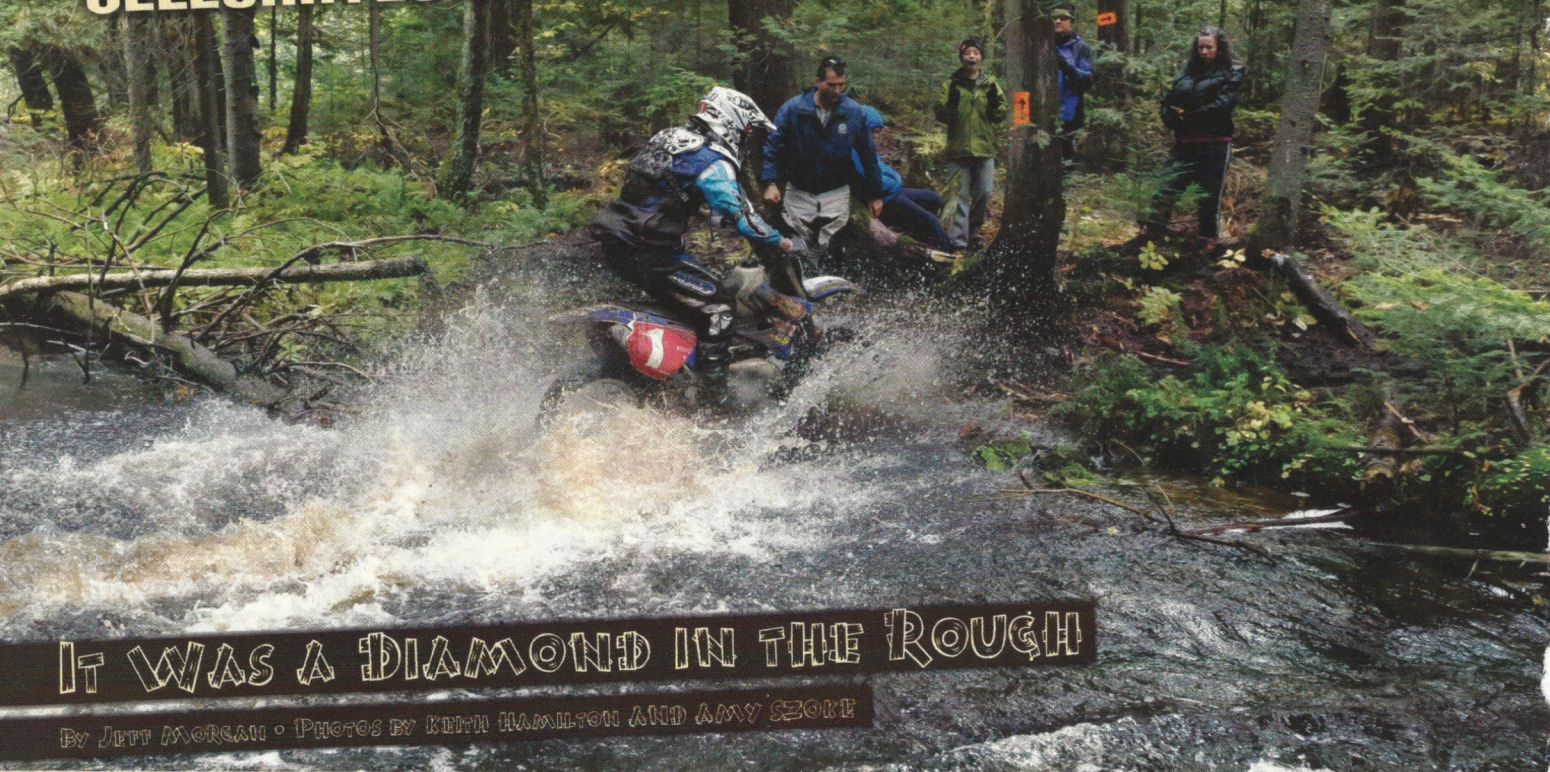
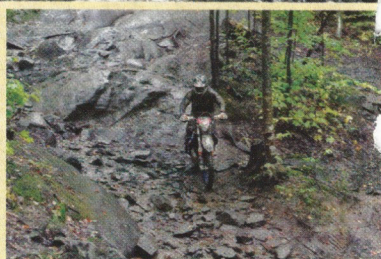
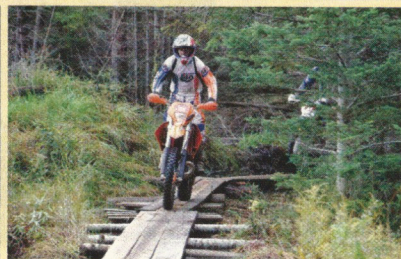
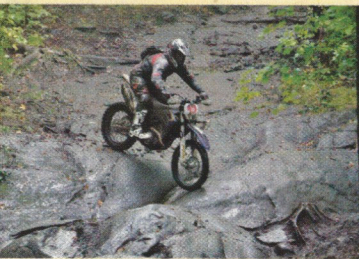


