

Chasing the Dream - A Privateers Chance to Shine World Super Bike Weekend May 2010 by Denny "Budman" Kobza

When the Hannspree World Superbike Series signed a deal to come to Miller Motorsports Park, Lucas Oil stepped in to help the Utah Sportbike Association with the support event with purse money that is rare in the USA. The race gives some of the top privateers in the Country a chance to shine in front of a big crowd. The track is located in Tooele, Utah just outside Salt Lake City and is surrounded by majestic natural beauty. All the riders love the track, both the top guys in the world and our Nations top privateers as well. The WSB course is fast, safe and challenging.

It also gave them a shot at winning the big money for taking home the victory with a generous purse payout below. (5K for the GTU win and 6K for GTO)

This is a story of two riders. Jimmy Wood in the GTU class (middleweight super bikes) and Chris Siglin in the GTO class (open super bikes).

Wood is a 24 year old fast boy from Southern California who is an AMA PRO flat track racer, a WERA and WMSC road racer, who is also giving AMA PRO racing a go.

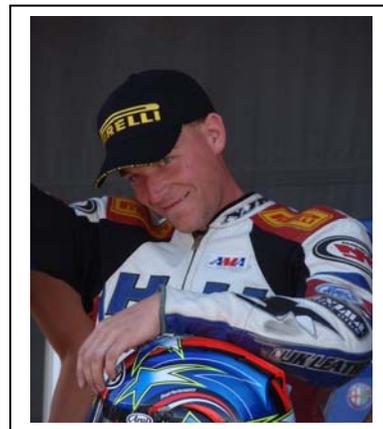
Wood is looking to make it a career in the sport and with his obvious talent he has a real shot at success in doing it. Siglin is a 29 year old veteran of runs in AMA and WERA series and AFM multiple class champion. He is focused on winning the AFM Formula Pacific Championship for the first time.



Miller Motorsports Park, Utah



Chris Siglin # 488



Jimmy Wood # 371

Siglin started riding in his early twenties and racing a little later than most fast guys, but his skill set on a race bike would lead you to think otherwise.

Wood's choice of weapon for the GTU race was his Lee Cycles Kawasaki ZX6R. Siglin would ride his Barf Racing/Pawn Moto/Boulder Motorsports Ducati 1098R*. Both riders are sponsored by CT Racing and run on Pirelli tires. *Barf is www.bayarearidersforum.com

Preperation:

Several racers took advantage of the Michelin/WERA National Sprints combined with the Pirelli/WERA West Regional Sprints presented by Lucas Oil the week before to get in some good set up and racing time. Wood was one of those taking a second in the 600 class behind Tyler Odom, who would race in the World Supersport race. While Jeremy Toye, Taylor Knapp and Gerry Signorelli were finishing one two, three in the Superbike race, Siglin was at Infineon taking a come from behind second in Formula Pacific race and a win in the Open Twins class. Siglin leads the Open Twins class and lies third in Formula Pacific, just five points off the lead. With half of the season remaining Chris chose to stay at home and make sure his seasons goals stayed intact.

The event allowed both riders a shot at showcasing their talent and their sponsors. Both made the most of it.



Hot Pit walk before GTO Race

GTU Race - Sunday May 30, 2010

Today would be race day for a Jimmy with the GTU guys kicking off the racing for the Memorial Day weekend. Chris would have a shot at bettering his 7th starting spot on the grid. Jimmy had taken full advantage of his racing at the facility the week before by taking the pole spot. Taylor Knapp on his Rider Discount Suzuki GSXR 600 and Geoff May riding his GMR Racing Suzuki 600 were upfront along with AMA regular David Anthony. The front row was followed by another 30 plus fast racers.

