

AMA FLAT TRACK: Coolbeth on a Mission

Written by: Dave Hoenig Greenville, OH – 7/22/2007

Harley-Davidson / Screamin' Eagle teammates Kenny Coolbeth and Jared Mees are waging a two-man war in the 2007 AMA [Ford](#) Quality Checked Flat Track Championship and the battle raged on Saturday night at the third annual Annie Oakley Shootout at the Darke County Fairgrounds' cushion half mile in Greenville, OH.

In the 25-lap Main event, defending Grand National Champion Kenny Coolbeth pushed his [Harley-Davidson](#) Motor Company / Screamin' Eagle-backed XR-750 into the lead on lap 4 and never looked back. Current points leader Jared Mees moved his Blue Springs Screamin' Eagle Harley-Davidson into second on lap 12, but could not catch Coolbeth.

Not known for his cushion track skills, Coolbeth had not been overly impressive all night as he qualified sixth then finished second in his heat to Pro Honda Oils / Total [Control](#) Racing's Nick Cummings. But when the National rolled around Coolbeth and his Harley-Davidson team had the bike and rider dialed in. Coolbeth held nearly a five-second lead at the end of the 25-lap race.

Mees on the other hand had been fast all night, posting the second fastest qualifying time before winning the second heat race. In perhaps the biggest surprise of the night Dan Gedeon slide his Ed Fatzinger / KK Supply / DZR Triumph to fast qualifying time. A poor start in his heat forced Gedeon to settle for a third and a second row start for the National. He was still able to work his way into a career best ninth-place finish.

In the first two years of the Annie Oakley race Joe Kopp prevailed and the Screamin' Eagle / Latus Harley-Davidson backed rider was looking to make it three in a row as he jumped into the lead off the start with the American [Suzuki](#) / Parts Unlimited backed Jake Johnson in second over Coolbeth American Suzuki / Parts Unlimited's JR Schnabel, Mees, Jack Daniels Whisky / Glen's Auto Body's Kevin Varnes, Memphis Shades / Yamaha's Sammy Halbert, Cummings and KK Supply / Las Vegas Harley-Davidson / Schaeffer's Harley-Davidson's Geo Roeder.

As Coolbeth quickly knifed his way to the front Kopp and Mees renewed their battle from last year, only this time it was for second. Mees was able to squeeze by on lap twelve and Johnson also knocked Kopp back one more position two laps later. Kopp then had his hands full as the other Suzuki; JR Schnabel was all over him. Kopp was able to hold Schnabel off with Varnes finishing a lonely sixth.

Moroney's Harley-Davidson / Screamin' Eagle's Bryan Smith could have

received both the “Hard Luck” and “Hard [Charger](#)” awards if such were presented. After setting fourth fastest qualifying time Smith broke in his heat and was forced to a backup bike for his semi, which he won. Starting on the third row for the National, Smith still worked his way up to a seventh-place finish.

Ohio’s favorite son, Geo Roeder, finished eighth over upstart Gedeon and his Triumph. Cummings slipped back to tenth.

This marked the second time this year that five different brands of [motorcycles](#) were represented in the main as the Lloyd Brothers Motorsports / Aprilia USA’s Henry Wiles made the main after taking a couple of weeks off to road race.

Mees points lead continues to shrink as Coolbeth has closed the deficit to five points. Jake Johnson sits in third, but is 31 points back