

CCHS JUNIOR EMBRACES THIRD-GENERATION RACING GENE



Above: Crockett junior Landon Trimmer.



Above: What the starting area looks like prior to a WORN Series race; Landon may be on the course with 200 other riders simultaneously. (Photo by April Trimmer)

By Ron Barry

School sports are tremendous activities. The form bonds that can last a lifetime; they teach the importance of teamwork, discipline, and cooperation; and they often can be the “glue” that holds a rural community together.

But sometimes a school may not offer the sport that scratches a particular athlete’s itch. That athlete has to search outside the school setting to find his or her endeavor of choice. That can take a while, in many cases.

Or NOT. Because if you’re Landon Trimmer – a 16-year-old Crockett County High School junior – you don’t even need to look beyond the confines of your own family.

Trimmer is currently lighting up the leaderboard of the WORN Racing Series, a dirtbike competition that specializes in events called Hare Scrambles. For the uninitiated, a Hare Scramble is an off-road event in which all riders in a single class start on the same row and then stage an all-out race to the finish – through the woods! It’s not the dirt track layout you might find on TV at the X-Games, for instance.

No, these riders zip through wooded terrain on trails barely wide enough for two bikes to be side-by-side, and they race through these several-miles-long layouts for a body-numbing two hours before a winner is declared. The WORN circuit (Winter Off-Road Nationals) hosts competitions in Kentucky, Tennessee, Mississippi, and Alabama, and Crockett’s Trimmer has won the first three races in his class (Lite B, based on bike size) to currently hold a 90-51 edge over his nearest foe in the point standings.

Landon’s success may not be much of a surprise when you consider how he came to compete in Hare Scrambles. His dad Tyler was – is! – a racer, as was – is! – his grandfather Danny. The three of them still ride together on a couple of trails that surround their house, which has a Humboldt mailing address but is actually closer to Gadsden. Landon’s older brother Hunter is also a racer, as is his three-year-old (not a typo!) sister Aniston. (Yes, there are races for three-year-olds.)

But that doesn’t complete the family involvement. Landon’s mother April and grandmother Tina accompany the men to all races, serving – as Tina says – as “the pit crew.” “We’re always ready whenever they come around for the next lap,” April says. “If they need anything, they’ll signal us, whether it’s gas or some kind of adjustment.”

Landon also has a younger brother, Sully, who hasn’t been bitten by the racing bug but enjoys the engineering of it all. “He’s the mechanic,” April smiles.

The WORN races are often two to three hours away, so the family travels as a unit. They enjoy getting to know the racers and families of the other “teams” they encounter, and say the relationships they make along the way are very gratifying.

Landon says he began racing when he was three, then just goofed around on four-wheelers (not racing) for a while. When he was 12, they got into a family-friendly racing circuit in Arkansas where “I was consistently in the top three every race,” but then COVID-19 hit.

By the time 2022 rolled around, he got a new bike, joined the WORN circuit, and finished fourth that season because he missed a few races toward the end after breaking his finger – which occurred when he tripped over the family dog.

“He’s never really gotten hurt racing his bike,” April laughs, “and then he trips over the dog and breaks his finger. It’s just crazy!”

Landon does recall one time that he hit a tree during a race, which then caused him to hit two others. “I thought I was okay when I got up, but the next day my shoulder and hip were hurting so badly, I think I walked sideways for a week.” He practiced hard all this past summer he says, and also started working out because he learned in 2022 how physically demanding racing a dirtbike can be.

“I had to learn to stay hydrated, and I had to get physically stronger, eating a lot of calories,” Landon says. “I used to get really nervous before a race, so I didn’t want to eat anything. But by the end of it, I was so worn out I had trouble just staying on the bike.”

Tyler recalled one race they all did together – they’re still a very competitive family – in which he and Landon were battling back and forth until Landon passed him near the end, only to be passed by Tyler again moments later.

“I saw him kind of sitting there on the side of the trail,” Tyler says, “and I could tell he was all right, so I kept going. When the race was over, Landon’s hands were cramping so badly we had to peel his fingers off of the handgrips. That’s when he realized that hydration and strength are very necessary for these types of races.”

Tyler says studies have shown that dirtbike racing is the second-most physically demanding sport in the world, ranked just behind boxing.

“People don’t always look at it as a sport,” he says. “They say, ‘Aren’t you just riding a bike?’ They don’t realize it’s the equivalent of trying to physically control a 250-pound gyroscope – and you’re doing it for two hours, while maintaining total focus on the trail, because if you glance back or look around the slightest bit, it’s going to cost you.”

Grandfather Danny says that Hare Scrambles began in the 1970s, but there weren’t many places to compete east of the Mississippi River. There were really no race hosts in West Tennessee. Now, the closest trail is in Troy. Danny still races from time to time, and says in one recent race he was almost upstaged by a 75-year-old man. “But he broke his femur in the last half of the race, so I ended up not getting embarrassed,” he laughed.

Tina laughs as she hears the tale. “You can see how this all got started with him!” she smiles. “But we all still enjoy every minute of it.” On the WORN circuit, there are three major classes: Pro, A, and B. Landon competes in B Lite (a lighter weight in his bike), but if he wins the series this season, he’ll automatically be bumped to Class A.

“That’s the plan, anyway,” he says. “And after that, I’d like to compete in the Pro division. I’d like to see what I can do against the very best.” One indication of his potential came at the Sugar Hill Cross-Country Vintage race in which he duelled with 18-time ISDE (International Six-Day Enduro) gold medalist Fred Hoess. Landon was riding a borrowed bike, but finished second to the legendary rider and was featured in the national publication AHRMAMag.

“It’s something when a racer of his stature takes the time to find out who that kid was that was chasing him so well for two days,” Danny says, “and then tells him ‘Great race!’ when it’s over.”

This coming weekend, Landon will be stepping up in competition, heading for the Gobbler Getter National Enduro in Stanton, Alabama. “Enduro is more of a national competition,” Tyler says. “You’ll get riders from all over, and you’ll get a much better idea of where you stand as far as your potential for success.”

Enduros are more of a time trial race – like the Tour de France bicycle race in Europe – in which riders are competing more against the clock in several sections of racing than against each other. It typically takes all day to run one; the times for each section are then added together to determine final placings.

After that, Landon will return to the WORN circuit and to family outings through his local woods.

“For me, it’s a stress-reliever,” Tyler says. “You have to totally concentrate, but for some reason that relaxes me.”

For Landon, it’s more for developing the skills he’ll need to consistently beat his dad when they race each other. Neither he nor Tyler will admit that the other may be better right now – but as long as it stays in the family, the future continues to be bright for Trimmer Off-Road Racing.



Above: The entire Trimmer racing family: (from left) Landon, Hunter, April, Sully, Tyler, Aniston, Danny, and Tina.



Above: Landon on his bike prior to his October 8th victory.



Above: Representing three generations of Trimmer Off-Road Racing: (from left) Landon, his older brother Hunter, his dad Tyler, his younger brother Sully (the mechanic), his sister Aniston, and his grandfather Danny.