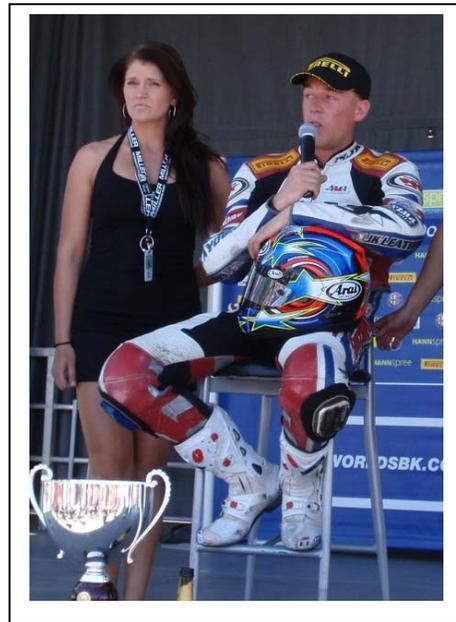
With the National Anthem sung and the warm up lap complete the lights went out and Wood pulled the hole shot. Knapp, Brant Wiwi (who also had a good day racing the week before at Miller), May and a throng of hungry privateers charged towards turn one. Wood assumed the point and managed to immediately gain a couple of bike lengths. By the time he completed lap one of the twelve, he had two seconds at start/finish. Wiwi and Anthony followed in second and third. Wood picked up another second on lap two as Knapp and May challenged for third. At the 1/2 way flags Wood had a five second lead over Knapp and May who both had worked by Anthony and Wiwi.

Knapp started to cut into Wood's lead and May was riding really hard to keep pace, but remained in touch. By lap eight Knapp had cut the gap down to three seconds and the front three started to engage some lapped traffic.

Wood got the message that Knapp was on the move and rolled out a couple of 1:54 laps that extended his lead back to 4 seconds. Knapp maintained a smaller gap over May. As the leading trio worked through traffic the gap remained the same.

A rider went down on lap 10 and it was serious enough for the race officials to put out the red flag and the race was halted.

After a few minutes the race was called final and the podium set. Wood, much to the delight of his Mother would take the big cash. She was excited and proud of her son's performance. On the podium Wood said "This will allow me to travel to the next round of the AMA races so I am stoked!!". Wood also thanked his Mom for being his Crew Chief, CT Racing for the Pirelli's and a few more people that helped his effort. No doubt this was a big win for the young man.



Wood chatting about the race

A privateers life..one race at a time.

Knapp took home a good check too and thanked his team as well. May thanked his new boss Eric Buell for letting him race in the 600 class on his own bike. Indeed Buell deserved it allowing May to gather some cash when he is getting paid to ride Buell's.

Privateers are very good at thanking those who support them and they need to be.

After a quick hoist of the trophies the guys jumped off the stage and spread the champagne love on the scrambling crowd.



Wood with Mom, CT Racing and Scott Griffin of Pirelli

Sunday's track time was over for Chris early with his qualifying practice being cut short. The GTU practice was red flagged due to a crash and that meant the GTO boys only got 8 minutes of time. The plan to switch to a qualifying tire late was frustratingly lost for Siggy. He would stay 7th on the grid based on his previous time.



Siglin got good exposure for his sponsors ... and enjoyed it too!

GTU Race - Monday May 31st, 2010

Slightly overcast weather greeted the racers. WSB race one would follow the Memorial Day opening ceremony that featured 2,010 American Flags on the infield and a F-18 fly over. Siglin was feeling better as he had knocked off two seconds of his time in morning practice and now was closer to pole man Jeremy Toye. Toye on his BMW 1000SR had been the fastest of the privateers all weekend. David Anthony on his GSXR 1000 was gridded in P-2 with Chris Peris also on a BMW, to his left. Knapp on his Riders Discount GSXR 1K was on the inside of the track completing row one. Buell mounted May was on the outside of row two with the CT Racing Suzuki of Brant Wiwi to his left. Siggy was next in P-7 and Brian Stokes, the only Honda up front, would be on the inside completing row two. Several others fast guy made up row three and four, including long time racers Jeff Stern and Dean Mizdal. Both are members of old guard of privateer racers whom I respect mucho. They too would get to show they are stillfast and enjoying the racing game.

