



Making it Happen

Not your average little girl's dream

BY DEBORAH SHADOVITZ

In May 2007, we introduced you to gutsy El Camino Real High School 11th grader Chelsy Swenson, who defied the status quo and became a motocross force to watch. We were impressed by Chelsy and her parents, Jessa and Christopher, who support her fully. Apparently, I'm not the only one who was impressed by Chelsy — her website was very busy when *ValleyLife* magazine issue hit your homes. So we're checking in with Chelsy to see how she's doing as she turns 19.

Chelsy was old by motocross standards when she entered her first race in 2005. She didn't have the latest and greatest equipment either. Her bike was a 2001 CR125 Honda that was vintage in the racing world. But she won! In fact, when we met Chelsy — Rider 669 — in 2007, the 5'4" dynamo had never lost a race. Pretty terrific for an under-equipped, late-in-life starter — and a girl at that!

Motocross is a tough sport. Eight months after we met Chelsy, she was a high school senior when, in a turn while racing at Perris Raceway, she had to stop short for another racer who'd crashed. As Chelsy went over her handlebars, a moving motorcycle part tore her boot — and her big toe. Fortunately, Dr. Liebeskind of West Hills saved her toe (now nicknamed "Knubby") and actually helped it grow back. The only downside, she says, is that it cost her four months

of racing.

That race may have gotten a boot, but Chelsy didn't give racing the boot!

After graduation, Chelsy, for whom college is "Plan B," decided the only way to be a winner was to train every day. To practice daily, Chelsy got the owner of RaceTown 395 (near Victorville) to allow her to literally live at the track. For four months, five days a week, she called her Fifth Wheel (camper/hauler) home and put in full days of practice under the guidance of John "Dr. Arm Pump." Snow, heat, wind, and cold were not reasons to skip practice.

But you might say that, now, when Chelsy puts the pedal to the metal, she does it with the force of titanium, in addition to her sheer will. In January 2009, while practicing during the California Gold Cup Series at RaceTown, she took a 135' jump. Her rear tire clipped the top of the landing so she

"swapped out" and took the fall full force on her right side — with the bike landing on her. Chelsy broke both her right femur and collarbone. When people say nothing stops Chelsy, they mean it! As she was being carried out on a stretcher to be airlifted to Arrowhead Hospital, the dynamo was texting friends!

That injury slowed her down for a mere two months. Titanium rod within her leg, she did a fifty-mile desert ride with her dad just 40 days after surgery, then said, "Mom, I'm ready to go back." On April 5, she raced at Glen Helen Raceway, a national track known for its difficulty level — and took 1st of 1st (the best you can do). Ten days later she won 1st of 1st at Perris Raceway.

On April 20, Chelsy also started doing stunt work — without stunt training. When the Discovery Channel's newest show, *The Colony*, airs in July, it's Chelsy you'll see as "The Marauder" on a black Harley. As I write this, she's taking a race-training break for professional stunt training in Albuquerque.

In Hollywood our gal's turning pro, but on the racing circuit, Chelsy still races as an amateur because those January injuries slowed her down a bit. Her racing continues. Since breaking her leg, she's living back at home in Woodland Hills, but she continues to practice with Dr. Arm Pump 3-4 days a week for 5-7 hours daily.

Today Chelsy rides a RMZ250 Suzuki, purchased in Simi Valley. Her family maintains it themselves (they're privateers). Chelsy is sponsored by the best in the industry and owes a lot of her success to Rob Roon, owner of GMO in Canoga Park, who believed in Chelsy when others didn't.

Want to follow Chelsy? Her website is ChelsySwenson.com. ♦