

Ricky James #824

2008 Sponsorship and Support Proposal

Dear Potential Sponsor,

I would like to present my future plans to your company and what I would like to achieve in 2008.

My name is Ricky James, I am 19 years old and live in Murrieta, California. I was injured in early 2005, almost 3 years ago while racing amateur motocross, I was planning to make my transition to the professional ranks by the year's end. During the first race of the new season I crashed resulting in paralysis and confined me to a wheelchair, or so I thought. Since my injury I have accomplished things that I and everyone around me believed would not or could not be done. I have had an unbelievably good group of friends, family, and supporters around me since being injured and I feel that I don't want to let them down, so I push everyday to make my new lifestyle as good as it can be. I want to continue to keep pushing forward with my simple, one-word motto, "Perseverance".

My Past:

Growing up through elementary and middle school, I always wanted to be a professional motocross rider. Ever since I was born, I saw my dad's dirt bikes in the garage and went to the races with him. He got me my first bike, a PW50, when I was 5. Since then I have been hooked. I would always get mad at my dad for not letting me ride as much as I wanted to when I was in elementary school. Then he wouldn't let me race in middle school like all these young kids I saw in magazines, like Mike Alessi. Another influence I had growing up was my cousin, now the Godfather of Freestyle Motocross, Mike Metzger. Well, that's exactly why my dad would let me race, and why he was holding me back. He saw my cousin grow up racing every weekend since he was 8 years old. Mike broke so many bones and overall worn out on racing by the time his ability was supposed to peak at age 16. The whole time I thought my dad was holding me back, he was helping me, he had a plan.

I started racing a local grand prix series that raced once a month when I was 11. My dad said once I won the number 1 plate he would let me start racing motocross; I won the series the next year. Finally, at age 13, I raced my first motocross race, coincidentally Mike Alessi was in it and I finished in second place behind him in a 3 event format race. After that race I started racing every weekend and improved every single time I got on my bike. I moved up to the 125 Novice class after a year in the 80 12-13 class and eventually up to 125 Intermediate before I turned 15. I then decided to sacrifice everything I could to become faster. I convinced my parents to let me do independent study after 9th grade. My life was now motocross, my friends were at the track and my training buddies were who I hung out with daily. David Bailey, who has been paralyzed for 20 years and past National Champion, approached me at a local track and offered to train me! I took him up on the offer and he taught me valuable techniques and gave me the right mindset. After putting in good rides at my first ever Loretta Lynn's, the largest race for amateur up and coming riders, in 2004, I earned a ride as an American Honda factory rider. I did it! I was on my way. I had made huge progress on the riders who raced since they were young kids! Racers who I looked up to, I was now battling and beating them on a regular basis.

I knew 2005 was my year to shine, I had the ride I had good companies behind me, and I had the drive more than ever before. My mind was set on coming out swing at the first national for the amateurs,

Lake Whitney, Texas. I was training like a mad man up until the race. It was my job, I was all business. I would wake up 3 times a week at 5:30 in the morning take an hour spin class. I was getting so into it and so motivated I actually did 3 of these spin classes a day sometimes. I got the week started off with three 4th place finishes. I was competing with guys who are now riding for the factories like Suzuki's, Ryan Dungey and Kawasaki's Ryan Villopoto 2-time AMA motocross champion. During my fourth race of the week I came together with another rider while running in second and was ejected over my handlebars. Before I could react, I went head first into an embankment on the side of the track, my bike followed me in and broke my spine, literally in half. This crashed left me a T7 paraplegic, broken wrist, punctured lung, and some broken ribs. My dream was over and the fact that I could never ride again brought me to tears.

After My Injury:

After seeing my X-Ray, I knew it would not be possible to walk again without medical advancements such as Stem Cell Research. I was flown from the hospital in Texas after 10 days and to a rehabilitation hospital in Southern California. My first goal was to get strong again, get through rehabilitation and hopefully get through it quick enough to make it to the next amateur race in Las Vegas on April 15th to thank everyone for all the support they gave me and my family while I was in the hospital in Texas. Everyday I asked them what I need to do to "live". I did it and told them, "OK. Let's move on to the next thing." I was confident I was well enough to leave in time to make it to the race in Las Vegas, so I checked myself out after 3 weeks of rehabilitation; they expected me to stay for 6 to 8 weeks. I was driven to start attacking my new lifestyle and find out what was possible, my dad and I drove to Las Vegas straight from rehabilitation, not even going home first which I hadn't seen for 6 weeks. That evening we arrived at the track and that night I went out on the town with some old racing buddies, leaving my dad at the hotel. I ended up riding New York New York rollercoaster the first night out of rehab. The following day I talked the Honda guys into getting me back on a bike, so my buddy rode me around the pits, it felt great. From there, it was game on and I saw the endless possibilities.

