

YAMAHA R&D Team Follmer Takes Second Overall In Mark Hahn Havasu 300

The 6th Annual APBA Hot Products Mark Hahn Havasu 300 Memorial Race is now in the history books and will join it's predecessors as one of the most memorable team endurance races of all time. A year of planning and anticipation culminated in an uneventful and smooth week leading up to this years event. Everything leading up to the race went so smoothly that it seemed that either something was being overlooked or there was imminent disaster looming around the next corner, but all the unwarranted concern gave way to advance planning being all that was needed to make everything run as smoothly as it did.

Jim Russell and his DSM crew had everything set up and ready to go on Friday afternoon, so when we arrived at 6:30 AM on Saturday morning to set up our fuel pits and make ready for the race with the other competitors, the only race consideration was the weather. With overcast skies and a forecast for afternoon rain it looked like a typical Mark Hahn where everyone would have to battle all the elements and themselves to endure through to the finish of this 6 hour marathon. R&D YAMAHA Team FOLLMER entered two teams again this year with high expectations of bringing home a 1-2 finish and a pair of big trophies. Both of the Teams YAMAHA FZR's were expertly prepped for the race by R&D's Bill Chapin. The #26 FZR was piloted by the all Girl Lake Havasu local pair of Niky Goudreau and Lark Schmitt while the #2 FZR was once again piloted by Mike Follmer and Tony Beck of Walt's Motorsports.

As in years past, a 9 AM pace lap of the course was made to familiarize all the racers with the race course, the turn boats and the start finish line scoring boat that this year marked the addition of a transponder timing and scoring system named e-Timeit developed and run by Ken Johnson. Timing and scoring an event of this magnitude and length has always been a daunting task and in an effort to lead the way in the sport, the Mark Hahn planners spent many months before this years race testing out this new system and integrating it into the scoring. All of the critics of the system are now some of its greatest advocates after seeing how flawlessly it worked and the accurate lap counts and precise lap times it provided to immediately declare every position after the race.

At the conclusion of the pace lap and an opportunity to top off the fuel tanks, all the teams lined up on the beach at Crazy Horse Campground for the playing of the National Anthem and then prepared for the now legendary one minute countdown and Jim Russell shot gun blast to signal the le Mans start. Although the number of teams was a few less than expected due to the economy, it is always a sight to behold when this number of PWC's blasts off from the beach in a land rush for the first turn boat 3.5 miles out in the middle of Lake Havasu.

Niky started out on the #26 and Tony Beck was the starter on the #2 FZR and both riders got off to a good start. Tony was in 5th place at the completion of lap one and right in the middle of a great battle amongst the race leaders that would play out for the entire day. Team Follmer set up a pit strategy that had the #2 FZR coming in for fuel and a rider change after every 5 laps and the #26 FZR for fuel and a rider change after every 6 laps. Keeping to a fast and steady race pace all day long kept Team Follmer in the hunt, our crew had lightning fast pit times of 30 seconds to get the boat out of the water, fueled with 17.5 gallons of F&L Unleaded race gas and back in the water with a new rider aboard to return to the action were just short of amazing.

With five laps to go, Follmer took over the reins and set out to catch the lead Kawasaki of Victor Sheldon and Craig Warner from a solid second place position. The famous Lake Havasu wind was now at 30 MPH and the water was getting rough where conditions were taking their usual toll on all the riders and boats. I finished the race on the lead lap, back of Victor and Craig. Only two boats finished all 30 laps, and the third place finishers were two laps back of 1st and 2nd. R&D Yamaha Team Follmer/Beck finished 2nd Overall and 2nd in the Pro/Am 4 Stroke Open Class and the all girl Team of Goudreau/Schmitt finished an amazing 8th Overall and 4th in the Pro/Am 4 Stroke Open Class. Bringing R&D Yamaha Team Follmer's two FZR Waverunners both home in the top 10

The race was run in a new record 4:33:31 time which eclipsed the old record set in 2007. The rain held off until the race was over and all the crews had packed up to get ready for the big Awards Banquet. Over 300 people crammed into the Awards Banquet to celebrate a great day of racing and receive all of their awards and trophies.

Thanks again to all of the sponsors and racers for their support of this Memorial event – we have all made the memory of Mark Hahn special in the PWC Endurance Racing world!

And to all our team partners :

Yamaha Motor Corp USA Inc, R&D Performance Products, Motul Oil, Jetpilot, NGK, F&L Racing Fuel , Monster Engery, Riva, Simpson Helmets , Skat Trak, Hydro Turf, Walts Motorsports, J&E Pistons, Carillo Rods. Circuit Jet Sports.

My Team Mates Tony Beck. Niky Goudreau, Lark Schmitt