



MuddyWatersMX.net TrackMasters Series

Interview: Shand Garcia of BERM Motorsports

If you have more than a passing interest in Texas motocross you've probably heard of Shand Garcia. In fact, you've probably heard Shand Garcia doing the play-by-play commentary at a Texas track. He's written the only book on Texas motocross history, has a suspension accessory company, serves as assistant editor of Texas' only motocross magazine, and now he's co-promoting his own night-racing series. We had the chance to sit down with Shand and ask him a few questions about the business behind the business of motocross in Texas.

Terry Frazier

The 2nd Annual BERM Pro Showdown series at Village Creek MX Park starts next week. You're the title sponsor and actually co-promoter.

Tell me how the series came about.

Obviously you did the series last year, but is this the first time you've taken on a series at this level – as a title sponsor and promoter?

BERM really isn't a very big company, is it? Title sponsors are usually big corporations that are using marketing money for niche advertising.

It seems like you're taking a different approach. What are you looking to accomplish with the series?

What made you decide to work with Village Creek MX Park?

Shand Garcia

The BERM Pro Showdown Series Presented by MOTOREX is a five round Saturday night series at Village Creek MX Park in Ft. Worth Texas, with one round (round #4) stopping at Freestone County Raceway. The series is for amateur and Pro motocross racers.

Obviously with our title, we definitely gear it to highlight Saturday night professional motocross racing in the DFW market. The series came about by having conversations with Village Creek MX Park owner, Mr. Terry Cordray. Mr. Cordray has been a staple in north Texas motocross for many years, and at various tracks, dating back to the mid 70's.

Mr. Cordray and I agreed that north Texas professional motocross had seen better days. There are a couple of key elements that we both understand...

- 1) We understand the passion for amateur riders wanting to turn local Pro,
- 2) We understand the need for local Pro talent to try and earn a buck racing.

Great question, this series is in fact my first series to co-promote. I have co-promoted an annual motocross race for several years, but 2011 was my last venture with that event.

You are correct; BERM is not a gigantic corporation at this point. Relatively small company that has seen growth each year. I take a slightly different approach, on top of money I put in a ton of sweat equity... Haha!

Obviously, there are many things I would like to accomplish with the BERM series, but the number one thing would be to offer good, safe Professional and Amateur Saturday night racing in North Texas.

Two key factors, one is the fact that Village Creek MX Park has the only night track in the heart of the DFW metroplex, and the other is Mr. Cordray. He is very easy to get along with, and he is very open-minded to my views and suggestions.

We both share the same goals of highlighting Sat. night pro racing. As an infant, kid, teenager and now adult, I kind of grew up under the tracks that Mr. Cordray was always involved with. He knows this fact, and I just think there is a level of respect between us that is genuine.

You're Assistant Editor for Holeshot Magazine, the author of 'BERM: The Texas Motocross Chronicles,' you developed and sell a fork protector called SHOCK SOX, I've seen you at Vintage MX events and local races – you seem to be everywhere.

How many different things do you do?

That's a lot! Most people who want to be "in the industry" do one thing – get on as a sales rep with aftermarket companies, or go to work for a dealership, or something more like a "real job."

You seem very entrepreneurial. How did you get started?

So is BERM Capital Co. now sort of an umbrella business? What do you see for the company going forward?

Is race promotion and development something on which you're going to focus?

You've been around the sport for 20+ years, and working in it professionally for more than a decade.

What have you seen change in that time? What do you think are the biggest challenges facing the sport today?

Yes, seems like I am all over the place. One quick correction though, my old business partner, Kevin Weable – the original owner of SHOCK SOX actually developed the product. I am simply not that smart... Haha.

I partnered with Kevin in 2006, and bought the company from him in 2007. Terry, I pretty much do all of that, as well as announce races throughout the great State of Texas, and I also do some Texas Track/Racer consulting for MOTOREX Oil of Switzerland.

This is a very long story, so I will try to keep it short. I used to be in the Equipment Lease Financing industry. I arranged lease financing/funding for various business that needed equipment leases/loans without going to their banks.

With my dirt bike background I handled lease financing for various companies in the powersports industry – from dealerships, to teams, to tracks. Ultimately that is what got me into the business side of the "industry."

Yes, BERM Capital is very much an umbrella business. As for "going forward"... our main focus is SHOCK SOX, and the BERM-book you mentioned. Our focus will be growing SHOCK SOX to its full potential.

SHOCK SOX was picked up by Tucker Rocky Distributing in the Summer of 2010. As you can imagine, with that factor there is a lot of attention to detail that has to be placed on that part of the BERM business.

As far as race promotion and development, it is definitely a fun adventure and I enjoy the challenges, but for right now I think the BERM series, or maybe annual race would be all I would like to do at this point.

You know, I was an infant at the Ross Downs flat-track races, and have been hooked on motorcycles ever since. It's a very long time to have a passion for something, and I realized well over a decade ago that I would not want to be doing anything else with my life, career wise.

A lot of things have changed in the sport in just a short decade, but the first ones that come to mind are – dominance of 4-strokes, and digital media (a lot of magazines have made the switch from print to digital, or simply went out of business).

