

ISDE Poland 2004

The Six Days Diaries

Report 10 – Day 6 – The Final shambles!

The final day of the modern ISDE is usually a simple trail ride of about three checks length, and takes riders from the start paddock to the final MX circuit. This year was to prove to be no exception, although I did give Chris the hurry up on one check when it looked like the organisers had flung in a nasty tight check to catch riders out. It turned out to be fine and Chris came in with about 6 minutes to spare!



In Medziana Gora, the weather had been very dry for some time and over the course of the ISDE, there had only been one day of slight rain. The final MX was to be held in a flat field next to a MX held on Day 1 & 2. The MX test was very dusty and riders voiced concerns about the events climax early in the week. As in Scottish events, riders are set in the tests individually, about every 20 seconds. In the final MX there is a full line up of 40 riders, all trying to get in the lead. Concerns about the safety of riding in these conditions were raised well before Saturday, and the organisers promised to water the track.



Over the last few years, the legendary “Purple Helmets” display team have been in attendance and they also made the trip to Poland this year. These guys (about 30 or so) all arrive in Convoy on 90cc step-through Honda mopeds and put on an acrobatic comedy display. For 2004 the organisers only allowed the “Helmets” to have a 2 lap race round the circuit. This had the crowd revved up fully and the deliberate knock-offs and pile-ups kept the throngs amused.

Even at this early stage, the riders could see that dust would be a problem as the C90's were kicking up a mess even with their limited power. With 9 races on the cards, most agreed that the track was well under-watered and questioned whether it was safe for riders.

Race 1 was the top 40 E1 class riders, which contained GB representation from Paul Eddy, Wayne Braybrook, Daryl Bolter and Simon Wakely. The group also contained top MX'ers like Pedro Tragter and Allesandro Bellometti as well as some pretty handy Enduro riders. Because of the time that Chris had lost on Thursday with his top-end replacement, he was dropped from the first race to the third.

Riders get one sighting/practice lap to get to grips with the circuit before picking their start position depending on their overall position at Friday night. Paul Eddy dropped from 5th overall to nearly 30th when he also had top end problems on the little Honda thumper. This meant his grid position and crucially his start would be affected. Daryl was in 20th place whilst Si had a position nearer the back of the group. At the start of the race, the dust was so bad that as a spectator at turn 8, I still had difficulty in picking out the GB riders. On lap 2 I was able to see that Daryl was in a strong place about 8th, Si and Eddy were back in mid pack and Wayne a few places behind. Daryl was really motoring and climbing over his rear mudguard! The track layout and dust contributed to the fact that it was very difficult to pass. This made it very difficult for Eddy and Si to make up places and everyone struggled in the dust except the leader. Eventually, Silvan "The Flying Pig" got past Bolter and maintained that to the chequered flag. Wayne Braybrook suffered engine gremlins and it looked like the compression problems Eddy had on Friday had found there way into Wayne's engine with two laps to go. He plodded round and crossed the line, happy to have secured another Gold for the trophy cabinet.



Daryl Bolter flies!

Race 2 of the E2 category saw Rowan Jones, Andrew Edwards, Junior Team rider Dylan Jones and a host of other GB riders battle the dust. Rowan made a terrific start and led for a couple of laps before settling into second place. DJ hit a fallen rider in the dust and found himself cartwheeling, whilst Andrew's painful thumb made it very difficult to hold on. All riders got across the finish line, but it was Rowan that had the biggest smile of all the Brits, only a few seconds behind the Polish leader! A great finish to his Polish ISDE.

The dust had been an even bigger problem for race 2 and I was pretty nervous for Chris – I knew he must get a good start. Because of the top end problem of Thursday, he was way down the list, and had one of the last picks of start gate. On his sighting lap he held way back to make sure he wasn't trailing in others dust, then did a quick practice start and bombed round the track. As he filtered in to choose his gate, I advised him and John Hinam (Wales) of a couple of sneaky lines I'd seen. To both mine and Chris's amazement, most riders picked gates at the middle or right hand side of the line, the start being pretty short into a tight left hander! Chris was able to

choose his almost ideal line about 6 places in from the left. Brilliant, I knew it was down to his start now, and waited eagerly at the first corner. Waving the St Andrews flag madly, the 40 engines revved and the gate dropped. Chris didn't seem to get a great jump off the line, but he really picked up drive and streaked out towards the head of the pack. The only rider near him was Hans Vogel, a very talented Dutch Junior teamster, but he seemed to go pretty deep into the first corner. However, he had just enough to make it to the second corner on Chris's inside, which forced him wide. Hans was a pretty smart rider and obviously knew how much of a problem the dust would be, so he straight away ploughed into the biggest, softest berm and dragged his feet to kick up as much stoor as possible. Young Hay settled into second position about five seconds down. When Hans stumbled over in a tight corner, a mad Scot was running around complete with Saltire draped across his back, urging Chris past. Father Trevor was willing the boy on, but Hans got his balance back and pulled away just in front of him. He tried all he could over the full 8 laps, but just couldn't get past, even when back markers started to get in the way. He wasn't taking any prisoners, and well and truly stuffed any rider silly enough to try to delay him or hold him up. Second it was then for Chris, but he had impressed more than a few riders and spectators, with compliments from the Dutch and Yanks. Sean Wooley was in the same race and kept flying round in about 10th place, even finding time to wave to his supporters!



Chris tries to find a way past Hans Vogel of Holland in the final MX – look at the dust!

Then real dismay. The first of the E2 class races featuring one Stefan Merriman seemed to be delayed. Eventually word gets passed back that some riders are refusing to ride because of safety concerns. We think that Merriman is one of the main leaders of this, as he's leading the event overall and doesn't need to risk losing it in the final MX. After a long delay, along comes a Fire Truck, in a pathetic attempt to dampen the course. It makes no difference, and as the E2 riders do another sighting lap, the dust is as bad as ever after the lap. We all know what's going to happen, but none of the spectators or supporters want to believe it.

It goes to a head to head battle between the organisers and the E2 riders. Some want to ride, others refuse. The organisers threaten to strip the medal from any rider who doesn't race, but still no movement from the grid. Eventually everyone gets fed up and they all start to leave the circuit, really disappointed at not seeing their riders. The final MX will be scrubbed, so all the hard work and risks taken by the E1 riders was for nothing.

But then more news reaches us as Chris and I have a drink in the hotel that evening. Sean Wooley informs us that the Jury has indeed thrown out all the riders that refused to race in E2 and E3 classes. Not only that, but the Spanish Junior Team has been thrown out for unsportsmanlike behaviour! It turns out that Juan Knight had taken his bike from the parc ferme and was completing a lap when the Spaniard Ivan Cervantes dismounted him with a post! Obviously a trifle aggrieved by this, he promptly clocked Ivan and put him to sleep for a while. The rest of the Spaniards didn't like that, so a bit of a brawl erupted, the end result of which was their exclusion. That didn't effect the GB World Trophy Team,(who were in 5th place), but it did move the Juniors up a spot into 4th overall. A great result for them.

A few more drinks and off to bed. We've decided we'll travel in convoy with Sean until we get out of Poland just to make sure neither of us have problems. After a week of riding, we can't be bothered to load the van, so leave it until morning and hit the sack for a rest. Tomorrow we begin the long drive to Calais.

All the riders want to be following this arrow at any ISDE





The attempts to water the track at the final MX just weren't good enough



Cute dog of the week award
goes to this Czech Check Dog