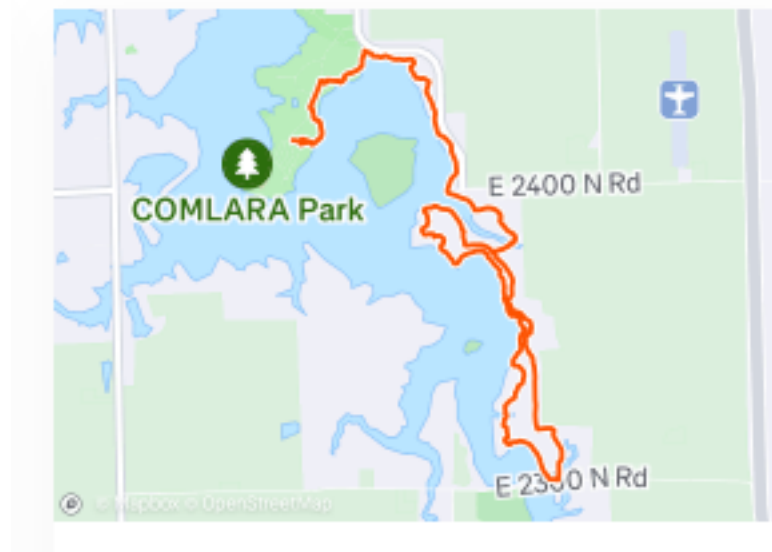


After a three-year hiatus, Comlara Mountain Bike Club revived the Mud Sweat and Gears mountain bike race at Comlara Park on September 6th. Changes for this year's event, included a youth skills course consisting of high banked berms, rolling jumps and small tabletops. Each youth rider was timed on individual runs on the skills course and all were awarded Mud Sweat and Gears for their participation. Majority of the riders improved their times from the first to their last of four individual runs.



From Left to Right, Myles Foxx, Patricio Gordillo, Wyatt Peiffer, Roman Foxx, Jack Selden, Max Selden and Johnathan Weisz. Johnathan Weisz (far right) was the winner of the youth under 14 Novice class. Johnathan's mother PolyAnna (not shown) was the female overall Novice Class winner. Jack and Max Selden road the sport class with their dad after the youth event. Riding over 17 miles for the day!

The Mud Sweat and Gears Novice course was new for 2025. Starting just to the North of Evergreen Lake boat launch. The course started on a wide double track grass path, leading to rolling hills and over to the John English trail. The John English trail is a narrow single-track section with tight twisty turns and few short climbs. At the end of the John English trail, the riders were also challenged with another grass path, leading to fast sweeping downhills to return to the finishing line at the park. The length of the Novice course was a bit over 6 miles in length.



Giovanni Mendez of Winfield, IL was the Novice class winner covering the course in 30 minutes 45 seconds. Andrew Peiffer of Toluca IL was second and Jason Hemp of Normal was third. Comeback of the year goes to two participants, Brian Detweiler who had open heart surgery earlier this year who finished 5th in Novice, and Chris Hardesty which had a recent knee replacement riding the Caboose event Novice course. Pollyanna Weisz was the women's Novice Class winner and her son Jonathan was first in the under 14 year old Novice category.



The Sport Class were greeted with a new course layout which combined the new Novice course with legacy MSG trails at Comlara park. The sport class course rolled out on the same course as the Novices completed, and at the end of the John English trail system, hopped onto the road near the Comlara park Archery range. The riders were challenged with a floating bridge over a creek, a few miles of tight single track, which opened up to another short road section off White Oak Road over to the main mountain bike trail system at Comlara, starting at trail 7. Riders road the majority of the old MSG course single-track rolling trails, some of which were narrow and just enough room to squeeze their handlebars through. The racers followed the course arrows back to the finish line inside the park. The sport class course was 15 miles. * Course measurement via Garmin 45.