As for challenges facing the sport today, that's hard to gauge. I think the industry as a whole needs to figure out new ways to attract people into our sport.

You've probably visited every motocross track in the state of Texas. What are some of the biggest challenges you see individual track owner/operators face in growing their business?

Loaded question, huh Frazier. Haha? I think some of the biggest challenges I have noticed range from lack of communication, to arrogance, to simply not having true customer appreciation. Most of the track owners in Texas I consider true friends. In fact, for many of them, I act as a sounding board on their ideas. There are some great track-owners, and every one of them is "giving to the sport".

We have to have the track owners (public riding-land is a thing of the past), but I think one of the single biggest challenges is the over focus on the dirt/track, and the lack of focus on all of the other elements that go into growing their business. I am not singling out one particular track owner, because there are many of them like this.

These guys are awesome at their craft of "working dirt". They will tell you "check out what we did here." They are so proud of their dirt/dozer work and often they just overlook other, very important, issues that would grow – maybe even double – their business.

I've been a business consultant since the mid-'90s and one of the most common reasons I get hired is to be an unbiased outsider.

As I mentioned, I act as a sounding board for their ideas, for those track owners that call upon me. But, a) they have to call upon me in order for me to help, and b) they have to want to implement the ideas.

It's a natural human trait – focus on what you do best. We all do it, but over time you can develop blind spots that really hurt a business.

Don't get me wrong, I don't have all of the answers, but nothing is ever hurt by asking questions. I use that philosophy in my day-to-day business dealings. I am always interested in the opinions and perspectives of others.

Track owners shouldn't expect to be different. Is that something you can do, help track owners see and address some of those challenges?

What have you seen that's really innovative? Do any tracks stand out for you as a positive example of innovation?

Well it's not cheap and it's not easy, but one thing that quickly comes to mind is the customer value brought about by live streaming... Whether it's audio or video, live streaming or scoring or whatever, people can get to so they can hear or see what's going on at the races.

So far, the only track [in Texas] that does this every time they open their gates is Freestone. Every race people can tune in and hear me and JP Parsons (my co-announcer) call the play-by-play all day.

Motocross fans are so passionate about the sport – the digital media stuff's got to be really important.

Earlier I talked about highlighting Saturday night professional racing. Well to explain a little deeper... 99% of the local amateur kids growing up will not make the transition in to the "Factory World" of the sport. These amateur kids all dream about it, and if you ask 100 of them, 95 of them will tell you they can't wait to turn Pro. I think everyone that throws a leg over a bike has that hope and vision. The reality is that it just doesn't happen like that very often.

Finding ways to connect people to the action and the athletes in real-time (or near real-time) seems almost mandatory for success in the future.

My main goal for the BERM series, and what I have always prided myself on, is letting these racers know that it's "OK" if they never become a Supercross-Superstar racing at the very highest level. Being a Texas local pro for many of them will be as good as it gets, and there is no shame in that. It's really cool. I have great relationships with many of the local Texas pros. Some work full-time, some are attending college, and some just financially can't afford to race out of the local scene, but many of them "GET IT"...

Let's talk about how you put the BERM Pro Showdown together. What was your main goal in creating this series?

They realize this is as far as their moto-career will go, and 15 years down the road they will be able to look back and feel good about their local pro days. I hear it all the time from guys that quit..."Man, I wish I would have continued racing while I was younger and faster."

When I was a kid the local pro races around here were big and stacked with talent. The racing was awesome. I don't know where you can see that kind of racing on a regular basis anymore.

BTW, your Berm book was a great tribute to all the local heroes I grew up watching. Thanks for doing it.

Getting a big turnout of local pros can make a great show for spectators, too. Is that something you're focused on as well, getting people out to watch even though they might not be racers themselves?

A good, convenient location is critical to getting new or casual spectators out to the races. So is creating some name recognition for the local pros, and some hype around the quality of the racing - to give people names and numbers they know.

Are you doing anything new or different in that area - recognizing and showcasing the top racers?

Your Championship Points Fund is bigger this year, right? How much is it and how is the pay-out structured?

If you're successful with the Berm Pro Showdown and getting more recognition for the local pro scene, do you think the concept will expand to other tracks?

Is that something you'd like to see?

Dallas/Ft. Worth used to hold some great Saturday night Pro racing, and Mr. Cordray and I both know that it's a great entertainment value for spectators that want to have a relatively inexpensive Saturday night watching some of Texas best motocross racers.

Think about it. Saturday night in North Texas people can go do just about anything they want. There are so many options. Now, they can go watch professional motocross racing. Saturday night racing in the metroplex is one of the oldest, tried-and-true forms, as well as the easiest way to get newcomers into the sport.

This ultimately helps drive customers to local area motorcycle dealerships to purchase bikes and start their dirt-bike journey. The average potential spectator is not going to wake up early Sunday morning and drive 1.5-2 hours away to watch Sunday motocross racing. Yes, a few do, but there is definitely a larger impact for Saturday night spectating for the spectators that want to watch Pros racing.

