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WORTHY CHAMPIONS

Spoonogle, Wepler crowned as AMA Vintage Grand Champions at 2022 AMA VMD

There was plenty of dust — and some mud — kicked up at 2022 AMA Vintage Motorcycle Days, and when it all settled, two men claimed the event's top honors.

Following three days of hard-nosed off-road racing, 27-year-old Chris Spoonogle from Ballston Spa, N.Y., was named the AMA Vintage Grand Champion, while 62-year-old Lightning Wepler of Tippecanoe, Ohio, earned the title of AMA Senior Vintage Grand Champion — special awards determined by cumulative points earned across three vintage off-road events: hare scrambles, trials and motocross.

Spoonogle entered the final day of racing deadlocked with multiple-time winner Quinn Wentzel for the right to be named AMA Vintage Grand Champion. Spoonogle edged out Wentzel by 6 points in the vintage trials competition and became an AMA Vintage Grand Champion for a second time, his first coming in 2019.

“Coming in, we definitely put in the time, and this is our goal, to come in and do this,” Spoonogle said. “My dad won it last year for the senior class, and I wanted to follow it up to make sure it wasn't a fluke.”

In the competition to be the AMA Senior Vintage Grand Champion, Wepler entered the vintage trials portion with a healthy lead over the field. After mustering his way through 24 tests on Sunday, Wepler became AMA Senior Vintage Grand Champion for the first time in his racing career.

“It was survival mode,” Wepler said on the final day of racing. “I went out there and rode to the best of my ability, but I did not expect this. I was just out there having fun.” —*Keaton Maisano*



Chris Spoonogle (left) and Lightning Wepler (right) shaking hands after being crowned AMA Vintage Grand Champions at VMD.