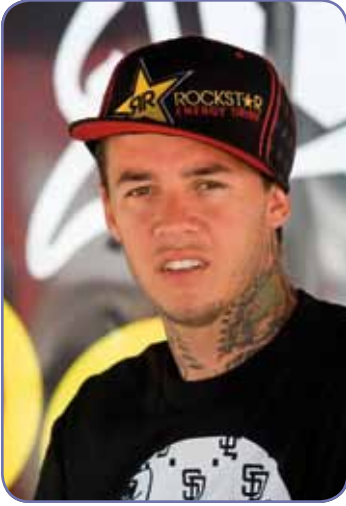


## Jeremy Stenberg



Jeremy “Twitch” Stenberg may be unknown to adult readers of *Inside TSA* but to many young kids and teens he is a certified sports hero. The 28-year-old Californian is a professional freestyle motocross (FMX) rider defying gravity and the competition in an arena that requires discipline, skill and bravery. He participates in the most demanding competitions in his sport and has racked up a series of impressive wins including: a First Place in the 2008 LG Action Sport FMX World Championships; First Place in the 2008 Red Bull X Fighters in Brazil; Bronze in the 2008 X Games Speed & Style; and Silver in the 2008 ESPN Moto X Championships Speed & Style. Like many top athletes Jeremy has a shoe — the Twitch 2 from Etnies Shoes — described as a premier skate/BMX shoe and designed by Jeremy for his athletic fans. In addition to Metal Mulisha, Jeremy is associated with major sponsors including Rockstar Energy Drink and Boost Mobile.

**TSA:** We’ve interviewed people in a wide range of professions, including some impressive professional athletes, but you are our very first FMX pro. Please tell us when and how you got started in your exciting career.

**Jeremy:** I started with the Metal Mulisha crew at 16. I was in the right place at the right time. They were my first sponsors and I’m still with them. I was trying freestyle at 14 or 15 watching videos of it. It came naturally to me. I started riding when I was two. My parents put me on a little motorbike. We’d go for holidays in the desert and my dad would take me riding every day. It is something I love doing. I’m pretty blessed by getting paid for doing what I love to do.

**TSA:** After all this time in competition, are you fearless?

**Jeremy:** No, I still get scared, but that’s the fun of it. You feel much better accomplishing something with that little bit of fear.

**TSA:** What about injuries?

**Jeremy:** I’ve been injured. I fell off my bike 25 feet in the air, broke my left leg and my right ankle. I’ve broken each ankle 14 times and my left leg just once. I’ve had broken ribs, a collapsed lung, a lacerated liver ... lots of injuries.

**TSA:** Does TS have an impact on your performance as an athlete?

**Jeremy:** I don’t think so, not a negative impact. It’s helped me get more fans and given me a nickname “Twitch.” It was a little weird at first and kind of bothered me, but now it’s stuck and I’m fine with it. All my fans know me as “Twitch.” It’s all good.

Because of my tics I got teased in school and got into fights, but I think it made me stronger. I had to prove that I can still do this, that I’m still ‘normal’, that I have tics, make funny faces and shake my head, while still riding.

**TSA:** What was your life like when you were growing up with TS?

**Jeremy:** I was making noises and clearing my throat, but I was sent to doctors because they thought my parents were beating me. I had bruises, cuts and black eyes. I was just a boy having fun and being pretty fearless. The injuries sent me to the neurologist and that’s how we found out I actually had TS.

**TSA:** What was the impact of your TS symptoms at school?

**Jeremy:** I wasn’t into school. They put me in Special Ed for having TS. That made my day way easier. I could do the work — if I wanted to, but I didn’t. They said I needed to pay attention and that I had ADD. I didn’t focus on schoolwork. I did the least possible. Some kids are into school. I wasn’t.

**TSA:** There are many FMX fans among the *Inside TSA* readers, any advice for young riders in the TSA family?

**Jeremy:** Practice! A lot of people think we just wake up and do a back flip, but it takes a lot of work, a lot of riding and a lot of practice. They say practice makes perfect — maybe it does?

Anything is possible if you want to do it. You have to figure it out and then work. If you want to get straight A’s you can do it, but you have to do the work.

**TSA:** Does anyone else in your family have TS?

**Jeremy:** My little cousin does. I was the first one. They came to me to ask questions about teasing in school and about being afraid in public. I’m the big cousin now. I can talk about it with them.

**TSA:** Any stress reducing tips you’d like to share with adults with TS?

**Jeremy:** I tic the most when I’m nervous, excited or stressed out. I just try to be myself, take a deep breath and go. I’ve practiced this (stunt) everyday for months so I talk to myself and I come out on top. It’s a lot of mental work.

**TSA:** You were featured on MTV’s “True Life” episode about TS. What do you think of how the media portrays people with TS?

**Jeremy:** It’s mostly good, but I hate the words “suffers from TS.” I don’t “suffer.” Some people really do have it bad, but it’s not really a big deal for me to have TS.

**TSA:** You’re a family man now. Has that changed you?

**Jeremy:** I have an 8-year-old daughter and another on the way. It’s definitely changed me. When you have kids you’re not living for yourself anymore. I think about risks and what’s worth it. I think before I do anything now. When I’m not riding, I’m with my family.

**TSA:** Is your little girl interested in riding?

**Jeremy:** She’s more of a girly girl and won’t ride dirt bikes. We’ll see about our second daughter. ●

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