Well, the top name and draw has been 4-Time Arenacross Champion, Josh Demuth. He is a bona fide star on the national level. He is last year's BERM series champion, but was just injured recently and will miss the entire series. Last year at one of the rounds, Jimmy Albertson showed up out of the blue...his appearance really surprised everyone in attendance, racers and fans alike.

I definitely try to communicate with as many area pros as possible to see who is committed to the series so that we can have Program Flyers made, so the spectators can put a name to a bike number. It's hard to know and gauge who will show until the day of the race, then it's up to the announcers (Jack Rhodes and myself) to thoroughly plug the racers during the evening.

As far as hype around the quality of racing, Keith Demele with TXMotocross.com put together a "Coming Soon" trailer-video that highlighted some of the great racing from last year.

Glad you asked. SHOCK SOX and TiscoRacing.com are heading up the \$5,000 points fund. Last year we had a \$4,000 points fund, and we paid out the Top-8 finishers in the points chase. Since we increased the points fund to \$5,000 this year, we will pay out the Top-10 racers at the end of the series.

The payout will be as follows...1) \$1000, 2) \$850, 3) \$750, 4) \$600, 5) \$500, 6) \$400, 7) \$300, 8) \$250, 9) \$200, 10) \$150.

Another unique thing we will do is have an awards ceremony complete with Top-10 plaques, and the racers names on the plaques. This was a huge hit last year, as pro riders do not receive plaques or trophies once they leave the amateur ranks.

I would hope so, and I would like to see that. I really enjoy the local pro racers "getting after it" so to speak. I think it would be GREAT for the sport if there was more emphasis on local Pro Motocross racing!

Most of the races are at Village Creek, but there's one at Freestone.

What's the benefit/challenge to running at multiple locations, and how do you decide whether to run at 1, 2, or more locations?

Well, with a 5-round series we felt it would be good to have a little change up from the norm, so to speak! After three rounds at Village Creek the racers will get to go to Freestone where they have not been able to practice or race at often leading up to that weekend. Every racer gets excited about visiting a new track, so this will create a good buzz that the BERM circus travels to Freestone.

There really is no challenge (from a promoter standpoint) as far as running at Freestone. Tony Miller, Tom Shields and the Freestone staff always do a top-notch job, and it's no secret that Freestone has the best lighting in the U.S.A. for night racing.

The series is definitely a Village Creek MX Park series due to what I mentioned earlier about Saturday night pro racing in the DFW metroplex. Terry Cordray would be the deciding factor on taking a round to another location.

Let's talk about safety. It's on everyone's mind, with half the Supercross field recovering from some sort of serious injury, and the outdoor Nationals already down several top riders.

What is your approach to rider safety? Do you get involved in the safety aspect when you're sponsoring a series or working with track owner/operators?

BINGO - Great question. Yes, I get very involved. There is a fine line we all have to watch when it comes to speed, jumps, obstacles, etc, etc, etc. My approach is to slow the track down: this is easily done by adding berms, corners, s-turns etc etc etc.

Slowing the track down can also provide for greater racing, as it becomes a thinking-man's track. That is what is so good about working with Terry Cordray: his night track is safe, and I know if I or the racers see something that needs to be addressed, he will not hesitate to address our concerns.

We talked about some of the challenges the sport faces earlier. Motocross bike sales are at an all-time low according to the Motorcycle Industry Council, but crowds for Supercross and Motocross Nationals are bigger than ever.

That seems like a contradiction. What do you see in the sport's future?

I think with everything, there are cycles of highs and lows. I think right now we are just experiencing a low point, and in due time the sport will strike another high point. I do think right now the track owners, race promoters and dealerships need to get creative to put a little spark in the dirt side of things.

Shand, thanks for taking the time to do this interview. Is there anyone you'd like to thank for supporting the Berm Pro Showdown Series or being part of your BERM campaign?

Terry, thank you for this interview opportunity. I really think it's cool that you care about this side of the sport and like to see what goes on "behind the scenes." I have to thank Terry Cordray first and foremost for allowing me to get involved with this unique series.

Secondly, all of the sponsors that have shown their unwavering commitments... BELL, Black Sock Mafia, Motorex, PMP Sprockets, Scala Rider, Shock Sox, Speed Grafix, Tisco Racing, Central Yamaha, Honda West, KTM of North Texas, Johnson County Kawasaki and all of the racers that attended the series last year that made it a success.

I would also like to thank John Willis at Holeshot Magazine, Keith Demele at TXMotocross.com, my SHOCK SOX partner Chris Daubitz, as well as the crew at Tucker Rocky...Bill Harrington and all of the sales reps that are helping SHOCK SOX grow. And one final "THANKS" to all of my extended family and friends in the motocross community. I have made a ton of friends, and there are some really genuine people out there that make my life very fun!

Editor's note: The following links are mentioned in this interview:

[BERM: The Texas Motocross Chronicles](#)

[SHOCK SOX](#)

[Holeshot Magazine](#)

[Village Creek MX Park](#)

[BERM Pro Showdown](#)