

Are you interested in District 15 Harescramble racing? Here is some general information to help you get involved.

District 15 H/S racing is governed by the AMA amateur sports rulebook along with a few supplemental rules found in the D-15 rulebook. Rulebooks can be found on the AMA or D-15 websites. The AMA defines a Harescramble as *“a closed course, using trails and paths over natural terrain. The course should be between 2 1/2 and 40 miles long”*. Most D-15 H/S courses actually range from 3-10 miles in length. The majority is normally woods trail but open fields and MX sections are frequently included. A D-15 H/S race will contain almost every type of natural obstacle imaginable and a few manmade ones too! Race length will vary at each event and can be designated as a specific number of laps or by a set time length. This will be announced at the riders meeting. Adult bikes should usually plan on a race lasting from 1-1/2 to 2-1/2 hours, Youth bikes: 1 hour, Pewee bikes: 1/2 hour, Adult Quads 1 to 2 hours and Mini Quads 1/2 to 1 hour. Each rider must evaluate their machine’s fuel consumption and, if necessary, plan for refueling to go the distance. Talk to riders with equipment similar to yours for advice about fuel range. Each race event will combine several classes all sharing the same course. Classes start in waves with a brief delay between each wave. The end of the race is determined by the leading rider regardless of class. The first rider to complete the required number of laps or time receives the checkered flag, ending the race for all who reach the finish line after him. Finish positions are calculated by class, and most tracks will also post an event “overall” that mathematically subtracts the starting time delays between waves and displays finish positions for all classes and competitors as if they started simultaneously.

Classes: There are classes for everyone from beginners to experts and age classes for adults over 30 and kids from 4 to 15. See the D-15 rulebook for a list of H/S machine types and classes. If you are an adult with no previous H/S racing experience you are probably eligible for the Bike or Quad beginner classes.

Signup: There will be a gate fee for entry to the track and a race fee to participate. AMA (\$39.00) and D-15 (\$15.00) annual memberships are also required. Both can be purchased at the track. **SAVE YOUR MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION RECEIPTS.** It will take a few weeks to receive your membership cards. Your receipts are the only way to enter future races until your cards arrive. You will be required to sign releases, assumption or risk and waiver of liability documents before you compete and your signature must be notarized. If you have kids racing there may be additional restrictions and signatures required. Be prepared to have BOTH of the minor child’s parents present at signup to authorize the minor’s membership and participation. Parents may be required to show a photo I.D. and must have their signatures notarized. A notary should be present on race day. Please contact each track prior to race day for information regarding their specific requirements for minors.

Racing numbers: Each track will assign you a number for the race. Even if your machine already has numbers it shouldn’t matter, they probably won’t be used. A combination of decals, barcode stickers or a transponder will be issued and must be placed on your machine and helmet in the positions designated by the track. Each class is usually issued a specific sequence of numbers or a particular color decal to help riders identify others in their class. Even when races are scored by electronic scanners it’s still important to know your number. Inclement weather conditions or equipment failures can complicate the scanners ability to record you, so be prepared to call out your assigned number when stopping at a check. **YOU MUST STOP AT THE CHECK UNLESS WAIVED THROUGH BY THE SCORERS.** Failure to stop can result in a penalty. Transponders must be returned at race conclusion.

Equipment: Follow the AMA and D-15 rulebooks for equipment specs. Machines designed for motocross and off road riding are both popular in H/S racing. Contact each track prior to the event to determine if they enforce a noise policy and have exhaust sound testing requirements. Most riders will add aftermarket, wrap around handguards (often called “barkbusters”) regardless of machine type. They can provide rider protection when traveling thru trees but also protect the machine controls from damage in a fall. Many riders have successfully finished H/S races without bark busters but it only takes one fall or tree to break a lever or jam the throttle and spoil your day. A drinking system like a camelback is also valuable to prevent dehydration during the race.

Practice: There is no practice allowed. At the promoter’s option, the youth, pewee and mini quad classes may be offered a parade or sighting lap to show them the course. If a parade lap is planned, it will likely occur immediately before the start of their event. Racers are expected to follow a race official around the course, returning to the start line at the conclusion of the lap. A Sweeper or course Marshall will follow the racers to be certain all return to the start line. When the Sweeper confirms all have returned, the race will be started. Adult classes are not given a parade or sighting lap but they are allowed to walk the course prior to the race. Plan to arrive at the track at least 90 minutes before your event to signup and to get thru tech inspection (if required). A rider’s meeting will be held prior to your event. It may occur at the starting line or somewhere else... ask at signup. Contact each track prior to race day to determine start times and classes offered. Not all tracks run all machine types and the event order will vary from track to track.

