

Racing bikers dig up the dirt



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Dirt and dirt bikes flew this weekend in Lincoln.

About 2,500 racers and fans gathered at the State Fair Park Coliseum Friday, Saturday and Sunday for the Mid-America National BMX competition.

The event, sponsored by the American Bicycle Association, drew almost 750 competitors, ranging from 3 to 44 years old, said Joe Thoms, local BMX organizer.

"It was packed," Thoms said.

Three to eight racers competed in 123 heats, called motos, and had three chances to qualify for the mains, or finals. Amateurs raced for one of the 300 trophies, while the professionals earned money for placing.

People from as far away as Texas and Ohio came to Lincoln to race their bikes over the dirt mounds and curves built on the floor of the Coliseum, while friends and family cheered them on from the stands.

Terry Stark of Bartlesville, Okla., said he took his three children to BMX races across the Midwest to compete.

"It keeps them out of trouble," he said.

Clockwise from left: BMX racers pick up their trophies after competition. Jamie Do (No. 20) and Brandon Crocker (No. 10) of Lincoln try to catch the pack in the 14-year-old expert-division race Saturday. Billy Au of Columbus, Ohio, races Saturday in the pro division. Kris Hansen and his father, Roger, of Manitowoc, Wis., fix Kris' bike before competition.