# THE CORDUROY CELEBRATES ITS DIAMOND ANNIVERSARY



## IT WAS A DIAMOND IN THE ROUGH

By JEFF MORCAN • PHOTOS BY KEITH HAMILTON AND AMY SZOKE



**S**ixty years is an accomplishment in anything, from anniversaries to birthdays and 2013 marked the 60th running of the Corduroy Enduro and the second year of it being a three day event for the Pro riders. This year was also the start of a new era with Sherco Canada signing on as the title sponsor, making it the Sherco Canada Corduroy Enduro.

Mother Nature does have a way of conspiring against off-road motorcycle events and after 60 years the Corduroy does have a history of battling with Mother Nature. And often times she gets the best of many riders. The middle of September can be a questionable time for weather in southern Ontario, unfortunately this mystery was solved on Friday night and all day Saturday with an incredible amount of rain.

The weather was not the only challenge that faced the Corduroy this year, thanks to an unexpected visit from a particularly unfriendly OPP officer on the Friday of the race. This visit caused the organizers to creatively reroute some sections of the Cord to keep the riders off of the rural roads in the area. This is in spite of the fact that the organizers had received permission from the four townships that the Cord goes through.

Aside from the inconvenience that the OPP caused on Friday, the conditions were almost perfect. A wet summer of 2013 provided the Friday racers with slightly wetter than normal conditions but still made for some great racing, and the top several riders kept things close throughout the day. As has been the case in recent years, Barry Ferguson created an endurocross course that was to be used over the course of the weekend. To end Friday's racing the Pros were pitted against one another in three motos on the endurocross track that saw four racers go head to head. This created some very exciting racing for the fans that came to the Gooderham Community Centre to watch.

At the end of the first day perennial favourite and relatively local boy Brian "Wojo" Wojnarowski sat in first place and was sitting in a prime position for his first win at the Corduroy. He would be in tough though when the racing got started on Saturday morning going up against Kinmount local, Aaron Wilkens and the two Sherco riders, Canadian Superbike champ Jordan Szoke, and New England enduro champ Jeff Melik.

The biggest adversary that all the riders would face on Saturday was the weather. Torrential rains that started Friday evening went



(Opposite main) Brian "Wojo" Wojnarowski finally got to put his name on the famous Corduroy log.

straight through the night and all the following day. With a total of 43.6 mm of rain falling in the 24 hour period riders were in for a challenge. This is a formidable amount of rain at the best of times, but when you add it to the already saturated ground from the wet summer you get a massive amount of water and very soft ground.

Every trail was drenched in water with some 'puddles' being up to the seat of a full sized bike and the trails were like riding on grease once the early minute riders went through. For many riders the downfall of Saturday was the gully on the huntcamp trail. This gully is not particularly bad on a good day, but once you add in the rain that fell it became a blackhole that sucked in everyone that went near. Bikes and riders were littered all over the upside of the valley and a lineup of hesitant riders filled the downside of the valley waiting for their turn to attempt the greasy hill.

Even for a rider as skilled as Wojo the hunt camp trail made an impression. "On Saturday when we did that huntcamp trail," said Wojo, "I got to that ravine and I couldn't even tell you exactly what it looks like because I did not stop, I bounced off dudes I was cursing and swearing for them to get out of the way and look out and blasted through it. For about five minutes after I got to the top I wasn't even thinking about the test, I was thinking, 'how are they going to get all those dudes out of there?' I thought they were in there for the long haul."