Race Start: The start area will normally be in a field or open area. Riders line up in rows according to class, sometimes classes are combined on a row. Signs or markers are used to identify rows and the classes that belong there. Due to the large number of riders and differences in skill level, different classes start at different times, usually with a 1 minute delay between rows. For example, an adult bike race will normally put the “Heavy A and / or Light A” class riders in row 1 and they start first. One minute later row #2 starts, then etc. etc. until all rows are launched. The number of rows and class placement is determined by the promoter with the intention of getting the fastest classes out first and the slower classes at the back. This helps prevent bottlenecks shortly after the start. Races normally start with engines dead (some youth events start live) and a flag or shotgun blast signals the start of each row. At most events your row is expected to remain in place until your start but occasionally a promoter will instruct the rows to advance forward following each row’s launch to eventually reach and start from a common starting line.

Course: H/S course direction is defined using arrows attached to trees and other structures. Since sections of the course are shared by different events during the day, a variety of colored arrows are used. Racers should expect to see different colored arrows but must always follow the color assigned to their event. For example, the bike event may follow blue arrows but later in the day the Quad event will follow black, so both colors will be present along the course. At some point the Bike and Quad courses may split then later merge. Be certain you know what color arrows your event is using so you go the correct direction at the split.

When a single arrow is used to mark the course the rider can legally ride up to 20 feet to either side of that arrow. Exceeding 20 feet is considered course cutting and the rider is subject to disqualification. When 2 arrows of the same color are positioned directly across from each other the rider MUST go between the double arrows. Double arrows are often used with safety in mind to keep riders away from a hazard. Other times they are used to prevent riders from skirting around a planned obstacle. Arrows pointing straight down are intended to warn the rider they are approaching a downhill or drop off. Signs with the letter “W” warn that the rider is going the wrong way. Stakes and plastic ribbon are often used to mark the course in open areas and also to block off or warn of misleading intersections in the course that should not be followed. If ribbon and arrows are both present, the arrow is only intended to show direction and the ribbon marks the boundary of the

course. You do not get to ride outside the ribbon even if you can remain within 20 feet of the arrow. No rider should ever break or cross a ribbon.

Course Sweepers or Marshalls are race officials who circulate the course while the race is in progress. Their purpose is to monitor the race and help riders who have problems. They also help direct emergency responders to injured riders. They are authorized to re-route any section of the course that has become impassable. They are normally wearing orange vests to let others know they are not a race participant. Sweepers are especially valuable in the youth races to help young riders.

Scoring: The scoring station declared as the finish line is referred to as the “home check”. Additional scoring stations or “checks” are often used in other areas around the course to prevent cheating. Stop at all checks unless waived thru by the scorers. Stopping is not required at unmanned electronic checks but the rider needs to be certain he is being counted. The home check will frequently require the rider to pass thru a pair of barrels or lane designated for specific classes. When multiple scoring lanes or barrels are used it is important that each rider identify and enter the correct area in order to be scored. Failure to pass thru the correct barrel can result in a penalty. A white flag is displayed at the home check to notify of 1 lap remaining. You don't have to be running at the end to “finish” but you must complete at least ½ the number of laps your class winner completed to avoid being counted as a D.N.F. (did not finish). Spectators and rider crew members are not allowed to bother or distract scorers during the event.

Points and Awards: In addition to awards presented at the conclusion of each event, D-15 uses a points system where H/S season champions are determined and awards are distributed. Currently we count all races scheduled minus 1 to determine season champions. Normally the top 10 percent of each class will win a District 15 jacket. The H/S state championship race pays double points and the top 3 per class earn additional trophies or awards at seasons end. A “Raw Points Award” is provided to the rider amassing the most points regardless of class. Jackets, State Race and Raw Points awards are distributed at the annual D-15 awards banquet during the winter months. Current point standings can be found on the D-15 website. In addition to the D-15 series, many of the races count towards additional race series that are organized by clubs within D-15. For riders who find it difficult to attend the entire D-15 series this provides a way to compete for prizes and awards on a limited schedule. Nearly every race found on the D-15 schedule also counts for points in an additional series so every rider should become familiar with the Stoney Lonesome Series, The Southern Indiana Series, The Northern Indiana Series and the Indiana X- Country Series.

