



Pushing for the top

New bike, new class and still charging

By Jeff Morgan

*Photos by Suzanne Howie and
courtesy Honda Canada*

In last year's inaugural season for the Canadian Enduro Championship, some riders got plenty of attention, while others quietly slipped under the radar and just went fast. It could be said that Jason Schrage fit into the latter category.

Schrage, the E3 winner from last year's CEC is on a new bike, in a new class and could easily be the guy on the top of the pile at the end of 2010.

With most of the focus on his former team-mate Bobby Prochnau, Schrage was often the second fastest rider on the course, usually finishing very close to Prochnau. This lack of attention may have been caused by his entry in the slightly popular E3 class, but Schrage will be making the move to the so-called premier class, E2, for the 2010 season.

How has the Honda been for you this year?

It has been great so far. It is starting good and I love that four-stroke power; it goes straight and that is what is so nice about it. I wasn't having any trouble with my KTM but I was ready to switch back to a four-stroke and not have the twitchy two-stroke bike, let me tell you.

So you prefer the smoother power of the four-stroke?

Yeah, it just puts the power to the ground and it is not skipping all over the place all the time and I am not as tired. It is a pretty forgiving motor on that bike [the KTM 300XC] but the two-stroke just skips around. Once you get in the powerband the rear wheel just breaks loose and wants to go. That four-stroke is nice, it just sticks to the ground and wants to go straight.

So it was an easy switch over for you?

Yeah it was really easy. I used to race

Hondas a while ago, so going back to the Honda 450 was quite easy.

Have much have you actually changed on your bike, compared to the stock model?

I have put a flywheel weight in it and a Rekluse clutch in it as well and that was huge. I have a Q4 silencer in it, so I think that takes the kick out of it a bit as well. So I did those three things and it took the initial kick out of the bike and made it more manageable. It still makes a lot of power, but it is not as aggressive when it comes on. I am glad I did those three things to it because the power is still there, but it doesn't snap on and rip you off the back of the bike.

I presume you did the suspension as well?

Actually I didn't, I never did with my Hondas before, and then when I got on the KTM's linkless suspension I did it then because I could never get rid of that twitch



Schrage was happy with his KTM two-stroke last year, but has enjoyed the return to the Honda four-stroke.

and now I am back to full stock.

It has been great. It's nice because when we go practice on the motocross track I just click the clickers back up and when I come back home and ride the woods I just click them back out and I am good. I don't know whether it is the four-stroke power or the linkage suspension. When I go in the bush I can go full soft and still be able to ride it when I go to the track.

If you get suspension work done they kind of tell you that you have to have two bikes, one for the track and one for the trail, you can't really have the best of both worlds.

Have your preparations changed at all for this season now that you know what the CEC is all about?

I kind of switched up my riding. The special test format is more of a motocross style, where you are all out for a short burst of time. So I have been doing some sprint type riding to change it up and get used to that kind of format. And then just working out and running a lot.

I still do local races that are two-and-a-half hours long, but I have been preparing

more for the sprint type. I definitely have switched it up.

Do you find that the cross country type races throw you off a bit for your training?

It still gives you your endurance, which is good. I still need to be able to ride for a full day, but it is a change for sure. When you ride a cross country, it is all about pac-

ing yourself and riding at a certain level for three hours, where this is all about lasting for 10 minutes going all out. It is different, but I think I need to cross train so I can go fast, but still last all day.

Last year going into the CEC did you know what to expect or was it a totally new experience for you?

Well, it actually wasn't a totally new experience because I did the ISDE in Chile and I did the World Enduros when they went to New York and Parry Sound, so I kind of had an idea of what the special test format was all about. But I guess it was all new for Canada and our format isn't identical to those races, but I was on to the idea of what it was all about.

Was the level of competition what you expected?

Actually it was. I always knew that there were awesome riders in Canada and it was nice to put us all together. Going in I was pretty intimidated thinking about what we were going to face and that I would have my work cut out for me, and I did.

Will the switch to the E2 class be much of a change for you?

I don't think so because I didn't ever care about the class per se, it was more of a race of Canada's best riders and to win my class, it was more that I wanted to win the overall. I didn't really put any emphasis on the class I was in, I was always racing Bobby because I wanted to be the fastest. *IM*

