

Deseret News

Stewart holds off Reed in Supercross

By **Jared Eborn**

Deseret News

Published: Saturday, April 25, 2009 11:38 p.m. MDT

With an AMA Supercross series title hanging in the balance, the last thing Chad Reed wanted to see was the teammate of his archrival blocking his path.

Yet, with seven laps left in what was shaping up as an epic battle on the Rice-Eccles Stadium course against defending champion and current series leader James Stewart, Kyle Chisholm cut between Stewart — who had just taken the lead on a jump — and Reed on a corner and effectively ended the race by creating a big gap between the two leaders.

Reed had led most of the first 12 laps of the Supercross main event, battling back and forth with Stewart and exchanging the lead several times, but found himself in trouble as they pulled away from the field and running into lapped traffic.

Trailing Stewart by just three points, Reed wanted desperately to pick up a win Saturday night and create a tie in the standings.

But it wasn't to be.

"It was a fun race," said Stewart, who won and extended his lead to an almost-comfortable six points. "The guy was on it tonight, and he made me work for it."

Reed showed he had every intention of winning from the moment the gates dropped.

"I got the hole shot and tried to put some good laps together," Reed said, "but the track kind of broke down."

Several earlier races and some rain left the dirt course choppy and slick, but after the initial charge, it was clear the race belonged to Stewart and Reed as the duo quickly put a gap between their personal battle and the rest of the 20-man field.

With passes coming on hairpin turns and triple jumps, the lead went from one rider to the other several times.

But on lap 12 and with Stewart in the lead, Chisholm — Stewart's teammate — got in the way and earned the scorn of most of the announced crowd of 40,612 by impeding the path of Reed.

"It's hard to put it into words," Reed said. "But we'll go on to next week."

Chisholm was black-flagged and kicked out of the race, but the damage to Reed's hopes had already been done as Stewart easily covered the final seven laps to pick up the win by 3.7 seconds.

David Millsaps was third, more than 31 seconds off the pace.

Though Reed didn't say anything about the on-course incident after the race, his actions were loud and clear as he gave Chisholm a long look while kicking his rear wheel at him as he passed him a final time on a triple jump near the start/finish line.

The results set up what will be a compelling series finale next weekend in Las Vegas as Reed tries to make up all six points and reclaim the championship he has enjoyed three times.

Ryan Villopoto was fourth and Andrew Short fifth in Saturday's main event.

In the Supercross Lites division, a trio of Utah riders lined up to give it their best shot in the night show, and Lehi's Gray Davenport slipped past Boise's Ben Evans on the last lap of their qualifying heat and earned a

spot in the main event with his ninth-place finish.

South Jordan's Landen Powell was 15th, and Sandy's Jeremy O'Driscoll finished a lap down in 17th spot.

In the main event of the Lites race, Trey Canard cut inside series points leader Ryan Dungey at the beginning of the 11th lap and held on for the win. Rupert, Idaho's Jake Weimer, however, sent a big scare into Canard and Dungey as he motored over the final few laps and nearly took the lead on the back stretch of the last lap before Canard nipped him at the line.

Dungey, holding a 14-point series lead coming into the race, needed only to finish fifth or better to win the season title and cruised to fourth for a five-point season victory over Weimer.

"I lost a couple of battles," Dungey said, "but won the war."

Weimer, racing in front of several hundred family and friends from his southern Idaho home, showed he will be a force to reckon with in seasons to come.

Davenport got off to a tough start and never recovered as he finished 17th in the Lites main event.

E-mail: jeborn@desnews.com

© 2009 Deseret News Publishing Company | All rights reserved