

RACE REPORT

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KTM in the mix at Mission

Mission, British Columbia (June 06, 2005) – KTM Canada's first official foray into the CMRC Canadian Motocross Championships, with Team KTM, kicked off at a wet and wild Mission Raceway, B.C., Sunday 5th June. For team riders Jimmy Nelson and Kris Keefer the weekend would be a tale of mixed fortunes as sheer bad luck dogged Nelson, who quickly demonstrated his pace as a title contender, while Keefer recorded a pair of solid top ten scores to kick off the 2005 MX2 West campaign.

Track conditions were perfect on Saturday as Keefer and Nelson were soon up to speed on the KTM SXF250 in practice and pumped heading into the afternoon's qualifying session.

Jimmy rocketed off the start line to pull the holeshot and take the lead but his Mission Raceway jinx was to strike quickly as he slid out in a high speed corner, bumping his head and jamming his helmet peak into his goggles! He quickly recovered to move back up from sixth to fourth at the end. Team-mate and fellow American, Kris Keefer, having being caught out in a first-turn pile-up, stormed from last to ninth at the checkered flag posting some impressive lap-times along the way.



The KTM crew might have had a bright outlook ahead of Sunday's motos but the B.C. weather thought otherwise. Torrential rain guaranteed the day would turn into a mud-fest with track conditions about as bad as they could get. Undeterred Keefer and Nelson took to the start gate for the first moto and the pair ran safely in the top ten as the first lap unfolded.

For Jimmy Nelson though that was about as good as it got as a jammed rock in the counter shaft sprocket area derailed his chain, forcing an immediate retirement with barely a lap completed. As the sole KTM rider left in the battle, Kris Keefer rode well, mastering the mud beneath him to finish a respectable tenth.



Keefer's performance was rewarded with tenth choice on the start gate for the second moto while Jimmy's 40th place would require a sublime effort to launch into a front-end fight. Nelson seized the challenge to fire himself into fifth exiting the first corner with Keefer shadowing one spot back. In a frantic battle for position Jimmy soon reeled in fourth and set his sights on Colton Facciotti for third. Two laps into the race and Jimmy was in the final podium position chasing leader Dusty Klatt and Kyle Beaton in second.

Half distance approached and Jimmy was holding onto a solid third place while Kris kept himself in the action maintaining sixth overall. Nelson's bad luck was to strike for the third and final time however as the treacherous conditions took their toll on his SXF250. With his radiators plugged with mud Jimmy's engine over heated forcing his second retirement of the day. Truly a weekend to forget for the young American.

Unlike the weather it wasn't all doom and gloom for Team KTM as Kris Keefer scored his second top-ten finish of the day, the 26-year-old once again fighting both his rivals and the track conditions to finish seventh, exiting Mission ninth overall in the standings following his 10-7 performances.

Team Manager Andy White reflected on an eventful start to the new season:

"2005's very much a learning year for Team KTM but we showed here we could run competitively with a brand new bike and finish in the top ten. I think it's fair to say the conditions caught a lot of people out but it's something we can process early in the season and strive towards better results.

Kris performed a lot better than I might have expected given he's used to the Californian sunshine. Jimmy had some bad luck but we've also identified areas where we can get him to extract more from the bike. We'll test some of those ideas during the week as we prepare for Round 2 at Nanaimo this weekend. Our hopes are high and we'll continue to push KTM towards the podium."

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