

BY WENDY RUBICAM EVANS
PHOTOS BY TRACY RASINSKI

Knockin' His Forties

Pro SuperBike racer Johnny Rock Page gets honest about the ups and downs of following a dream

Johnny Rock Page wears his personal mantra, "Dream Big, Anything is Possible," emblazoned on a stack of black silicone bracelets around both wrists, ready to pass them out to fans or anyone needing a little inspiration. The 42-year-old AMA Pro SuperBike racer believes wholeheartedly that this is the way to live life, and he has put that mantra to the test more than once over the years.

Page definitely approaches everything he does with determination and goes full throttle to achieve his goals. Setbacks don't seem to slow down the exuberantly cool dad, entrepreneur and extreme sport pro—he just dusts himself off and starts over again.

Page with his two daughters.



He has recently returned to the AMA Pro SuperBike Circuit as the oldest racer in the division, after a suspension from the AMA in fall of 2009 and the breakup of his marriage. "The dream still goes on. It's just me and my girls now. It's about Dad recovering from life and getting his kick back in," he says.

Page's return to the track at the Honda Super Cycle Weekend in mid-July resulted in him qualifying and placing a personal best 12th place in the elite field of racers, most in their mid-20s.

To truly understand Page's dream, you've got to understand SuperBike racing. According to the American Motorcyclist Association (AMA), "There is no doubt that this form of racing is the most intense, exciting and unpredictable form of motorsports in the world." SuperBike is the top division in the AMA, and Page explains, "At the pro level of SuperBike racing, we're extrapolating every last millisecond to get from one corner to the next, and to connect 10 to 15 corners on a racetrack to come up with the lowest possible time."

In a nutshell, Page says, "Swimmers get wet, and SuperBike racers crash."

Page has sustained a laundry list of injuries over the years and has already crashed twice since his return. "Usually people crash four to eight times a season," Page says. "One out of nine crashes, we've estimated, you get hurt really bad."

So what's the draw for Page? He feels that achieving the status of the elite SuperBike level gives him a confidence he can't get from anything else. "I love it because people seem drawn to SuperBike racers. There's just something about it, when you put your life on the line, that's interesting and it's not about money," he elaborates.

Page has made his share of money as an entrepreneur, building a successful ATM company, CGI Direct. He says he started the business when he was forced to give up motorcycle racing at the age of 20 because he had run out of money. At that time he had won the national championship at Daytona in the Middleweight SuperSport class, and had dreams of moving up to make the SuperBike grid. "I built the ATM business in the hopes of going racing on my own terms," he says. "I built it for 16 years; then I was fat and out of shape and somebody asked, 'Why aren't you racing?'"

Page took the challenge and returned to the track in 2005 with one race opportunity in which to qualify before his professional license expired. Out of shape, yet determined to retain his pro status, he recounts, "I went out there for two more laps, and to me they were death-defying laps because I felt like I was going to crash at every corner." He shaved two seconds off of his time and qualified, beginning his racing comeback.

Page got lean and mean, working out and mountain biking for two hours a day, and joined the SuperSport class in the Daytona 200. "I went to Daytona

with high hopes after walking away from corporate America to see if I could make the SuperBike grid," he says. Unfortunately, he crashed in his 45th lap, going somewhere around 150 mph, and was sidelined with injuries for months afterward. "At that point I started to think maybe racing is not for me...maybe there is no special spot in the history of SuperBike racing for me."

"I didn't think I was going to make it back. Nothing mattered anymore," he confides. "I hit rock bottom."

But Page recovered from his injuries, returned to the track and kept pushing to attain his dream of making the SuperBike grid. "I tried several times, kept missing it, watched my friends cry who quit because they couldn't," he recalls.

In 2007 he made it, by one-tenth of a second. "I freaked out," Page shares. "Everything in my life made sense for once—this crazy money I was spending. This dream became true and all of a sudden I got to grace that stage with all of the guys who were my heroes."

His success continued, and he became double national champion at the 2007 Nationals "Race of Champions" at Daytona.

With his success came opportunity. As an elite racer, Page was in the public eye and was able to use that to his advantage. He began filming a reality show with his family, developed a clothing line and continued racing. What he didn't see creeping up on him was his own ego. As he puts it, "You don't really realize the ego sometimes—it gets out of hand and you don't even realize you're an egomaniac when it's going on, but you start getting all of this attention...you kind of lose a part of yourself." The result was the breakup of his marriage and months of debilitating depression for Page. "I didn't think I was going to make it back. Nothing mattered anymore," he confides. "I hit rock bottom."

A call from the new management of the AMA with the news that his license had been reinstated gave Page a shot in the arm. He was then contacted by David Anthony of the Aussie Dave race team, asking him to, "Just be a racer, and don't worry about anything else." Getting back to the dream was just what Page needed to get his life back on track. "When you're racing, going 200 mph at Daytona, you forget about everything," he says. "So that was my comeback. All of a sudden, life started making sense again."

So Johnny Rock Page is moving ahead on his own—living his racing dream, taking his reality show to Hollywood in the hopes it will bring SuperBike racing into the mainstream, and planning a new clothing line based on his personal mantra. He says with surety, "You've just got to be able to follow your dream. You've just gotta go for it."

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Johnny Rock Page

AGE: 42

STATUS: Single

WHAT INSPIRED HIM TO RACE: "I saw a picture of Eddie Lawson dragging his knee in a corner—he was a SuperBike racer at the time—and to me, it was poetry in motion. It was beautiful."

WHY HE WORKS OUT: Racing demands top performance and proper breathing. "We get into a rhythm, and the first thing to go if you're not tuned in and in top condition is you get sloppy on your marks, which means worse lap times. From a physical health standpoint, it's everything."

TYPICAL WORKOUT: Works out 4-6 times per week. "The elliptical works really good for me, because it works your quads and arms...we're squatting and going from left to right, and we're also using our biceps and triceps for that push-pull of the handlebars, controlling that gyroscope."

He mixes it up for muscle confusion and adds sprints, ball work for core strength, pushups, sit-ups and jumping rope.

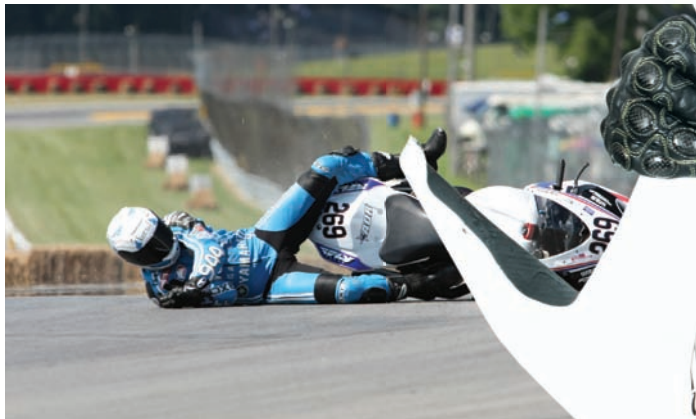
He also likes to ride bicycles and dirt bikes for training.

HEALTHY EATING: He cooks breakfast—usually egg whites, grilled veggies and low-carb tortillas. "I'm very health-conscious in the way I eat. Every time I go out to eat I say, 'Get the salads out of the way, and besides the salads, what's the healthiest thing on the menu?' The waiters will tell you what the healthiest things are."

FOOD WEAKNESSES: Dark chocolate, and greasy, fried hash browns.



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“Everything in my life made sense for once. ...This dream became true and all of a sudden I got to grace that stage with all of the guys who were my heroes,” Page says of making the SuperBike grid.