I made sure I kept busy to keep my mind off the reality of the situation. I would try to do something productive everyday, even if it was to learn how to drop off curbs, go up escalators, or to get my truck adaptable and learn how to drive again. I started going out with my friends to their test track and watching them ride, I knew I had to find out a way to ride again. I started using duct tape to strap myself to smaller dirt bikes and was able to ride around better than I thought I could. I decided I wanted to race in the Lake Elsinore GP, so my buddy who races quads lent me his practice bike and his mechanic set it up with an adaptable "suicide" shifter. Only 8 months after my injury, I was out racing again. I was running in third place, then halfway through I got a front flat tire. I went on to finish the race and placed in the 9th position out of 45 riders! I got a trophy for being in the top 25 percent! Being strapped to a quad was very risky, however, because of the possibility of it rolling without a roll-cage.

After that race I sat in my garage hours at a time, trying to think of a way that I could ride my 2 wheeled dirt bike again being secure. Thinking up a concept that I thought would do the job, I took my bike to a fabricator who is also in a wheelchair. He built down hill mountain bikes at the time, so I knew he had the abilities to weld. Also being in a wheelchair, he knew what I was talking about when I talked through the concept with him. After successfully modifying the bike and testing it out in a field, I showed up at the local track and stunned the people I used to see there. I then made it a point to go back to the same track I was injured on one year later to the day of my accident, on the same bike to ride a couple of laps. It was one of the best moments of my life to go around the same part of the track one year later and conquer it. Once the word got around to David Bailey that I had built my custom adaptive dirt bike, my former trainer and national champion, approached me and asked if he could spin

some laps on my new adaptable bike at the local track. Without hesitation I said yes, and we went to the track the next week. Seeing David ride my bike with the number "824" was something I thought I would never see. Out at the track I realized that I was actually helping one of my heroes. I never thought I would be able to help him out after all the help he gave me. The best part of the day wasn't seeing him ride for the first time since being hurt 20 years ago, but seeing him ride with his 19 year old son for the first time! Flying over a table top looking over at his son in the air just sent chills down my spine. After riding a couple times I was hooked again and tried getting my friends to take me out to the track at least once a week. I started getting faster and soon started becoming faster than most of my "novice" buddies, so they didn't find it fun riding with me anymore!

Later in the year, I talked my dad into taking me down to spectate the Baja 500, the second largest desert race in North America. While watching from the sidelines I was telling my dad I wanted to compete in the race the following year in 2007. He knew I would love to, but didn't think I was serious. From then on, like a lot of times, I was one-minded: working towards racing the Baja. My first step was racing in the Elsinore Grand Prix, this time on my dirt bike. I started behind everyone, but passed about half of the field which was about 30 guys. That same weekend I raced a Honda Pilot, which I purchased the week before. It is kind of like an off-road one-seater, dune buggy. Soon after that, I talked to Travis Pastrana and he told me that he thought a Backflip would be possible being strapped to the bike like I am, so now I had two goals for 2007. First, was getting prepared for the Baja 500 in June; second, was attempting a Backflip on my dirt bike into a foam pit as soon as I survived the Baja 500. To make things harder for myself and to keep pushing myself, I moved out of my parent's house a month before I turned eighteen. I wanted to prove to myself that I could take care of myself even though I was thrown into my new situation. It was pretty intense because I did not know a paraplegic who was close to my age who moved out on their own. During the next several months I worked towards my goal of racing the Baja which was in June of 2007. I was moved out, going to college, and learning as much as I could about the desert racing scene, all while my friends the same age were still finishing up high school. I decided I wanted to race the first leg of the coarse, so the trucks and quads that started behind the bikes would not catch me. I lined up to race the Baja 500 on June 2nd, as number "120x", just like every other motorcycle racer. I had a rider start right behind me and follow me during the race to assist me just in case I went down, which I did a couple of times. All said and done, I completed my scheduled 125 mile leg of the race in 4 hours. My other three teammates, who finished the other 300 miles of the race, went on to finish in 13th place out of 22 teams!

So now it was onto my second goal: the Backflip. In July of 2007 I went down to X Games gold medalists, Ronnie Renner's house, who is one of the top freestyle motocrossers in the world, to jump a ramp for my first time ever. I ended up jumping a 45 foot gap of one of his metal kickers. I checked out his freshly built foam pit next to his big freestyle landing and told him I would be back in a few weeks for the Backflip. In August of 2007, I attempted the Backflip off a propped up metal kicker ramp. I tried it a total of 8 times and came a lot closer than I ever thought I would! Since then, I have been busy filming for a new up coming video for Transworld Motocross magazine and working on building a new bike to ride and attempt the Backflip again. I have a few things that I am doing different to the bike to be able to flip the bike better. I should be able to land it pretty close to perfect into the foam, its unfinished business as of now!

In September I was nominated to be inducted into the Spinal Cord Injury Hall of Fame! I am up against 9 other accomplished quadriplegics and paraplegics, but feel honored just to be considered only being hurt for two and a half years; they will announce the winner later this year.

