

ISDE Poland 2004

The Six Days Diaries

Report 3 – Tyres & Tired!

With only a day to go before the check-in of the bikes, Chris is busy making sure he is happy with his set-up. Before he left home he had done a major rebuild of his bike, including mains and top end. His ISDE special KTM had been delayed for two weeks in customs which meant he'd left for Dover whilst his bike travelled up to North Berwick. With that frustration behind him, he set off for the practice track to see how the bike was running.

The test track is about 30 seconds long and is really soft and loose, not to mention incredibly dusty. After about 500 bikes have been round it 20 times each, it has started to get proper rough. From the pits, you can hear the bikes racing round the track and all day long the sound never let up the whole day.

Chris was pretty content with the set-up and only wanted to change his FMF tailpipe for the standard one in case it started to become too noisy towards the end of the week when the packing starts to go off. A few laps later and he was happy enough to prep the bike for the scrutineers. He demonstrated the proper way to change mousse's using the Metzeler machine and he will comfortably manage two tyres and a filter within 15 minutes – I only hope I can keep up with him!

I also had to do some preparation to his spare bike. A top end job, followed by swapping the mousse's for tubes and lastly fit a replacement chain. All done, I set off with Geraint Jones to get the lie of the land and suss out Days 1 and 2 checks. As we cruise about and find some of the going, we struggle to find the actual checks, as the organisers haven't set them up yet. Geraint will be doing the Pre-ride tomorrow, so will let us all know then. One thing that is certain is that the off-road course will be very fast and the outriders will have their work cut out getting to the checks before the rider. I think I need to visit the KTM van and get a smaller rear sprocket so the 125 isn't squealing quite so much on the roads.

As suspected, the terrain is reasonably flat, with the odd minor incline to add interest to an otherwise monotonous route. The major problem for all the riders will be dust, as it is simply hanging in the air and being sucked into the airboxes in huge volumes. Chris rode for about 20 mins around the practice track and his filter was well overdue a replacement.

News reaches us late in the night that this years' ISDE will be 7 days long! The organisers are checking bikes into a parc ferme in the centre of Kielce, with a 15km off-road ride to the race circuit on Sunday afternoon. The riders will go off at 1 minute intervals in their national teams, then junior teams then club teams. Most riders are really concerned with the amount of dust that will be kicked up and sucked into airboxes even before the event proper starts on

Monday. Visibility is also going to be a problem with so many riders in such a short time period. Inevitably there will be casualties – lets hope none of them are Brits!

We've now moved in to the Gormada hotel in Kielce, so our sleeping arrangements are much more comfortable – we even have warm showers! Chris seems to be in need of his sleep and tends to collapse in bed fairly early, sleeping right through until 8am when we both get up for breakfast. The only down side with staying at the hotel is that it is about 30 minutes away from the start area. Some riders such as Paul Eddy, David & Juan Knight, Daryl Bolter and Ed Jones have chosen to stay in their vans/caravans at a nearby campsite, minimising any travel time.

As sign in and scrutineering is tomorrow, I'll be out again sussing out the routes and finding out how I can get between two points as quick as possible!