

ISDE Poland 2004

The Six Days Diaries

Report 2 – Sussed & Sustenance!

We had arrived in Medziana Gora late on Monday night, so had little time to do much else other than get the beds made, have some supper and get to bed. Chris is acutely aware of how he needs to fuel his body for success and has recently seen a nutritionist for some expert advice. They recommended he have honey sandwiches for breakfast and supper, so each night he demolishes about 4 or 5! Personally speaking I think he has a Winnie the Pooh / Paddington Bear fetish or something.

Hydration may also be a problem for the riders next week. Wednesday brought cooler and cloudier weather, but still riders find themselves drinking water constantly to top up their fluid levels. In an event like the ISDE it is especially important to ensure you don't dehydrate. Just think how bad you feel on a Monday morning after a Scottish Enduro, then imagine you have to go out and do it all again – and keep going until Friday! It's not for the faint hearted or unfit.

Being at the event with the bike more or less ready means that we have the chance to relax before Friday's scrutineering. Chris had been at a European Championship at Medziana Gora late last year, so he had a pretty good idea where some of the checks and tests were. Once we'd had a freezing cold shower and said hello to some other Brits, we headed off into the Polish countryside in search of fields of tape. We did manage to find a MX test, but the organisers were still putting the posts up, never mind taping them! We'll have to come back later in the week. Our next priority was to get a good quality map of the route so I can suss out where the route goes and where I'm going to meet Chris. After searching for most of the day and trying to explain what we wanted in pigeon English and lots of hand gestures, we eventually find a decent map and mark on the checks and tests.

It's very much the calm before the storm at the start area. Most of the people there know they have plenty time to do everything they need to, but as more people arrive and it's getting nearer and nearer to the start, the panic starts to



set in and spread around the pits. The Polish organisers have arranged a superb location for the parc ferme and pit/work area. Part of an old communist road race circuit has been commandeered and all the nations have stacks of room to park their vehicles and work on their bikes. Great Britain has the largest entry, so naturally we have the largest pit area. Strangely though we all seem to gather in one

small area and huddle closely together! The Trophy and Junior Trophy teams will be getting serviced from the Fast Eddy and D3 racetrucks which are in a separate paddock for all the WC teams.

The big KTM truck arrives and unloads stacks of Six Days Specials. A small excited army of expectant riders gathers together to claim their new toy for the week and each one wheels it away with a massive grin on their face. GasGas have a large presence too, with support teams from the likes of Ohlins, Marzocchi and Pirelli / Metzeler also making themselves noticed.



The far flung nations are also gathering with the large Australian contingent being instantly recognisable by their green and yellow patriotic team gear. The large kangaroo stickers on their hire cars are also a bit of a give-away! Team USA's massive container is being unloaded, with crates bearing the names and addresses of riders from every

corner of the States. I managed to catch up with a rider I rode with in Spain (2000) and we chewed the fat for a while. Four years ago, he mistook Rachel for my daughter! This year he asked how my daughter was getting on!! He has also moved on from the lightweight two-strokes to the 450 four-poppers and loves riding them, except when it gets wet!



Talk of who will do well fly around the paddock. The favourite teams are going to be Finland and Italy as they have much more strength in depth than the other nations. I think that Holland and Belgium could surprise a few, simply because the tests will be so like their home nation events. With names like Pedro Tragter in the Dutch Trophy Team, you'll realise how fast these guys are! Team GB will also have chance of a good result. Knighter and Eddy will be challenging for a class win, with the rest of our guys very capable. In the ISDE, the top 5 of 6 scores count for the Trophy Team and the top 3 of 4 scores for the Juniors. Little is expected of the Junior team, but with Daryl Bolter, Simon Wakely, Robert Jones and Dylan Jones in the team, they could pull out a few surprises. The fact that we are able to present a Junior team of such calibre is testament itself to the hard work being done by the Junior Training Squad, and it will surely pay dividends in the future.

By all accounts, the surrounding terrain will offer little in the way of technical challenge for the riders and they really could do with a lot of rain. The dust will certainly be a problem here, as it seems to be as powdery and fine as it was in Portugal in 1999. A prime example of this is seen at the practice track. On Tuesday afternoon, only a few Dutch riders had been round the short grassy test-like practice track. By late on Wednesday, it looked like the tail

end of a very bumpy Breckland! The dust seemed to hang in the air and riders started to realise that unless it rains pretty heavily, they'll be changing their air filters very regularly.

Over the next couple of days until check-in, Chris will be doing all the small final touches to the bike, like setting the suspension up and making sure the jetting is spot on. He's already spent ages getting his sponsor stickers onto his beautifully D-Zigns painted Team GB helmet, so at least he'll look the part!



We've just watched the latest MX/FMX DVD "Crush" and Chris is all fired up. When you see what these guys can do on a bike, I really do feel like an amateur!

Right, I'm off with Winnie to get some honey sandwiches before hitting the sack – I wonder, does that mean I'm more like Tigger or Eeor?



Team D3 KTM



Now that's what I call an awning – Team TM



Team KTM had stacks of Six Days bikes – literally!



You know you've made as a factory star when you have your own personalised environmental mat!



Team UFO Corse Yamaha



Merriman's immaculate WR 450F complete with carbon fibre tank!



Paul Eddy – the legend.



Team Mitas and Ohlins



The KTM's had some pretty funky event graphics