Aylmers, Craig Kennedy on a Honda, Glen Buchanan of Toronto (Yam), and Sharpless. Gas number two was exactly the same as Gas number one, with another 10 minutes of free time to catch our breath and grab a drink. The Super Veterans and Novice riders, having had to lay over for 90 minutes, now joined the fray again.

The final section of the day was the Galway Trail in reverse to what we had ridden first thing in the morning. Fifty riders burned this section, (anxious to finish?) and very few of the remaining riders bettered their morning's score on this 18 kilometer trail. The final check at the start/finish was a surprise only to a few Junior and Novice riders. Riders with more experience remembered earlier Cords with final checks and impounds at the end of the day, and therefore returned on time.

The final scores at the end of the day had Glen with 14 points, Kennedy, Matt Spigelmyre (Petersburg, PA), and Blair all with 15 points. Blair had carded an early at check five and protested this afterward. The outcome was that the check crew admitted that they had made a mistake and Blair's score was adjusted accordingly, giving him the lead at the end of the first day with 13 points.



Blair Sharpless with his first Cord overall log, won in 1983. This will be the last year for Blair, since he officially announced his retirement following the event.

the active members has risen at the same rate as the event itself. Steel City on the other hand, although well stocked with "Older Fellows", has been very active in recruiting new and young members. Even though Larry Bastedo, who's age qualifies him for Super Veteran, (50+) was the chairman of the event, he had lots of young lions he could send out to do the actual work.

DAY ONE

The focal point of the day was the Buckhorn River Trail, an 18 kilometer stretch of meanness that had never been used by the Cord before. I remember riding this trail on a snowmobile. It was rough, tough and tight. Guess what? Without snow it was still rough, tough and tight. Nonetheless this is the stuff enduros are made of. Did I say rocky? This trail has never had any truck traffic, which tends to flip the toaster size rocks to one side, so

DAY 2

Sunday morning's start, at 9:00 am, was three hours earlier than day one. It was a lovely morning with sunshine and clear skies but quite cool, and left riders wondering whether to wear a jacket or vest.

The speed average was again 42 KPH and the first trail was grass covered and had some dirt between the rocks. Good stuff! The next section was new. A ski trail somewhere near Burnt River. This section was unique in that riders entering the section had to pass the check for the riders coming out.

This trail was similar to the difficult trail on day one, with a couple of bottlenecks to make things interesting. The best scores for this section were four points for Spigelmyer, Buchanan and Sharpless. Kennedy missed the flip and took a five, and this would effectively take him out of the hunt for the top spot.

After the gas stop the Seniors, Experts and Masters checked into the Miserable Lake Trail. Many riders later said it could have been called a "miserable trail by a lake." Four riders carded six points here but the overall positions remained unchanged. The "old guys" and Juniors had a layover and missed this section. Damn!

Confusing arrows seemed to direct riders into a parking lot at the start of the Green Mountain Trail and check six, when in fact the trail entrance and check were before

the parking lot. Rider attention was focused on arriving at the parking lot at the top of the minute and were actually early when they saw the check on the left, 100 feet short of the parking lot. An overzealous check crew began taking riders time as they turned around on the road. The outcome; 40 riders were marked early, 27 of which were Masters, Experts and Seniors. Were all these experienced riders trying to sneak in early? Craig, Matt and Blair each lost one point in the following section.

The balance of the ride was a repeat of day one and all within the Five Points system, and finishing on the Galway Trail which was also the return on day one.

Matt Spigelmyer was the only American to crack the top ten. The two Veteran classes were dominated by Americans, Ed Copp, State College, PA, and Bob Thompson of Candor, NY. Out of the seven or eight Quebec riders entered, only

J. Pierre Favreau, Mt. Rolland Que, managed a Class win, in the 200 Senior class.

Special congratulations to Toni Sharpless. Barely one year after being diagnosed with throat cancer she has ridden the Corduroy, finished and won the Novice class and collected her first Corduroy Log.

The White Trophy which goes to the top Junior was won by OCMC's Jeff Bone on a 200 KDX. Canadians Buchanan, Kennedy and Sharpless won the Can-Am trophy, which goes to the highest placed three riders Canadian or American, respectively. □

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