

BY SAMMY HALBERT



THE VIEW FROM THE TOP

Hey everybody, we're about halfway into the 2011 AMA Flat Track season and I'm excited to be leading the Grand National Championship by about the same number of points as after Daytona. It's been an incredible season so far, and I feel like my team is becoming more and more solid with every race. We're consistently running up front, which is exactly what we need to do to keep the points lead and win the championship.

Memorial Day weekend we always race in Springfield, Illinois, and this year was my best Springfield ever. I finished second (by inches) at the Springfield Mile, won the Mile Dash for Cash and then finished fifth in the Springfield



TT from the back row. I can't wait to return to Springfield Labor Day weekend.

I followed Springfield up by giving the XR1200 class another try at Road America. I really wanted to do well, as I'm pretty serious about giving road racing a go sometime soon, but unfortunately, I couldn't figure out how to get the bike to be halfway stable underneath me. Looking back, I probably should've passed on the opportunity and instead raced a couple of non-National flat track events that weekend to get some testing in on the clay half-miles. I now realize I need to focus exclusively on flat track this year, as the championship is mine to lose at this point. Once I've captured the number-one plate, then I can expand my horizons to other types of motorcycle racing.

Winning the Lima Half-Mile in late June was one of the highlights of my year so far. I love cushion tracks and the huge Lima crowd really got me fired up. Traditionally, the winner of Lima buys pizzas for everyone at the bar after the race - so we placed a huge order and fed about everyone in the place. I look forward

to being the one paying the pizza man again next year!

I'm really happy with the performance of my LZ Racing-tuned XR750 this year, as we have a much faster bike than last year. After almost winning the Springfield Mile, I'm really hoping to get that elusive mile victory this season. (I've already scored Half-Mile, Short Track, and TT wins). With the cancellation of the Minnesota Mile, I'll now have three more chances on Mile tracks: Sacramento Mile at the end of this month, and then the Indy and Springfield Miles. A win at any of those tracks would be huge.

I'm also trying to improve my results at tracks where I've struggled a little in the past, like our next race at I-96 Speedway in Lake Odessa, Michigan. If I can win on slippery Half-Miles like I-96, then I'll be in great shape to win the championship. It's a



bummer there aren't many cushion racetracks on the schedule these days, as I feel like I can ride those pretty well, especially after getting the big win at Lima.

I've been totally blown away by the support I've been getting from fans this year. At races big and small, so many people stop by my pits to say hi, grab an autograph or buy a T-shirt. We've been producing lots of videos this year, so people can get to know me better and see some cool racing footage. People have been buzzing about the videos, but the biggest hit this year has got to be the coverage my girlfriend has been providing on [facebook.com/FlatTrackLive](https://www.facebook.com/FlatTrackLive), something she started this year to bring flat track to fans who can't be at every race. It's where you can find live coverage and behind the scenes reporting from all of my races, including

racing footage. Definitely something you should check out.

Finally, I've been trying to find time to relax a little bit, too. We've been playing lots of tennis lately, which is fun and great exercise. We travel on the road with racquets and balls and break them out whenever we can. After racing just about every weekend this season, I'm taking this coming weekend off and flying to Los Angeles for a mini-vacation. Looking forward to chilling on the beach and doing a whole lot of nothing. For once, it'll feel good to go slow.

You can follow me on the road to the number-one plate at twitter.com/samhalbert so make sure you check that out.

Until next time...

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