My Future Plans:

From previous sponsorship relationships, I know in order to gain sponsorship from a company, the company looks at how the sponsored athlete will be able to represent them to a certain audience. I have kept this in mind and have created a program that will give your company exposure to a variety of consumers. First off, I have spoken to a few schools in the past and I am hooked up with a company that schedules speaking engagements for me at local schools in my area. I get a sense of satisfaction when I share my story to kids and I see them get inspired by my words and videos. Therefore, I want to continue speaking one time a week, which I will be speaking to 100 to 300 students a week, if not more. Also, another aspect that I want to incorporate into my schedule would be going to a rehabilitation hospital once a week to inspire newly injured spinal cord injury patients that life goes on after an injury. I believe it is very important to reach out to these patients shortly after they are injured to give them something to look forward to and want to accomplish as soon as they are strong again. These two tasks will be part of my weekly regimen along with working out to keep healthy, which consists of about 10 hours a week of therapy to keep my legs strong and my body healthy. Just like I had goals for 2007, In 2008 I want to start training for the Ironman World Championships. Just like the old days, David Bailey, who won the Ironman World Championship in 2000, will be training me for this most challenging feat yet. He is the best coach to have in this situation, so I feel honored he is willing to work with me, along with another former Ironman Champion, Todd Jacobs. I will be competing in smaller triathlons next year for preparation, then plan on attacking the Ironman World Championships in 2009. Also, during 2008 I have a few buddies that will be working on a documentary of my life. One of the three videographers has gone to 4 years at UCLA film school. We have a good supply of footage thus far and plan on putting it together by the end of 2008 to enter into film festivals and sell to the public. Along with riding at all my local tracks in southern California, I want to try supermoto which does not require as much standing up, which I can not do. I want to go bigger and better than I did in 2007. Therefore, since Baja 500 is the second biggest race in North America, I want to compete in the Baja 1000 in 2008 which is the largest off-road race in North America, if not the world. I also want to land the Backflip that I have attempted. Another possibility I am considering, is getting my skydiving license. I have talked to the skydiving school which said they are willing to train me. After eight training jumps, I can jump completely on my own. Lastly on my "scheduled list" for next year, will be racing my asphalt circle track truck, a West Coast Pro truck, similar to a Craftsman NASCAR truck, that I will be racing in all 10 events next year starting in March. I have done three races this year and love being competitive again. I plan on competing for "rookie of the year" which will be a huge accomplishment.

Above I said on my "scheduled list" because I constantly have unique offers to be involved in. If your company decides to be involved with me, I will make sure your brand gets recognized in everything I do. There are 2 levels of sponsorship that I am offering. First is a "Corporate" level sponsorship where your companies logos will be displayed in the most prominent areas on all of my gear/driving suits, helmets, bikes, race truck, transport trailer, videos, wheelchair and whatever else I can manage to get it on. Also, your logo will be on all of my personalized 5x8 autograph post cards that I will sign to all the students I speak to, rehabilitation patients I visit, and fans that approach me at the track and anywhere else I might be. Your company will not receive exposure for your product in just one sport but many sports through my active lifestyle. I believe I can make a bigger impact on people than most athletes could and would love for your company to be involved. I love being the one pushing the "disabled" limits and as you can tell, still have a lot planned; this is just the beginning. All I need to make this possible is your companies support! Currently looking for only three "Corporate" level sponsors that I will represent in all of the events listed above. I am limiting it to three companies because I want to make sure I represent these companies to the maximum potential. The second level of sponsorship I am

offering is an "Associate" level which would be for product only. This type of sponsorship implies that I will use your product doing whatever it is your product was designed for, i.e. motocross, NASCAR, Ironman, etc. Your company's logos will be displayed in pre-determined locations on my racing equipment, transportation trailers and racing apparel. The pictures I get in magazines or any other publicity I may get in the future, I will be featured using your product. I hope your company decides to support my activities and capitalizes on this unique sponsorship opportunity. You can trust I will always represent your company and its products to the best of my ability.

If you have any question or comments feel free to contact me through the contact link on my website.

Thank You for Your Consideration,
Ricky James #824

Media Coverage:

Print:

New Mobility Magazine January 2008, 1/2 page
Ability Magazine January 2008, 8 pages
Transworld Motocross Magazine April 07, 8 page feature article
Sports and Spokes Magazine January 07, 4 page feature article
LA Times Sports section September 06, 3/4 page
Press Enterprise Newspaper, 05 & 06
Final Lap Magazine April 05, cover

Television:

Transworld Motocross Video "WHY?" November 2007
Speed Channel coverage of 2007 Baja 500
Fuel TV September 2007
Aura 360 Productions 2007 Baja 500 DVD
KZSW 27 2007
CNN Saturday night
Speed channel during the 2006 Daytona Supercross

Radio:

Pit Pass Radio 2007
DMXS Radio 2007
Totally Off Road Radio 2007