

Showing the nation how “Kentucky boys ride”

By Tiffany Sokolowski

*Staff Writer & Marketing Coordinator*

Cumberland resident James-Ryan Howard might not be old enough to drive on a public street, but he can certainly run circles around fellow racers on a track. In March, Howard placed second in the KTM Jr. Supercross Challenge (KJSC) in St. Louis.

“I was so excited,” said Howard about his arrival in St. Louis, “I wanted to show them how Kentucky boys ride!”

The KJSC is a very prestigious race and over 8,000 applications were received from 7 and 8 year olds vying to be chosen to participate in the race. The Sportminicycle event created by KTM in the mid-90s as a high-quality intermission exhibition held at Supercross stadium events. Riders competed aboard identically prepared KTM 50 SXS Sportminicycles in a three-lap feature race. This main event was held during the Monster Energy Supercross that was broadcasted live on national television, and though Howard wasn’t able to keep the bike, he did receive a set of Thor/KTM PowerWear riding gear and a KJSC participation certificate.

The obviously-very-mature adolescent Howard said, “As long as God is on your side, then you have nothing to worry about.”

Since his trip to St. Louis, he’s still racing and still placing. Earlier this month, Howard raced at the Appalachian Fairgrounds in Gray, Tennessee and placed 1st in two different race classes.

He has been riding a dirt bike since he was five years old and started racing at age of 6. He said Motocross is not only physically challenging, but mentally as well. He has a passion for the sport and hopes to continue to improve and work hard toward reaching his goals.

“My husband and I were speechless, excited, proud, and nervous for him,” said Howard’s mom, Kimberly.

Howard currently rides a KTM 50 SXS in various races throughout the states and he currently runs in the Mega Series sponsored by Victory Sports which travels through Tennessee, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia and Georgia. He trains with VBMX schools, when not racing or in school.

The Rosspoint Elementary student doesn’t just race, he’s active in football, basketball, baseball and swimming in addition to being a straight-A student. Howard loves reading and, of course, gym time.

Howard is the son of James M. and Kimberly Howard of Cumberland, and is the grandson of Dennis and Sharon Wells of Cumberland, and Dixie Stacy and the late Jim Stacy of Harlan.