



Tuesday Toolbox: Nate Kanney



by: Rachel Fluharty
Tuesday September 15th, 2009

Shock Doctor KTM's Nate Kanney is one of the most confident riders in the GNCC Series, but he's had his fair share of setbacks along the way. Photographer Theresa Ortolani captured his rise to factory rider through her book *Endurance*. Kanney took a few minutes out to talk about his experiences with the book and what he hopes for the last three rounds of the series.



Photo By: Matt Ware

Kanney is the focal point of Theresa Ortolani's book *Endurance*.

overdo it. At Unadilla that changed, and I took a more proactive approach. I think that was the biggest thing, it was about me wanting to go out and get it.

I met this really nice photographer at the Unadilla MX, Theresa Ortolani, and she gives me this postcard about a book she's written and taken photographs for. I was incredibly surprised to find out that you are one of main focal points of her picture book, *Endurance*. I was about as surprised to find a picture of David Knight in his underpants in the book. How in the world did you get involved with that? Theresa is one of my best friends. She's a professional photographer. She was always doing more fashion type photography. I think she wanted to do something a little more exciting and wide standing for her portfolio. She always had the idea to do a coffee table type book of photography on racing. I was already travelling around the country racing and then she had someone to travel with and do her thing. It was sort of good for both of us.

Speaking of accidents, does the book start off with you losing your Spleen during the International Six Days Enduro? The book says you almost died. That was sort of a big event in my life, even though the book started a year or so after that. They say with spleens anything that can happen. I hear about people crawling in three days after it ruptures and some people can die after a few hours. In my case, I crashed, and ruptured my spleen. I wasn't bleeding or bruised and it just hurt a lot. When you've never had an internal injury like that you don't know what's happening. My point of view was that I was on a team, and other people were relying on me. I wanted to push through it. I thought, "I'll rest tonight and start fresh tomorrow. Just preserve and get through it." I made it 80-90 miles or something like that and I just couldn't take the pain anymore. I went to the paramedics and then they took me to the hospital. Who knows, anything could have happened I guess.



Theresa essentially followed your career from privateer to where you are now. What did it feel like getting followed basically all across the world while you were trying to make it as a rider, did it make you nervous? Not really

because we were really good friends. It was more like we were friends on a road trip together. She had her job to do and I had mine. The hardest part was posing for her camera all the time. Theresa has her idea of what's fashionable and what looks good on camera. I'm not one to say I'm

Nate, are you launching a comeback? You've had your two best races since the first round of the season. What's changed?

I guess everybody says I do better at the end of the year. Of course being home for the summer and settling into a routine, sleeping in my bed, has helped. And more time has passed since I got hurt this winter. All those things factor in. These tracks are also better for me.

How did you get hurt this winter? Well, (laughs) I got hurt more than once. I hit take off pretty hard and crashed and compressed two discs. I took two weeks off of riding, and the first time back I got cut off by a rider and crashed and reinjured those discs. The next time a vine caught my handlebar in Florida and I tore two ligaments in my shoulder and then I broke two of my toes.

I take it you aren't very lucky? No, not really. But it turned out pretty good that I was fortunate enough to race.

What went right for you at Unadilla, I know you had a bit of a home advantage and a lot of local fans, did that have a big affect? I think it was just my attitude to be more aggressive and my mentality. A lot of the races this season have been modest because of the injuries. I didn't want to



Photo By: Matt Ware

Ortolani followed Kanney through his rise to KTM factory rider.



Photo By: Matt Ware

Easily the most confident GNCC'er, Kanney has a personality like no other.

very photogenic. That was hard but it, didn't matter if I won or lost, if I was happy or sad, she wanted to take the photos no matter what situation to tell the story.

What about the other guys? Did they seem to like it? I don't think the other guys minded too much. A lot of the guys on my team, I think everyone had a lot of fun doing it. Of course, Theresa is a lot of fun as well. It's a good environment for everyone.

I think the book makes all these great points about off road riders and how incredibly hard they work. Why did you keep coming back, after all these injuries and even after losing your spleen?

I mean, it's because it's what I've been passionate about my whole life. Of course with these injuries, now I think about it. Is some other opportunity out there? But that's all I do, is to think about it. If you grow up doing something you love and get to have a dream and follow it you ignore the negative and keep pursuing.

Let's talk about the rest of the season. You're in a weird position in the point standings. With Jarrett 10 points ahead of you and Casselli more than 20 behind, which way do you think it's going to go?

I know what I want to do! All I can do is go do the best I can. It's sort of a shame, Jimmy is riding with a bad wrist and I've had some mechanical problems. Charlie is really far ahead and fourth is pretty much the best I can do. Everything is sort of going to fall into place. It doesn't matter as long as you don't win the championship than anything else. I'm focusing on getting wins and getting ready for next year.

One last question, Why do you run number 116? I don't know. When I come back from racing in Europe that's the number I got when I began racing with KTM and I wanted to stick with it. If I don't win the championship, I'd rather have a number that is associated with my name.

You can check out Theresa's book at <http://www.theresaortolani.com/endurance>



Photo By: Matt Ware

Kanney has battled everything from injury to mechanical failure.



122 Vista Del Rio Drive, Morgantown, WV 26508 | 304-284-0084
© 1999 - 2009 Racer Productions, Inc. All Rights Reserved.