

# 5 MINUTES WITH...

## Andrea Leib ON TRACK

by Bryan Stealey

*Whether you agree with homeschooling or not, it's a reality in motocross, as kids are getting more serious about making a career in the sport at younger ages than ever. Years ago, California's Andrea Leib made the difficult decision to homeschool her boys to help them maintain competitive amateur racing careers, and that step led to the creation of an innovative educational program unparalleled in the sport. Mrs. Leib's On Track is designed to keep racers, well, on track, with both their dirt bikes and their educational pursuits. We talked to her to find out more.*

### **Racer X: What exactly is On Track, Andrea?**

Andrea Leib: On Track is a program that focuses on custom learning solutions so racers who are going to be competing on a national level, who need to dedicate more time to their racing, can still achieve a cutting-edge education. So what I do is I facilitate a plan based on each individual. I give them a learning-style profile, because everybody learns differently. Through this profile, which a student takes online, I customize a program, whether it's text-based or online or a combination of both.

Another thing that makes my program unique is that I provide support to the parents too. When a family starts homeschooling, it's really difficult. When I started several years ago with my two—I'm a teacher, and I really didn't want to homeschool—I had heard a lot of negative things about homeschooling. But this was something I had to do for my son Michael, because leaving school so often really hurts them. There really wasn't any support in place when he started, so a year later, when I started On Track, I thought there needed to be something where the parents and the students would have somebody who they could meet one-on-one with.

### **Do you go to all the major amateur races?**

Yes, I do. I started out by just doing tutoring at the races, because kids go there with homework, and it's really difficult, as you can imagine. It's a very distracting environment.

Now I'm available at the races mainly to help parents who are looking for a program. The students I work with—about eighty across the country—I encourage them not to bring their homework to the track. This way, they can focus on their racing and they're not stressing about their homework. Instead, I encourage them to get ahead so they don't have to do schoolwork at the track.

### **Do students need to be accepted into your program?**

Yeah, they do. I haven't actually turned anybody away, but if I find that students are falling behind and we have a suspension or a meeting about it and they're not able to pick back up, that's just not acceptable. The kids I work with have to maintain a B average; they have to stay on track. I know at some point everyone is go-

### **What happens if a student isn't taking it seriously and just isn't getting good grades?**

Well, I had to drop two students in the past two years. I really don't want to just shut the door, so I have this system in place where if a student is more than four weeks behind, I give them two weeks to get caught up. If that doesn't happen, then I sit down and talk to the parent about things they can do to get their child to take it more seriously. I've never said, "Okay, you're on your own." I'll take them to the end of the year, but that's all.

### **Do riders have to have a certain skill level on a bike to apply to On Track?**

Absolutely not. I can't turn anybody away. I work with anybody who's interested in getting a cutting-edge education. I even have a



ing to fall behind, especially when we go to Texas. But as long as we're within three to four weeks of where we're supposed to be, I'm okay with that. We meet weekly, or we talk weekly, and we have a plan. That's how everyone does well, because there are guidelines and boundaries that everyone's got to stick with.

high-school-equivalency program now, and there are people coming to me who have nothing to do with motocross, but they dropped out and they realize that having a diploma is important. I'll take that student in a heartbeat. I want to help them achieve a better job, a better future, and a stronger belief in them-