

ISDE Poland 2004

The Six Days Diaries

Report 5 – Day 1 Dust!

Predictions of a fast dry course were well and truly on the money during Day 1 of the 79th ISDE in Poland. The course has turned out to be not particularly technical, but riders are already commenting on how demanding it will be physically. Dust is also going to be a problem, but will really only be a big issue on the tests as the check times are reasonably generous.

Each day features 3 tests, two MX type and one Enduro test, although all are in stubble fields or rough parks with no cross-country or forest parts. The terrain is very sandy, but most of the tests feature a firm crust. Strangely though, one test crosses over two fields, one of which is very soft deep sand, the other being rock solid hardpack with dusty and soft berms. With over 450 riders in the field, the sandy tests are cutting up really badly, especially for the



club riders. Additionally, the problem of dust being thrown up from slower riders is also an issue. Although there is a slight breeze, the dust drifts in the air across the 5-7 minute long tests. In some cases Chris has passed three riders in these tests, but each time is held up considerably. It is even worse for the club riders. No-one looks smooth in these tests – well no-one except Merriman and Salminen! Both of

these riders are a class apart, with Merriman leading by nearly 40 seconds at the end of the day! The trail dust is not too bad, but riders are pretty much changing a filter before every test! All the top GB riders are using filter-skins of one kind or another and are making a big difference to the longevity of the filter. The sun shines all day as well and riders refuel themselves with isotonic drinks and energy food at every check possible.

In terms of rider performance, it has been a steady day for most Trophy and Junior Trophy riders. Young Daryl Bolter was the star of the day finishing in about 20th place in the E1 (125 2St & 250 4St) class, and set the fastest test time of all E1 riders in the last test of lap one – beating Paul Eddy in the process! David Knight had an interesting day with some excitement that nearly put him out of the event. His D3 KTM ignition started to give him some problems, and the bike would not rev out. Unable to sort the problem before going into a test, he had to ride with a very poorly performing bike. He actually stopped in the test fearing his brake had jammed on. It hadn't, but his entire tailpipe was glowing cherry red from the excessive heat. Forced to

continue, he carried on and had a major spill on the going when the KTM failed to respond to some throttle input to clear a hazard. Fortunately he landed on his head, so no damage was done, other than a grazed face and fat lip! At the next check he was able to sort the problem with assistance from Julian Stephens and the factory KTM mechanics. The problem seemed to be the CDI unit, and since replacing it, David has reported having no more problems. Having sorted out the problem, David was really back on the pace, winning the last two tests and clawing back about 15 seconds on Samuli Aro.

Chris had a steady day, and never really seemed to be tuned in with the bike. His trademark smooth style just wasn't there, but despite that, he still posted his best class finish for Day 1 of an ISDE in 44th place. He did have a blown fork seal from check two onwards, which undoubtedly affected his times, especially on lap two when the course started to get very rough. At the end of the day, he swapped both forks for a new pair and fitted a rear tyre in his fifteen minute work period. Completely unflustered or rushed, he comfortably manages to get the work done – no dramas here. In the morning he will swap the forks back (after an overnight service) and fit another new air filter.



Simon Wakely had a good day for the Juniors had finished a few places ahead of Chris, as did Dylan Jones.

From my own point of view, the outriding has been good fun, although parts have been quite boring. Right from the start of the day, the little KTM had to fly, just to keep up on the road with the riders on the going! I am usually able to meet Chris at least once each check, with a quick thumbs up to let me know all is OK. Checks one and two are pretty much all road work, with the occasional fast dash down a forestry type road (but still a public road) so that I can meet Chris. Although it is easy to ride a bike very quickly on the roads, when to start to mix in very bumpy and rutted roads, slick level crossings, somewhat erratic driving and suicidal pets, you really have to keep your wits about you. In the small towns and villages all the riders and outriders and greeted every few meters by kids and adults waving you by. In the third check I have found about three mile of cross country riding which I need to attack flat out so I don't miss Chris. At least this part isn't boring, especially when you throw on a backpack containing filters, energy drinks, spares, jackets, goggles and gloves that weighs in at about 10kgs! Part of the challenge of outriding is finding places that others don't know about, but after a lap, other outriders follow me to some of the route points to meet other Trophy pilots riding around Chris.



After meeting Chris at each checkpoint, I make sure he is OK, then head for the start of the test to collect his bum bag. The event is notorious for having bikes stolen from the tests, so before I leave the bike, I fit a padlock. I just about have enough time to do this before he arrives and offer any tips on the test that I have seen. I like to keep one eye on the bike, so don't wander far from it and also note down the GB riders times, as well as Chris's. If I can, I cheer my rider on through the test, and then give him back his bum bag and a quick drink. After that I pack up, unlock the bike and scoot off full pelt to meet up with him.

Strangely enough, I feel like I'm racing as well. I never stop for any length of time and when I'm in the check I only have a few minutes to eat and drink as well as get things ready for Chris.

At the end of Day 1, Ed Jones score was dropped to leave the GB Trophy team in a strong 5th place, with the Junior lads in 8th place. Leading the GB club team challenge was the Army "A" team (10th overall club team), four seconds ahead of Wales "A" with Midlands Enduro Team in third.

Day 2 will be a repeat of Day 1, including all the tests, so tomorrow will definitely be more of the same!!



Simon Wakely gets refuelled at the Start / Finish Checkpoint



Chris dives into a route check