



Dartmouth motorcycle racer Terry Steeves competes on the weekend in an Atlantic series event at Atlantic Motorsport Park, near Shubenacadie. Steeves is one of the few Maritimers trying to compete in the Canadian superbike series despite financial obstacles. (Contributed)

Steeves making it work

Local motorcycle rider scraps to compete on national tour

By **MONTY MOSHER**
Sports Reporter

Terry Steeves is driving to Calgary next week for the next round in the Parts Canada Superbike Championship series.

When you live on the East Coast and don't have full factory support like two-time defending Canadian pro champion Jordan Szoke, that's just the way it has to be.

It's a case of packing up the motorcycles and driving to Alberta or not competing for the championship in the series, which makes a stop at Atlantic Motorsport Park, near Shubenacadie, in August.

Steeves, a 38-year-old management consultant from Dartmouth, is the only Maritimer to complete the full tour last year, finishing 17th in the country. It was his first year to run the entire series.

He and amateur rider Frankie Horwarth make up the Freedom Cycle Kawasaki Racing team.

They'll take Truro budding star Brian Blaauwendraat's bike with them on this trip as Blaauwendraat takes his shot at winning national top rookie.

Blaauwendraat, who has an even smaller racing enterprise than Steeves, is the 2007 Atlantic champ.

For Steeves, competing nationally is partly about pride, but also about showing the flag for the newly formed Atlantic Racing League Inc., where he is one of the principal players along with partners Andrew Murray and Malcolm Mackay. He believes he can make the effort to race in Alberta and Ontario, racers from those provinces can reciprocate later on.

"I mean it's tough, it's an uphill battle," said Steeves, a former regional amateur champ who has raced motorcycles for the past six years. "But we can certainly keep them honest. We can keep them honest at AMP. As far as competing with guys like Jordan Szoke in pro superbike, that's pretty tough."

Mackay and Murray tune the bikes and help with team logistics.

"It's not a complaint because we know what we're getting into when we jump into it, but logistically putting the whole thing together is a challenge," said Steeves. "The factory guys can

jump on the plane in Toronto on Wednesday evening and jump on the bikes on Thursday morning. I have to jump in the truck and drive."

Bedford's Don Munroe was a star in Canadian motorcycle a decade ago, winning a pair of national superbike titles in 1995 and 1997 and a string of five pro 600 crowns from 1994 to 1998.

Others, such as perennial regional champion Jeremy Burgess of Hammonds, have tried to compete since with varying degrees of success.

Knowing the odds are long, it would be just as easy to run the regional schedule.

"Our goal is to be the top privateer, the top non-factory supported team," Steeves said. "And we want to represent Atlantic Canada. The Atlantic Road Racing League is a new series at a track everybody knows and we want to let people now we expect them to come down here to race our national (round)."

He was the top privateer a year ago, at least among the Kawasaki riders. Only factory riders Szoke and Saskatoon's Brett McCormick were better.

With more than \$100,000 in costs, Steeves said he would have no shot at running the series without sponsorship.

A U.S. company attempting to make a breakthrough in Canada

has supplied a trailer and Kawasaki provides a small budget to help cover travel and motorcycle expenses. A few other local motorcycle businesses are also on board.

Some of the top Canadian teams would have budgets topping \$1 million.

"Some of the factory teams will run as many tires in one practice session as we will run in the whole weekend," said Steeves. "You're looking at \$400 for a set of tires. I'd love to have an unlimited tire budget, which is what it takes in the superbike class, but we just can't."

He said the factory riders get the best of technology and equipment, but the big companies also help the privateers when they can with some mechanical advice or a spare part.

His goal for Calgary is to be better than last year. He said that often happens with a little experience at the track.

"If we're five seconds faster, then we're battling in the top 10 and that's where the money is," he said.

Steeves was 17th in the first national round at Calabogie, Ont., last month. Truro's Andrew Dunlap was 11th, Blaauwendraat 13th, Sydney's Mark MacDonald 19th and Oakfield's Cory Canfield 20th.

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