

put. When the speed reached 50 miles an hour (81 km/h), Opee crouched down closer to the bike. When the road curved, Opee leaned into the turns. *This dog is a natural*, Mike thought.

Mike hurried home and dashed into the house. Grabbing his extra helmet, he sawed a chunk out of the back so it would fit around Opee's head. Then he put the helmet, goggles, and a backpack on the pup. They were about to leave when Mike had another thought. He found some rope and tied Opee to him, just in case the dog lost his balance.

To Santa Barbara and back is 300 miles (483 km)—a long trip on a motorcycle. Mike wondered how long Opee would last. Surprise! Opee made it the entire way.

Feeling Upset?

Get a pup. Dogs understand when people are nervous or scared. Seeing you cry makes a dog feel bad. It will tuck its tail and bow its head, say scientists at the University of London, in England. A dog will snuggle against you and give you a doggie hug. You can bury your face in its soft fur, and it will lick your cheek.

Pretty soon, you will stop thinking about yourself and think about your pup instead. You might even smile.



Then it was pavement. Then dirt again. It went uphill and down. It twisted and turned. For a while it wound right through the center of town.

Clusters of men and women stood on the grass bordering the route. Little kids in baseball caps perched on their fathers' shoulders. Everyone turned toward the roar of the bikes. As the riders whizzed by, the people cheered. "Hey, look!" someone yelled. "There's a dog in the race!"

People waved and shouted. The cheering grew louder when Mike and Opee rode by. Mike had never heard anything like it. He felt like a rock star.

Race officials stood at checkpoints along the way. They waved yellow flags to warn riders of turns and intersections.



Motocross is dangerous. People can get hurt or killed. That's why motocross is called an "extreme sport." Besides competing against others, extreme sport athletes also battle nature. They may face fierce winds, giant waves, snow, ice, finger-numbing cold, or blistering heat. Contestants need both physical and mental strength.

Dogs take part in extreme sports, too. The best known event is the Iditarod (sounds like EYE-DIT-UR-ODD). Held in Alaska, it's an 1,100-mile (1,770-km) race for sled dogs. The winners of that truly are "top dogs."