Food for thought: H/S racing is fun but can also be very frustrating for new racers. Some courses are more challenging than others and weather can play a huge factor in the difficulty level of each race. There is no “track prep” like you find in MX, H/S races run rain or shine. You will be dealing with Mother Nature on her terms. Wet conditions increase the difficulty level dramatically and few new riders are prepared for the slippery hills, deep ruts and exposed tree roots and rocks that can develop. A thunderstorm or strong shower the night before a race can leave a previously bone dry course very slippery the following day. Sandy soils often handle rain better than clay soils. Excessively dry conditions produce dust and reduced visibility. New H/S racers should consider these factors when entering their first few events. Avoiding extreme course conditions should be considered by all new riders and is especially critical for most new youth racers. Nothing is worse than the excitement of a first race turning to disappointment and embarrassment if the rider can not complete even 1 lap or spends their day falling down repeatedly or stuck at the bottom of a slippery hill. Choose your first few races wisely. Good course conditions usually lead to an enjoyable day for new H/S racers. We want you to have fun and return!

If you are an MX racer give H/S racing a try to test your fitness. When compared to MX racing, most H/S tracks have a daily event schedule that allows for a later arrival at the track, earlier departure and more racing time on your machine. Instead of four, 15 minute motos try a 2hr race for a change of pace. We will do our best to wear you out but be careful, you might also get hooked!

If you are a recreational rider, that's fine too. Many people participating in H/S events attend because they are looking for a place to ride. Riding areas are difficult to find, H/S events can provide some new opportunities so don't hesitate to try it. If you are concerned about being too slow and in the way don't worry. Since riders of all skill levels share the course and races are long, faster riders are routinely lapping or passing slower ones. You will hear faster guys coming up behind you and most will shout to let you know that you are being overtaken. Simply move to 1 side and let them by. Pointing to the side you want them to pass on is an effective way to avoid confusion and collision. If you need a break along the way stop and rejoin the race later. Successful completion of a long event is rewarding, regardless if you finished first, last or in between.

Course descriptions: Included below is a brief description of race locations currently included on the D-15 schedule:

Attica: This is the Badlands Off Road Park. It was formerly a sand and gravel pit. Also contains clay soils and a variety of hills, wide trail.

Bedford, KY: very hilly, near the Ohio river. Clay soils with lots of rocks, numerous rocky creek beds, many open grass track sections, mature timber.

Bloomington, MI: very flat, mixed soils, few rocks. includes large MX track, ditches and stream crossings, wide trail.

Bronson, MI: very flat, includes large MX track, lots of jumps and open areas, limited woods. Sandy soils with few rocks, mature pine trees/ hardwood mix. Damp areas in hardwoods become deeply rutted with exposed tree roots, wide trail.

Cayuga: Mix of woods, hills, grass, and MX sections. Course generally crosses a small stream twice each lap. Soils are clay / loam, medium to wide trail.

Columbus: Southern Indiana clay with scattered rocks, rocky sections and limestone creek beds. Heavily wooded with mature timber, lots of elevation changes, and hills of all sizes. Tight to medium trail width, no open fields but logging roads are sometimes included.

Freeman: Rolling land, mature hardwoods. Moderate hills, open field grass track sections, soils are clay / loam with few rocks, tight trail.

Greencastle: Farm country, flat fields, numerous small hills and ravines in mature woods. Soils are clay / loam, few rocks. Tight trails, small log crossings, includes a short MX section

Ligonier: Rolling land, deep sand to dirt / sand mix soils, scattered rocks. Usually includes sections of MX track and some open sections around perimeter of a peat bog. Mature hardwoods, medium to wide trail.

Lynnville: Southern Indiana clay with lots of rocks. This is coal mine country so expect hills and ridges created by old strip mining draglines before mine reclamation was required...the locals call them "spoils" Hills are steep but of moderate height, a mix of hardwoods and pines. Not many open areas, mature hardwood / pine mix, some natural areas remain.

Matthews: Farm country, relatively flat except for steep hill along the river. Course will cross the river when water levels allow. (C riders sometimes skip river crossing) Lots of open field grass track. Mature hardwoods, tight trail, few rocks.

Mitchell: Southern Indiana clay with a few rocky sections, moderate to small hills. Usually includes grass track and sections of the old Midway MX track. Tight trails

Plymouth: Sugar sand, also dirt / sand mix and some low, wet areas containing black dirt, numerous open fields. Numerous sand whoops. Mature hardwoods, recently logged, very flat terrain.

Springville: This is the Lawrence County Recreational Park, expect southern Indiana clay and limestone. Moderate hills, mature timber, scattered rocks, some rocky sections.

Worthington: Mix of clay and loam. Lots of grass track in open fields. Mix of hills from small to large. Usually contains MX sections. Mature hardwood timber, expect to cross a few logs, few rocks, tight trails.