



SXQ&A

WHAT IS SUPERCROSS?

Monster Energy® AMA Supercross, an FIM World Championship, is an off-road motorcycle racing competition, produced inside a stadium that seats no less than 35,000 fans, where dirt is brought in and sculpted using construction equipment. Widely regarded as the king of extreme sports, AMA Supercross is considered the NASCAR of motocross. Some of the world's greatest athletes compete in what has been described as the most physically demanding sport in existence.

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SUPERCROSS, ARENACROSS AND MOTOCROSS?

Motocross is an off-road motorcycle race run on natural terrain, with few man-made obstacles. Unlike motocross, supercross can be viewed from every seat in the house. Arenacross, like supercross, competes on a man-made surface, but the stadiums and tracks are on a much smaller scale. The riders competing in arenacross events and Monster Energy® Supercross attract top-level racers from an international pool of talent.

HOW LONG IS A SUPERCROSS SEASON?

In 2009, Monster Energy® Supercross will host 17 races, starting in Anaheim, Calif., January 3rd, and ends in Las Vegas on May 2nd.

WHAT DO ALL THOSE ABBREVIATIONS STAND FOR?

This type of motorcycle racing carries a number of abbreviations. "SX" is widely used to represent the sport of supercross, "MX" for motocross, "AX" for arenacross, "FMX" for freestyle motocross, etc. The two racing classes will now be known as AMA Supercross (for 250cc two-stroke and 450cc four-stroke machinery) and AMA Supercross Lites (for 125cc two-stroke and 250cc four-stroke equipment).

WHICH MOTORCYCLE MANUFACTURERS PARTICIPATE?

Like NASCAR's "big four," supercross has its "big five" major manufacturers on the track. Honda, Kawasaki, KTM, Suzuki and Yamaha all field teams for each race.

HOW DIFFERENT ARE THE BIKES THEY RACE FROM THE ONES I CAN BUY?

Supercross motorcycles may look the same as the ones on the showroom floor, but the similarities end there. Completely "tricked-out" supercross bikes cost as much as \$80,000 and are built from the ground up with custom components. The average fan can buy the same model motorcycle with factory standard parts for less than \$10,000 at a local dealership.

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE MOTORCYCLES USED IN COMPETITION?

The 250cc two-stroke and 450cc four-stroke is heavier and faster than the 125cc two-stroke and 250cc four-stroke. Faster in the straight-aways and quicker out of the turns, the 250cc and 450cc four stroke bikes are the formidable bikes in each respective class.

WHO ARE THE STARS OF SUPERCROSS?

Reigning AMA Supercross class champion Chad Reed, former AMA Supercross class champion James Stewart, Ryan Villopoto and Ryan Dungey are some of the most recognizable names in the sport. Stewart became the first African-American to win a supercross title in 2003. His accomplishments have helped bring national media attention to the sport of supercross.

HOW OLD ARE SUPERCROSS RIDERS?

Many of the top riders are between the ages of 18-21, with professional eligibility at age 16. The average supercross rider is 25 years old, with a career span that can last until their early 30s.

HOW DO I FIND MORE INFORMATION ON SUPERCROSS STARS?

The official website of Monster Energy® Supercross, www.SupercrossOnline.com.

HOW CAN I GET STARTED IN SUPERCROSS RACING?

Most young riders get started at the local level, training on nearby tracks to hone their racing skills. The majority of the racers competing on the Monster Energy® Supercross tour enjoyed success on the highly competitive amateur championship circuit, which includes the culminating Loretta Lynn's Amateur National Championship.

HOW FAST DO THE RIDERS GO? HOW HIGH DO THEY JUMP?

Speeds vary depending on the track, but you can expect to see competitors going in excess of 60 mph at a typical supercross race. Riders soar as far as 70 feet in distance, while flying as high as a three-story building off jumps called "triples."

HOW MUCH DIRT IS NEEDED TO BUILD A SUPERCROSS TRACK, AND WHERE DOES IT COME FROM?

Dirt Wurx, the official track builders of Monster Energy® Supercross, brings in roughly 500 truckloads of dirt for each contest, which equals approximately 1.5 million pounds. It takes a crew of seven men with construction equipment about three days to build the course. The series owns dirt in almost every city it visits. The soil is stored year-round and used for various motorsports events, including Monster Jam®.

WHAT KIND OF SAFETY EQUIPMENT DO THE RIDERS USE?

All supercross riders are required to wear safety equipment, including helmets, racing pants, boots, gloves and goggles. Many also use chest protectors, shoulder pads and kidney belts for added protection. At the forefront of racing development is safety technology, including neck braces to prevent spinal cord injuries.

HOW MANY RIDERS COMPETE DURING A SUPERCROSS EVENT?

Monster Energy® Supercross races sometimes have more than 150 riders vying for a spot in the finals. Qualifying heats are held throughout the day, whittling the field down to 42 riders for the final two races. The AMA Supercross class main event features 20 riders, while the Lites finale showcases 22.

HOW LONG ARE THE RACES?

Final races for the AMA Supercross class run 20 laps and the Lites go 15, but a supercross event begins well before rider introductions in the early evening. Practice laps and qualifying heats begin in the afternoon, with other exciting activities, such as autograph sessions and open paddock areas at most venues going on throughout the day.

HOW DOES THE POINTS SYSTEM WORK?

Points are only awarded in the event finals of the Lites class and Supercross class. The top finisher receives 25 pts, with 22 for second, 20 for third, 18 for fourth and 16 for fifth. Sixth place receives 15 points, with each place below receiving one less.

CAN I SEE SUPERCROSS ON TELEVISION?

In 2009, supercross boasts its most impressive television package ever, with season long, next-day broadcasts on SPEED and CBS Sports. CBS Sports will air seven races, a season preview show and a season recap show. SPEED will open the season with a LIVE broadcast from Angel's Stadium in Anaheim, Calif., on January 3rd.

HOW MANY FANS ATTEND THE RACES?

More than 800,000 fans attend Monster Energy® Supercross each year. Some events even out-draw the home NFL team on its own turf.

IS IT EXPENSIVE TO ATTEND A SUPERCROSS RACE?

Supercross is an extremely affordable, fan-friendly and family-oriented event. Fans can purchase a ticket to a Monster Energy® Supercross race for as low as \$10 in most markets. Compare that to the average ticket prices for the NFL, NBA, NHL and NASCAR, which all have tickets that are more than \$100.

Photo: TONY SCAVO