Most riders relied on the kindness of strangers to get them up the hill and by the time they were back up and on the trail most of their energy was spent. Saturday proved to be a tough day for many riders with copious amounts houring out, but Sunday was to be a new day.

With the rain finally stopping overnight Sunday was looking to be a nice day as far as the weather

was concerned, but the damage had been done. The organizers were forced to shorten Sunday's course to address the concerns with the weather and the ongoing challenges that the OPP was presenting. What is usually the longest day of the Corduroy turned out to be a short one, of only about 70 km as opposed to the usual 150 plus.

Don't be mistaken in thinking that it was going to be an easy day though. Sunday turned out to be very difficult and claimed as many DNFs as Saturday. With the ground being as soft as it was from the heavy rain, portions of the trail deteriorated and left some deep holes that could easily trap you if you chose the wrong line.

This year proved to be one of the toughest Corduroys, at the very least in recent memory, and the level of DNFs worked to prove that. One rider seemed to be almost unaffected by everything and that was Wojo, who managed to take his first victory.

"I definitely thought it was one of the more fun events that I got to do all year," said Wojo. "Obviously it was wet and muddy and all that and I really enjoyed it because we don't really get too many challenging events like that. I am a big fan of that Friday deal myself, I like that you get to ride that extra day."

When asked about what it was like to win the Cord after a few tries Wojo said, "That was really neat. It was kind of weird on the Sunday because I had a bit of a lead going into it and I didn't really want to screw up and put it into a big mud hole and wreck it. I wouldn't say I took it easy, but I really rode using my head on the Sunday, to try and win it. It was one of those races that everything seemed to work out well for me, you know. Sometimes it happens and sometimes it feels like you are beating your head against the wall. It was a lot of fun, especially with it being so tough.

"The biggest surprise of the weekend was when

## RESULTS

### Pro

1. Brian Wojnarowski
2. Aaron Wilkins
3. Jeff Melik

### Expert

1. Hugo Gravel
2. Barry Armstrong
3. Lee Hill

### Vet A

1. Steve Ooman
2. Terry Schaubel
3. Denis Aumais

### Novice A

1. Ben Roth
2. Mark Graham
3. Jim Bolle

### Novice B

1. Aaron Gibson
2. Rob Tobin
3. Theo Lepley

### Novice C

1. Tanner Cowan
2. Drew Miller
3. Frank Casciaro

### Intermediate

1. Andrew Millson
2. Jake Woodcock
3. Alvin Olar

### Supervet A

1. Bruce Moffatt
2. Gary Klassen
3. Wayne Brogan

### Supervet B

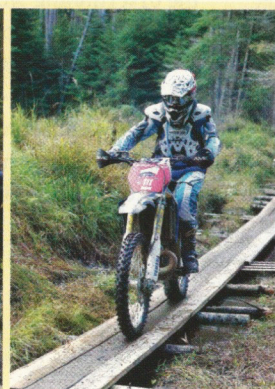
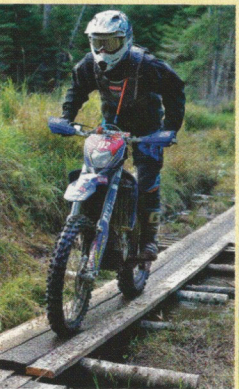
1. Hal Judd
2. Mike Blanken
3. Keith Quade

### Women B

1. Katelyn Irwin

### Vintage

1. Helmet Klassen
2. Justin Lewis





(Top) Wojo was consistently fast all weekend and fought the difficult conditions. (Right) Jordan Szoke got off the Superbike and tried the Cord; his thumb proves how tough it was. (Bottom right) Aaron Wilkens is a Corduroy area local and used that to his advantage, taking second place.



Nelson [John] came back to the pits on Saturday, "said Wojo. "I thought his bike would be completely spotless from all the crying he would have been doing."

First time Corduroy and enduro participant Jordan Szoke, put in a very respectable ride and finished in fourth position after three days. "I've never been so exhausted in my life," said Szoke. "Just finishing this event is a victory in itself. This event was so well organized and laid out, considering all the obstacles Mother Nature and the OPP brought them it was a very well organized competition."

Szoke, who is a seven time Canadian Superbike Champion and a multi-time Canadian trials champion isn't quite as familiar with the Corduroy trails, "This terrain is really tough, then you add an element of speed in there it makes the stages even tougher. When my supporter Sherco Canada brought in a new enduro bike, they asked me to showcase it in this particular event. The Cord is infamous for its brutal

punishment, so I figured it was right up my alley.

