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Local motorcycle racer claims historic double class championships

Written By BRIAN LOCKHART

A local motorcycle racer has achieved a historic milestone in racing.

Cole Alexander competed in the Bridgestone Canadian Superbike Championship Series and claimed two championships at the Canadian Tire Motorsport Park in Bowmanville on Sunday, Aug. 10.

Cole is one of only four riders in the history of the series to claim a championship in both the EBC Brakes Amateur Supersport 600cc and AIM Insurance Amateur Superbike 1000cc classes, which he did in the same day.

The season took him from Edmonton, Alberta, in the west to Shubenacadie, Nova Scotia, with two rounds of racing in Ontario.

Motorcycle road races take place on an enclosed circuit, with a paved surface, and high-performance motorcycles.

The 18-year-old racer, who lives just outside Shelburne in Amaranth, got his start riding when he was just three years old, on a dirt bike. He started riding road bikes at age 15 and turned to racing when he was 16.

?Me and my dad used to watch road racing on TV when I was a kid and it was always interesting to me,? Cole explained. ?I wanted to get started in it and he found a program for me in Grand Bend three years ago. It's a course and they give you a bike and you work with coaches. They teach you how to ride on the track. It's an introduction to it all. Then I got my race license.?

Cole races mostly at the regional level on the track at Grand Bend.

?My first year was nothing special,? he said of his start in racing competitively. ?I slowly got faster as the season went on. The first year was just about going out and having fun and learning the bike.?

A typical race features 15 to 20 riders, so every competitor has to concentrate on what they are doing on the track to succeed.

Most races are around 15 laps, with each lap taking around 1.5 minutes.

Cole rides a Suzuki GSX R750 ? a popular motorcycle for the class he rides in.

To qualify for the races in Bowmanville, a rider must register and then complete a lap within a certain time compared to the faster riders on the track for that race. This ensures that riders will be competitive and can ride the circuit safely.

?I got first place in qualifying so I set the pace for the race,? Cole explained.

Races get underway with a standing start. Racers line up, and when the flag drops, they roar into action.

?The adrenaline is pretty crazy, when you're sitting there on the grid ? it's like the calm before the storm,? Cole said.

Cole raced in the Super Sport and Super Bike classes.

?Super Sport is for 600cc bikes, and the Super Bike is for the 1000cc bikes,? Cole explained. ?I race both of them on a 750.?

When he races the lower 600cc class, his motorcycle is ?de-tuned' so it puts on the same power as the other motorcycles on the track.

?The race was good. I knew I had to win on Saturday just based on how the championship points work,? Cole summed up about the final races. ?I put my head down, I got a new lap record. That made my job on Sunday a little easier. I just had to get second place to get the championship. Both were 14-lap races.?

Cole's Dad, Brian, holds up a sign as Cole passes on the track so he knows what lap he is on. When you're racing at high speed, you concentrate on what you are doing and let someone else count laps for you.

The Canadian motorcycle racing scene doesn't really have the money involved to make it a full-time professional sport in Canada, so Cole is hoping to be involved in some races in the U.S. in the future.

The Canadian Superbike Championship called Cole's wins ?historic? as he is in a small elite group of riders who have won both championships.