



# YAMAHA



**Race Report:** National Cross Country Rnd 1 Onga Onga

**Rider:** Paul Whibley

**Team:** Freedom Moto Yamaha

**Bike:** Yamaha YZ450 F

**Result:** 2nd



Round one of the National Cross country series was held under the Ruahine Ranges in the Hawkes Bay. It had been some time since I'd done one of these races, with a little different format than the racing in the States but a race is a race and I was looking forward to getting back to where I cut my teeth.

The La Mons style start didn't go quite to plan with a slip as I climbed on the bike, a couple kicks and I was off mid pack but quick work around the first paddock and I was up to third by the time we entered the lane way. The leader ran off the track leaving just my teammate Adrian Smith in front of me. I made a quick pass and into the lead. I held the front position for a while but wasn't keen to push the pace with plenty of hidden nasty's in the grass. Adrian retook the lead and came past along with Scott Birch. There were some pretty brave moves going on in the virgin terrain. Scott started to stretch out a bit of a gap on me as we ran down some fast laneways. The lap was completed in about 47 minutes. Two laps and then gas. I started to close in again on Scott and after the fuel stop pushed passed and into second. Adrian was on a mission and made his intentions clear. He had opened a safe gap and the fourth and last lap was completed fruitlessly trying to gain sight of him.

Overall it was a good day for the team, going One Two.

I wasn't overly impressed with the track. Parts of it were good but going 5<sup>th</sup> gear through gateways and lanes is not doing anyone any good. I'm going to have to do some more practice in these conditions to challenge Adrian.

1<sup>st</sup>: Adrian Smith

2<sup>nd</sup>: Paul Whibley

3<sup>rd</sup>: Scott Birch

Photo courtesy Andy McGechan, BikesportNZ.com

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