

Trials Tales



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Humiliation

If success at one's sport can be measured by level of enjoyment of that sport, then success, read enjoyment of moto-trials can only be achieved by overcoming humiliation.

Humiliation in moto-trials comes in many forms, but by and large, the fact that there will always be at least one witness (the observer), and quite likely other spectators to your struggles as you pass through or crash out of a section makes trials at times very humiliating.

It's not an easy thing to laugh off the fact that you're never quite the trials rider you think you are. I dare say even our top riders are faced with this very point quite often. That being said it is obvious top riders have "crashed" through their humiliation barrier so to speak. The fear of humiliation makes people not challenge themselves. But, without a challenge can one really say that the sport is enjoyable?

So what is this humiliation barrier that we all must face down?

It is the humiliation that:

- The dreaded "warm up tumble" occurs as you limber up for the first section, having you spitting dirt even before joining the queue for Section 1 ... and in front of a goodly portion of the spectators.
- We can't start the damn bike after shutting down for a short wait at the section gate.
- Then we stall with the front wheel just past the start gate.
- Or we get half way through the first section before realising at that moment when the engine goes *phutt*, that we didn't turn the fuel tap on.
- With that big crowd watching, you make the first easy turn only to be upended by a small stick lying diagonally across our path.
- A rear wheel spin actually throws you off the bike at half a kilometer per hour.
- A wheely to show off while heading to the next section becomes a "wheely" good crash.
- You rip your flash new pants going wide and into the briars, exposing your old battered undies to the wide world.
- Speaking of new pants, a new set of riding gear sets you up for humiliation, as any fall will be eagerly anticipated by any within eyeshot.
- A quick jab on the brakes at an otherwise innocuous part of the section puts you cleanly over the bars.
- Especially dreaded is the breaking of the helmet peak in the above fall. *Nothing looks dorkier than a peakless helmet.*
- After a long and tortuous section walk and dissection of your now preferred line you five out at the first obstacle.
- You do again on the second lap.
- You do it again on the third lap and so on...
- You clean a section at least until the very last, crashing nose first over the end gate.
- You utter these fateful words to another novice rider before setting off: *Now watch my line.*
- You fail to notice that the section tapes have wound around your rear wheel and you head to the next section trailing 100 meters of pink tape and 10 strident officials.
- A steep climb brings humiliation to many, especially the up and over wheel stand, followed by the end over end tumble back to the bottom of the slope.
- Inevitably you will face plant into the dust right in the section with the most spectators. **This is a right of passage in the trials world.**

There is an uncountable myriad of ways in which to humiliate you on any given day out at moto-trials. But one must get up, dust off and ride off with a smile. In order to become a true trial rider you must overcome the humiliation barrier and thus achieve true enlightenment. With that enlightenment comes true enjoyment of our sport. *At least, that is what I keep telling myself because all of the above has happened to me.*