The 30 plus rider field blasted off the line and did not complete 1/4 of a lap before the red flag flew due to a crash in turn one. The field would roll through the hot pit and wait to be re-gridded. After a few minutes the riders where sent back out to the track and the 14 lap race would now be 10. WSB has a TV schedule to keep so the shortening the race was easy to understand.

For the second time today the engines revved and the field launched towards turn one. Toye once again would go to the front and it was May who shuffled into second with Knapp, Anthony, and Peris making it a four rider pack at the front as they crossed the start/finish line for the first time. Wiwi followed about a second back, with Siglin a couple bike lengths behind. On lap two Anthony went down on the last turn and that allowed Toye and Knapp to create some separation at the front.

Both were running in the 1:51's. Peris was now behind with May working hard now in 4th. Wiwi had extended his distance on Siglin who had gapped a battle for 6th that included Ricky Corey, another AFM Formula Pacific contender, Chris Sibernhaar, Brian Stokes, Matt Cusimano and a charging Signorelli. These guys went at it the whole race.



Siggy working his 1098R
(Photo by Jimil Borillo)

Toye continued to march out front with Knapp keeping him honest, but not threatening. May was working hard and closed a bit on Peris as they came down the start straight. Siggy began closing on Wiwi and it looked like he would challenge before the race would be completed.

On the next lap Siglin shot past Wiwi at start finish and marched away, as Wiwi continued to slow with what would turned out to be a mechanical. Wiwi hit the pit lane on the next lap and rolled through obviously disappointed. Suddenly Toye was gone (crash) and Knapp came across the line with the lead for the first time. Peris now in second had May closing and starting to give him grief. A good five seconds back was Chris running alone in fourth.

The battle for 5th raged as five riders now had a shot at a solid top five. Knapp completed the last two laps in control taking the win. Peris, after great last couple of lap scrap with May came home second seven seconds back. May completed the podium with one of the best wheelies of the weekend, lofting the front on the exit onto the straight(Release Turn) and accelerating his standup on the Buell all the way down the straight. Siglin rolled home in fourth and in a last lap shootout it was Corey a well deserved fifth on his R1. Signorelli, Stokes, Siebenhaar, Stone and Cusimano were right on Corey with all crossing the line within 1.1 seconds. Dean Mizdal finished eleventh and would take home some cash as well in another day of fun racing. Knapp came home the big winner with checks in both classes and May took third matching his performance in GTU. Peris stood on the podium for the first time in second. After being interviewed they got their shot at dousing the crowd with bubbly.

Siggy seemed happy with his result, but of course was still just a little disappointed. JP with Boulder Motorsports and Alex with Fastline Cycles had put in the work during the weekend giving Chris's bikes caring attention.



GTO Podium / Peris, Knapp and May

After the race I had found out that Chris had decided to make a suspension change to try to capture the last bit of speed to run with the guys at the front and felt it was the wrong call in the end. Still he was happy. TJ Grossi one of the team's major sponsors (PawnMoto) summed it up best for me... "This was a kick ass weekend and when we get back to Thunderhill in two weeks those guys better be ready, because Siggy is starting to settle in on his Duc!"

Like a true privateer Siggy stayed at Miller for another day of practice and some fun with TJ and ride with WSB announcer Steve Martin and Jonathan Green before heading to Colorado to work with JP and Brian from Boulder to rebuild the motor.

By the way, Chris almost missed the race when TJ's truck motor blew on the way out of the Bay Area. They were saved by multi time AFM Formula Pacific Champion Dave Stanton. Stanton got the call from Siggy and brought his truck to them in Sacramento, so they could get to Miller. It takes a lot of help for the privateer to chase the dream and without that, most would not get the chance shine.

Siglin surround by the Team