"I am so disappointed in myself," said Szoke. "I made a bunch of really big mistakes out there that cost me a ton of time. I really laid it all out there and am disappointed that I was such a small step off the podium."

With Sherco Canada being on board as the title sponsor for this year, it was appropriate that Sherco Canada's owner, Bob Billyard would be on hand to witness the madness. "Sherco Canada was honored to be part of the 60th Cord," said Billyard. "Jordan had a brilliant ride, a very special and memorable weekend for all sharing Jordan's first competitive Enduro."

It can almost be certain that the 61st running will be in better condition and the organizers are working some exciting things for next year. Keep an eye on the Corduroy Enduro website for information as it comes out. [www.corduroyenduro.ca](http://www.corduroyenduro.ca).

## Rookies: The 60th Corduroy Enduro

By Frank Wood

Jordan Szoke and I have a lot in common when one looks back to the 60th running of the Corduroy Enduro. Although we both have had a bunch of experience in our separate roles in Canadian motorcycle competition — he behind handlebars and me behind a microphone — neither one of us had filled our function at Canada's toughest off-road event. We were rookies.

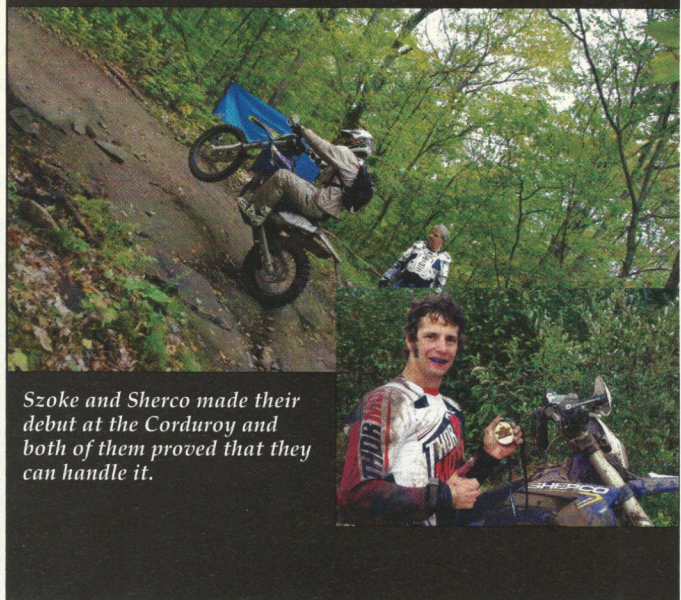
The definite highlight of the three-day weekend for me came early. On Friday after introducing each of the Pro and Expert riders, I made my way over to one of the viewing areas recommended by event organizers. It was indeed my good fortune to have arrived just in time to witness Yamaha-mounted Brian Wojnarowski (Wojo, as he is popularly known) and Sherco rider Jordan Szoke come through together. While not quite as smooth and effortless as eventual winner Wojo, Szoke was nonetheless doing an admirable job in his first competition on the Sherco. Aside from a brief stall that put him off the pace, he seemed to be mounting a good challenge. He is, after all, the nation's champion in CMA Trials competition, and that skill was drawn on at the Cord — at the end of the three day competition, Szoke finished fourth. He claimed it to be the toughest event he has ever done.

I couldn't help but wonder how his fellow enduro competitors at the Cord would do against Szoke on his home turf of the Mopar Canadian Superbike series, where he is a nine-time champion and the winner of 43 Superbike races.

No doubt the weather had a direct effect on just how tough this event was on all riders. While Friday's running was held under ideal conditions, Saturday and Sunday offered rain and more rain. Some sections that would have been a huge challenge under good conditions became impossible and had to be bypassed.

The only other hitch was the OPP who were in the area enforcing insurance and street legality, the result of which was a couple of tickets to serve as warning and a shortened route.

The weather and police were unfortunate hiccups in what was otherwise a very well-organized and well-attended and historical event — the Corduroy Enduro was inducted into the Canadian Motorcycle Hall of Fame in November of 2013.



Szoke and Sherco made their debut at the Corduroy and both of them proved that they can handle it.