

KOH News + Ian Johnson's Trail Ride + W.E.Rock Finals

# CRAWL

Hardcore Offroad

## THE VIKING ROCK YACHT



Issue 19



Inside AEV — CRAWL On The Rubicon — WIN A WINCH!

# GET PAID TO RACE!



**OFFROAD RACING HAS CHANGED A LOT** in the last five years, even more with the introduction of the King of the Hammers race series. Not since SCORE in the late '70s has a race series received so much attention from the media, and from fans. Making this the perfect time for someone, who has always dreamed of racing, to break in on the bottom floor and maybe, just possibly, get paid to race.

Now, there's obviously no way you are just going to walk into a multi-tiered race deal with an energy drink or tire company with no race experience. However, King of the Hammers is the kind of race that will give you

international recognition for your efforts—all you need is a rig and a spot in the race.

This month we will talk with three separate business owners who sponsor race teams, find out what information they use to sponsor teams who compete in offroad racing, and what you can do to get their sticker on the side of your rig, and more importantly, their parts on it for free.

We asked Ballistic Fabrication, Pit Bull Tires, and Spidertrax Off-Road about sponsorship. Here are the questions and their responses:





**How often are you, or your company, personally contacted about sponsorship?**

**(BF)** On average we are approached 15-20 times a week with sponsorship requests, from entire builds and cash requests for simple parts.

**(PBT)** All the time.

**(SO)** At least once a week but volume does vary depending on the time of year and the competitions in play. Last year, for example, our largest volume of sponsorship requests came from King of the Hammers and started during the time of new builds.

**Do you ever actively recruit drivers or teams to run your parts or product on their cars?**

**(BF)** Not generally, however there are a few drivers that we wouldn't mind if they approached us.

**(PBT)** No.

**(SO)** Not historically. We have been very fortunate to have top drivers seek out our products, even when those products were in their infancy stages. For example, the year Tracy Jordan dominated the rock crawling circuits with his Scrapper moon buggy which was powered by Spider 9 axles, Tracy contacted us for those products. At that time, the only other vehicle in competition running the Spider 9 product line was our own mid-engine single seat buggy, the XTS.



**What benefits have you seen from sponsoring drivers and race teams?**

**(BF)** The benefits that we see are almost never immediate, so at times we can feel frustrated. It never seems to fail though, a few months down the road we'll be having a conversation with a customer and they'll mention our driver or an event that we've sponsored.

**(PBT)** Great excuse to travel and hangout with good people while getting the name out there. Personally seeing our products put to the test and verifying that they do what they are supposed to do....kick ass.

**(SO)** Product exposure has been our largest benefit from sponsorship. When Tracy Jordan picked up our Spider 9 product line for his Scrapper moon buggy, most people hadn't heard about the Spider 9 product line and its capabilities. After he dominated

the series, people started talking and the product grew exponentially from there.

**What do you expect sponsored teams to do for you when they represent your company?**

**(BF)** Realistically, we want them to act as if they're an employee of Ballistic Fabrication, because the way we see it, they're on payroll. We have one driver in particular that has never seen a race circuit and has only attended one sanctioned event

**(KOH)**, however we know that he is out there a few times a week tearing it up with our name on the side of his rig.

**(PBT)** Say our name as much as possible, wear our stuff and tell the truth about the performance of our tires so



they maintain their integrity, we get honest feedback and we continue to produce great products.

**(SO)** We have some basic requirements like running certain sized stickers and such specific to our “Contingency Programs”. But more important than that is getting solid feedback on the products they are running. Today’s competition drivers abuse products harder than any other type of tester I can think of. Their feedback is critical for improving products over the long term.

**How would you suggest an up-and-coming driver obtain a sponsorship?**

**(BF)** Be seen. Be vocal. If we don’t know who you are, chances are we will pass your request up for the active socialite or racer. It’s hard to justify a sponsorship agreement if there’s a chance that the only person they’ll talk to about our company is their grandma at Sunday dinner.

**(PBT)** Go the extra mile to demonstrate a commitment to their sport, their integrity and our products. A lot of guys compete... so what? Why should any company just sponsor someone for showing up or asking for a handout? It’s not about being #1 either...most top guys are always going to be at the top regardless of the tires they run. I prefer working with guys who can move up the ranks...now that says something about our tires. A guy who goes from #10 to #3 in one year because he changed to our tires and didn’t change anything else...now that’s something.

**(SO)** “Up and coming” is tough because without a track record, it is hard for a company to make a solid decision on individual sponsorship. So, someone who is “up and coming” needs to stand out in some way to get the attention of the sponsor. There



are a number of ways to do this, and many teams currently in competition that have succeeded in this field, but in the end standing out in some way is all you can do if no track record exists.

**What type of image do you expect a sponsored team to portray?**

**(BF)** As I previously stated, we want our teams to be knowledgeable about the product that they sport, as if they’re on the Ballistic sales team.

**(PBT)** Professional, honest, hard-working, good-natured, energized and intelligent.

**(SO)** A clean and professional image suits us best. Every company is different though, so in the end teams should portray the image that is best suited for their sponsored company.



**Can you tell our readers about one “funny” sponsorship request?**

**(BF)** A month ago we got a request to sponsor ‘King of the Diapers’, and wanted us to trick out his daughter’s toy trike. We’re pretty sure he was joking, but you never know...

**(PBT)** You don’t have enough pages.

**(SO)** I can’t say we have one specific “funny” request, but we do see somewhat “funny” misunderstandings of what our sponsorship role is. We rarely give product away and rely on our “Contingency Programs” to cover teams looking for general sponsorship. With so many teams running our Spider 9 products these days, many drivers assume these products were all given away for free. Rest assured, the majority of these products were purchased and these teams more often than not are on our “Contingency Program”.

**Have you ever sponsored a driver with more than just parts?**

**(BF)** At this point we have only offered parts to our races; however it’s not in writing that we can’t offer monetary compensation.

**(PBT)** Rarely. They have to be someone that I have a long-standing relationship with who has proven to me time and again that they do what they say and do it well.

**(SO)** We do and this information is public on our Spidertrax Store website. We have in place a “Contingency Program” that pays out cash for top place finishers and is



available for anyone running Spidertrax products. Currently our contingency programs cover W.E.Rock, XRRR, and King of the Hammers.

**Are you a “hands-on” sponsorship company, and if so, how involved do you like to be?**

**(BF)** We are sure to attend all of our local events, especially if a sponsored

driver is present. This year I plan to co-drive KOH with one of our sponsored drivers, assuming all goes well.

**(PBT)** I try to get to as many events as possible. All teams have access to our private contact information and can get a hold of us whenever.

**(SO)** I would like to think we are very hands on. First, our involvement in sponsorship is very product oriented so there is a lot at stake in the product’s reputation and their performance. This is what makes team feedback so critical. Second, we try to make a point to attend the events, in person, that we offer contingency programs to. Many times we even cover the event live on our Twitter ([www.twitter.com/Spidertrax](http://www.twitter.com/Spidertrax)) and Facebook (<http://www.facebook.com/Spidertrax>) accounts and make a point to highlight teams on our contingency programs.

**What kind of racing would you like to sponsor more?**

**(BF)** We’re seriously interested in the KOH race. We believe that this event has a lot of potential for future growth, and we would love to be a part of it in any way we can.

**(PBT)** name it.

**(SO)** This one is hard as current trends and interests are hard to predict. Best guess, however, is that King of the Hammers is opening up the doors for more racing style events and I would not be surprised to see some products & contingency programs crossing over into off-road racing markets. <C>

