

## **Monster Energy's Taka Higashino Wins 1st Place at the Inaugural Monster Energy FMX High Rollers Contest in Las Vegas**

*Monster Energy's Taka Higashino took first place in the Inaugural Monster Energy FMX High Rollers Freestyle Motocross event by covering the entire course with creative aerial moves.*

Las Vegas, NV ([PRWEB](#)) October 16, 2016 -- The action was off the charts today at the UNLV Sam Boyd Stadium in Las Vegas for the first-ever Monster Energy FMX High Rollers contest. As this year's official sideline event to the Monster Energy Cup, the inaugural event stoked the energetic crowd with high-flying stunts from 30 of the world's leading freestyle motocross (FMX) riders, including competitors from Australia, Canada, Chile, New Zealand, and the U.S.

Battling the world's freestyle motocross elite and gusty winds up to 20 mph, Monster Energy's Taka Higashino took first place in the Freestyle Motocross event by covering the entire course with creative aerial moves. Higashino's Monster Energy teammate, 20-year-old Axell Hodges from Encinitas, California, walked away with a strong second place in the QuarterPipe Big Air contest followed by Kris Foster from Canada in third. Tom Parsons, Jarryd McNeil and Destin Cantrell took first, second and third in Dirk Shark Biggest Whip, which will qualify Parsons and Cantrell for Best Whip at X Games Minneapolis 2017, along with Tyler Bereman. McNeil was already qualified based on his X Games Austin 2016 gold-medal win.

As FMX High Rollers brought the freestyle event to the Monster Energy Cup spectators for the first time, the center of the action was this event. Riders took turns hitting the progressive obstacle course stacked with a 120-foot centerpiece jump in two 75-second runs for highest scores.

Right from the start, freestyle motocross veteran Adam Jones set himself up as the man to beat with a flawless 88.66-point run that put him at the top of the leader board. No stranger to challenging showdowns, Higashino upped the ante by utilizing every aspect of the course with fast lines, packing more tricks into his two runs than any competitor. For the day's winning score of 92.33 points, the 31-year-old from Osaka, Japan, brought his signature blend of high difficulty and fluid style to Las Vegas. Higashino's standout moves included a huge Indy grab backflip, switch blade, no handed backflip off the 120-foot ramp, (massive in 40mph wind gusts) Cordova flip, seat grab Cordova, and heel clicker / Indy air backflip for the win.

"I almost crashed on the second run, but I'm glad I landed clean and finished," said Higashino upon winning first place.

Also putting on a strong performance, but closely missing the podium, Higashino's Monster Energy teammate Harry Bink from Australia finished in fourth place with 85.33 points.

Earlier in the day, the first-ever FMX QuarterPipe Big Air event saw competitors launching their highest aerials off two 18-foot quarterpipes into a dirt landing. Battling fierce winds and desert sun, the qualifiers turned into a rivalry between Hodges and Australia's McNeil. Looking like a strong contender for the win, Hodges blasted into the finals by landing a 21' 5" aerial – the highest of the day – with McNeil following at 19' 7".

As wind speeds reached 16mph during the Big Air finals, the 20-foot benchmark for airs proved almost impossible to clear. McNeil edged ahead with a 15' 2" air, closely followed by Hodges' first attempt at 15' 0". But although Hodges managed to boost an 18' 3" aerial off the quarterpipe on his second run, he fell on the



landing, leaving the win to the Australian. Hodges teammate Foster from Canada also reached the podium with a solid 12' 7" air for third place.

In case you missed today's live stream, make sure to catch the Monster Energy FMX High Rollers action on ABC's World of X Games at 3:00 PM EST on November 6, 2016.

For more information visit <http://www.monsterenergy.com> and make sure to follow Monster Energy's Facebook, Instagram & Twitter for exclusive updates from The Monster Energy Cup / Monster Energy FMX High Rollers contest.

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#### About Monster Energy:

Based in Corona, California, Monster Energy is the leading marketer and distributor of energy drinks and alternative beverages. Refusing to acknowledge the traditional, Monster Energy supports the scene and sport. Whether motocross, off-road, NASCAR, MMA, BMX, surf, snowboard, ski, skateboard, or the rock and roll lifestyle, Monster Energy is a brand that believes in authenticity and the core of what its sports, athletes and musicians represent. More than a drink, it's the way of life lived by athletes, sports, bands, believers and fans. See more about Monster Energy including all of its drinks at [www.monsterenergy.com](http://www.monsterenergy.com).

#### About Feld Entertainment:

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