

THE AMA AND THE FIM

Our Place In It All

We were fortunate this year to have had the Motocross of Nations here in the United States at RedBud MX in Buchanan, Mich. We were not as fortunate with the outcome of the race, however, as the American team failed to reach the podium.

The MXoN has been called the Olympics of motocross because it pits the best riders in the world against each other as they race for their national teams. The annual event is sanctioned by the Fédération Internationale de Motocyclisme and promoted by Youthstream, which is also the rights holder for the FIM Motocross World Championship (MXGP) series.

Most motorcycle racing fans have at least heard of the FIM, but probably don't know much, if anything, about it. Fans of AMA Supercross probably know that our national series has also been designated by the FIM as a World Championship series. This was the result of a complicated series of events and is why the series is referred to by the mouthful of a name—AMA Supercross, an FIM World Championship.

The FIM, however, is much more than a sanctioning body. It is the governing body for international motorcycle sport and represents itself as the global advocate for motorcycling. Founded in 1904, the FIM was recognized in September 2000 by the International Olympic Committee. This recognition allows the FIM to claim the distinction as the supreme and sole international authority for motorcycling sports.

The FIM is the owner of the official titles of FIM World Championships in all disciplines of motorcycle competition, as well as the owner of the TV and marketing rights for international and world championship motorcycle racing. In addition to AMA Supercross and MXGP, MotoGP and World Superbike (both promoted by Dorna),

there are other FIM World Championships likely to be familiar to American race fans, such as the International Six Days Enduro and the Trials Des Nations.

The federation is incorporated in Switzerland with headquarters in Mies, just outside Geneva. There are roughly 110 national federations affiliated with the FIM. There can be only one federation affiliated with the FIM per country, and the AMA is the designated member federation from the United States.

The FIM is divided into six Continental Unions (CONUs) including FIM Africa,

FIM Asia, FIM Europe, FIM Latin America, FIM Oceania and FIM North America. FIM North America is made up of the Canadian Motorcycle Association, representing Canada, and the AMA, representing the United States. The presidents of each of the CONUs serve as members of the FIM Board of Directors.

LIKE THE AMA, THE FIM IS MOSTLY MADE UP OF PEOPLE, BOTH VOLUNTEERS AND STAFF, WHO ARE PASSIONATE ABOUT RIDING AND RACING MOTORCYCLES AND WHO WANT A BRIGHT FUTURE FOR MOTORCYCLING.

In addition to the CONU presidents, the FIM Board includes six other members and a president elected by the member federations. From among those elected board members, the president appoints a deputy president and a vice-president.

Because there are only two member federations in FIM North America, the AMA and the CMA take turns leading our CONU. The CMA has held the position of FIM

North America president for the last four years, and I will soon assume the presidency of the CONU for the next four years. This also means that I will rejoin the FIM Board, having previously served on its board from 2011 to 2014.

The international federation also has a number of commissions made up of representatives from around the world. Some of the commissions are organized by race discipline, while others are created for non-racing purposes, such as a public affairs commission. Commission members typically are required to hold relevant FIM licenses to be eligible to serve on a commission. The AMA has representatives on a number of FIM commissions, which enables us to have a voice in things that could impact AMA members.

The FIM is governed by a set of by-laws and statutes that are subject to the approval of the member federations. It also has a sporting code that governs competition, as well as an environmental code, a medical code, a disciplinary and arbitration code and an anti-doping code.

American race fans may have some passing familiarity with the last two codes because there have been some recent, relatively high-profile cases of American riders who have been deemed by the FIM to have violated provisions of these codes. The extent to which Americans may have a less than favorable opinion of the FIM directly corresponds to the FIM's handling of some of these cases.

Like the AMA, the FIM is mostly made up of people, both volunteers and staff, who are passionate about riding and racing motorcycles and who want a bright future for motorcycling all over the world. Also like the AMA, however, there are always things that can be improved.

The FIM is currently in the midst of an election to replace its term-limited outgoing president. There will no doubt be changes brought about by a new administration. Hopefully, some of those changes might even improve the image of the FIM here in the United States.

Rob Dingman is AMA president and CEO and is an AMA Charter Life Member.



By Rob Dingman