

Five Year Old Belton BMX Racer Signs to Factory Team

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The Factory Bombshell-Avent BMX team based out of Murrieta, California signed Eli Staton, 5, of Belton, Missouri to their nationally recognized racing team. The bicycle-motocross race team is comprised of elite athletes ranging from top-tier age group racers to 2016 Olympic hopefuls. Although it is rare for such a young racer to be selected as a factory racer, Staton has two years of national level competition experience and multiple national event podium finishes.

The five year old racer spent Thanksgiving week in Tulsa, Oklahoma competing in the USA BMX Race of Champions and Grand National Championships. The Race of Champions, referred to as "The ROC" by racers, is a single day BMX race held the Friday after Thanksgiving with entries comprised of the top ten competitors from each state in their division. During the Grand National Championship racers competed on both Saturday and Sunday.



The 2015 races comprised of athletes from 46 states and 14 countries broke records in attendance with 4,548 entries. When there are large numbers of entries, such as the case of The ROC and Grand National Championships, riders must qualify to race in main events. The process is arduous and challenging both mentally and physically for the racers. There are mandatory first and second rounds, called motos. Each moto has eight competitors line up on an elevated the starting hill for a full sprint around a 400 meter long dirt track with large bowl turns, jumps and other obstacles. If a rider finishes in first or second in the first moto, they may skip the second moto and move on to qualifiers. First and second place finishers in the second moto may also continue though the qualifying process. There may be up to three additional qualifying races, called Eighths, Quarters, and Semis before the Main Event race.

Staton rode the 5 & Under Intermediate and Mixed Open divisions at The ROC. The Race of Champions allows for racers to compete in the age and classification they were at the time of their respective state championships, thus many competitors already reached their sixth or seventh birthdays. The five year old Staton was racing against riders up to two years older in the Mixed Open classification where he finished fifth in the Semi. In the Intermediate class, Staton came from a back of the pack start to work his way to third overall.

Classifications for age divisions include novice, intermediate and expert. Determining the classification is based on the number of wins a rider has accumulated of their career. In Staton's short BMX career, the young racer turned intermediate level only two months after his fourth birthday in 2014.

At the Grand National event, the Belton, Missouri resident won his motos and subsequent qualifying races. Staton advanced to main events in both the 6 & Under Mixed Open, where he was the only five year old competing, and the 5 & Under Intermediate class. Staton placed fifth and third respectively. These placings earned the young racer a National Age Group number six placing for the year.



The Factory Bombshell-Avent BMX Team anticipates Staton moving into the expert category for next season's Grand Nationals where he will be one of less than 10 active experts for his age class in the country. His first national event of the year will be January 8-10 in Las Vegas, Nevada. The California based team expects Eli Staton at national events in Oklahoma, Kentucky, Minnesota, Tennessee, Illinois, and Missouri in 2016. Staton will likely be racing the expert division when the national event tour stops in Kansas City for the Mid-America National. The race will be held at Raytown BMX August 12-14.