

## Cooper Webb Back to Winning Ways with Tampa Supercross Victory

Tampa, Fla., (February 12, 2023) Red Bull KTM's Cooper Webb put in an outstanding ride to earn his first win of the season at Round 6 of the Monster Energy AMA Supercross season in Tampa, Florida. The crowd inside Raymond James Stadium witnessed a battle of determination that saw Webb take over the lead late in the race from second place finisher Team Honda HRC's Chase Sexton.

Raymond James Stadium hosted Tampa's 14th year of a Monster Energy AMA Supercross event and provided the season's traditional Military Appreciation Night. Photo Credit: Feld Motor Sports, Inc.

Nabbing third place was Webb's teammate Red Bull KTM's Aaron Plessinger, earning his first podium finish of 2023. The round paid points not only in the 17-round supercross series but also in the all-new, 31-round SuperMoto-cross World Championship. In a nail-biter of a 250SX Class race, Team Honda HRC's Hunter Lawrence took the race down to two dramatic contact passes in the final two corners to win his second consecutive race in as many rounds of the Eastern Regional 250SX Class series.

Cooper Webb was fast, strategic, and strong in Tampa. His first win of the season proved he's a contender for another Monster Energy Supercross title. Photo Credit: Feld Motor Sports, Inc.

Sporadic rain throughout the day exacerbated the tough, changing track conditions but when the gate dropped on the 450SX Class Main Event the skies were clear. Cooper Webb was credited with the official Holeshoot but Sexton's momentum over the stripe put him directly into the lead with Webb, Plessinger, Progressive Insurance ECSTAR Suzuki's Ken Roczen, Monster Energy Kawasaki's Jason Anderson, and Monster Energy Kawasaki's Adam Cianciarulo in tow. Points leader and defending champion Monster Energy Yamaha Star Racing's Eli Tomac was ninth out of the first corner.

Before one minute had run off the race clock Anderson collided with Troy Lee Designs Red Bull GASGAS Factory Racing's Justin Barcia.

The riders tangled and dropped to the back of the pack. Three minutes into the 20-minute plus one lap Main Event Sexton had pulled a 1.7 second gap on the pack. Most fans were expecting to see Tomac battling forward, but the pace of the front runners was close and the only rider seeming to make headway was Webb.

Through the race Cooper Webb pulled within a second of Sexton on two occasions but seemed to be biding his time for a pass attempt. Meanwhile, Tomac seemed settled into fifth position, 8 seconds behind Roczen and 8 seconds ahead of Monster Energy Yamaha Star Racing's Justin Cooper.

Webb's strategy of patience almost fell apart when, with less than three minutes on the race clock, he got wildly out of control in the whoops section. It was the longest whoops section of the year and was breaking down rapidly. Webb kept his feet on the pegs and the bike on the track and in short order made up the time he'd lost on Sexton. The next lap through Sexton made a nearly identical mistake; Sexton could not save it, and crashed.

Webb took over the lead and brought home the win, his first of the season. Sexton recovered quickly and took second place, and Plessinger took third without pressure for the podium spot. The win for Webb tightened the season standings so that only four points now separate the top three athletes.

Hunter Lawrence put in a brilliant ride to pull out a win with a dramatic last-corner pass. Photo Credit: Feld Motor Sports, Inc.

The Eastern Regional 250SX Class provided all the drama the fans could ask for. Muc-Off FXR ClubMX Yamaha's Jeremy Martin grabbed the Holeshoot but Monster Energy Yamaha Star Racing's Nate Thrasher was right around him and instantly pulled a gap on the field. The track's deep sand section claimed Monster Energy Yamaha Star Racing's Jordon Smith on the opening lap, who was running in second place; that crash caught up Red Bull KTM's Tom Vialle and he dropped back to mid pack



**450SX Class podium (riders left to right) Chase Sexton, Cooper Webb, and Aaron Plessinger. Photo Credit: Feld Motor Sports, Inc.**

with Smith.

Up front Thrasher looked untouchable. Fire Power Honda's Max Anstie held second place and rookie Monster Energy Yamaha Star Racing's Haiden Deegan looked like a seasoned pro in third ahead of one of the class' true seasoned pros, Troy Lee Designs Red Bull GASGAS Factory Racing's Michael Mosiman. Behind all the action at the front, Lawrence was on the move slicing rapidly through the pack after a bad start. Less than six and a half minutes into the 15-minute plus one lap Main Event Lawrence cut under Mosiman, taking out his front wheel and dropping the GASGAS rider to the dirt. The move put Lawrence in third place and he quickly closed the distance to Anstie. With 5:47 on the race clock Lawrence took over the second place spot, but Thrasher was 5.9 seconds ahead.

Rain from earlier in the day was back, and as it intensified so did the excitement. As the front runners battled the changing conditions, Lawrence drew the lead down to 2.89 seconds as

the race clock reached :00. When the white flag came out the gap was 2.4 seconds. Lawrence got to Thrasher's rear wheel when the riders came to the sand section for the final time. Exiting the sand, Thrasher moved to the outside line and the two riders made hard contact. Neither hit the ground and Thrasher maintained the lead.

As they reached the final corner Lawrence pitched his Honda sideways on the slick dirt. He finessed his bike to the inside of the corner, drove across the turn's exit ruts, and cut off Thrasher's straight-shot to the checkered flag. The athletes both charged toward the checkered flag with Lawrence taking the win just .2 seconds ahead of Thrasher. The crowd went wild with the dramatic finish, which extended Lawrence's points lead in the Eastern Regional 250SX Class series that is only two races into its season.

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