There were 16 sport class competitors at this year's Mud Sweat and Gears. Riders in this classification are experienced MTB racers and train for longer distance cycling events. Brian Litterio from Bloomington was first with a time of 1:07, which was just a few minutes slower than the top 5 expert riders lap times. Second place went to Justin Embry of Morton and third place went to Ryan Carmack of Leroy. From Left to Right, Ryan Carmack, Brian Litterio and Justin Embry



The Expert Class was a stacked field, consisting of 10 racers from central Illinois. The expert class racers were challenged with two 15-mile loops to complete. Gerrit Sinclair of Bloomington, set a blazing pace on the opening lap. Completing the 15-mile course in 1 hour, 3 minutes and 42 seconds. Paul Dekeersgieter of Normal was about a minute behind Gerrit at a time of 1:04:28. Tom Keller of Bloomington shadowing Paul roughly a minute behind. All three of these participants are members of the Bloomington Cycle and Fitness race team which compete in cycling events from a variety of disciplines including Mountain bike races, long distance gravel bike races, and cyclocross. Mud Sweat and Gears was Tom Keller's first mountain bike race in over 5 years and was just a bit off pace of the leaders on the opening lap and was holding off Michael Robertson of Glasford and Justin Stevens on the opening lap by roughly two minutes. Michael completed lap 1 in a time of 1:07:36 and Justin Stevens roughly ten seconds behind Michael. Both Michael and Justin are part of the Little Ades Cycling team out of Pekin, IL. Tim Larsen of Bloomington, who is also of the BCF race team completed his lap in 1 hour 10 minutes, Jake Kaminski of Normal at 1:11 minutes, female expert MTB racer Amanda Broughton completed her first lap in 1:18, Jeff Phelps of Bloomington completed his lap in 1:26 and Jeremy Hunt of Wauconda rounded out the field completing his lap in 1 hour 41 minutes.

Michael Robertson leading the Expert class followed by Justin Stevens and a host of other competitors in the Expert Class opening lap



Completing the +30-mile course at the end of the second lap, 57-year-old Gerrit Sinclair maintained his lead and was declared the winner of the Expert class. Gerrit completed the two laps in 2 hours and 11 minutes. Paul Dekeersgieter of Normal finished 2nd with a time of 2 hours 13 minutes.

Throughout the day of racing, majority of the racers in Novice, and Sport classes were finishing within a window of 10-15 seconds to over a minute apart, which made old school board finish scoring easy. The exception of the day was the dog fight that ensued with Tom Keller of Bloomington and Justin Stevens of Farmington, IL. Justin Stevens whittled away the first lap lead that Tom Keller had over him, and with less than 100 yards from the finish, both riders were neck and neck. Final sprint ensued, both riders battling for the finish and Justin Stevens edged out Tom by less than a foot. Comparing lap times with the expert class, majority of the riders slowed slightly between their first and final laps, with exception of Justin Stevens with an opening lap of 1:07:46 and a finish time of 2:14 was the only expert rider to have an even, or slightly negative split in the expert class.

Expert Class Award Winners: Left to Right. **Justin Stevens, Gerrit Sinclair and Paul Dekeersgieter.** Justin was awarded \$25 for Third, Paul D \$50 for 2nd and Gerrit took home \$75.00 for his win. The overall female expert was Amanda Broughton of Pekin, Illinois. She completed the expert course in a time of 2 hours and 46 minutes. In addition to her MSG metal, she took home \$75 cash prize for her efforts.



Thanks to all of who made this event happen for 2025!

Comlara Parks and Recreation-Michael Steffa, Bradley Wood and Park maintenance team

McLean County Sheriff Department

Hudson Township-Jeff Emmert

McLean County Building & Zoning-Darrell Mitchell

McLean County Health Department

Corba MTB club-especially "Retired Guys with Power tools team" Prepped and maintained the trails over the summer and weeks leading to the event.

BCF Race Team

Tom Breedlove, Rick Knuth and Chris Hardesty for volunteering with the MSG youth event

Andy Kehl for Friday MSG course mowing inside the park

Chuck and Kelly Burns with race day registration and scoring

Russ and Lori Manuel with finish line support

Mike Wells, Rick Knuth and John Pratt who were our race day course Marshalls

Brian Detweiler and Jeff Phelps clean up crew inside the park

We have some exciting plans for 2026, and we hope to see you back next year!

2025 Comlara Mud Sweat and Gears Race Recap:

Event Schedule: Youth Classes 9:15 AM

Novice Race 10:00 AM

Expert Race Noon

Sport Race 12:03 PM

Caboose 12:05 PM

Event Photos

<https://runsignup.com/Race/Photos/IL/Hudson/MudSweatAndGearsMTBRace>

Weather: Sunny and Breezy, low 60s

Trail Conditions: Dry