

ISDE Poland 2004

The Six Days Diaries

Report 8 – Day 4 Dawns Gloomy!

The tragic loss yesterday of 26-year-old German Trophy rider Swen Enderlin is really hitting home now. Today's course will pass the very spot where he died and riders and support crew discuss the matter very solemnly. At 7.45 am, the organizers held a minute's silence in memory of the German Champion, and the huge pit area fell remarkably quiet. At the exact time that Swen would have checked into the work area, almost the entire German contingent of riders and supporters walked into the area, unified in their grief and dressed in their team colours. For some of the crew, it was all too much and they stood in silence outside the area. At Swen's allotted start time, the team moved to the start ramp, and then slowly walked off back to their pit area. At the end of Day 4, most of the German national delegation had moved off, heading home. Before leaving however, they left a cross and some flowers by the track.

Today would also be a difficult day for Christopher, having had his bike expire as he crossed into the final control last night. Unsure of the problem, it looked most likely that the piston and/or ring had broken, causing a loss of compression. Whatever the problem, the young Trophy rider would have to remove the cylinder to find out – not an easy task in 15 minutes!

As it turned out, it would take Chris considerably longer than this to sort his machine. He had two major problems. Firstly, the Wednesday had been a very wet day, and the engine was caked in a dry sandy film of mud – plenty of opportunity to drop muck into the big end and finish his ISDE completely. Obviously he wanted to make sure this didn't happen, so was very deliberate and careful in cleaning the machine. Secondly, a large piece of the piston had broken off, bending the ring and demolishing the barrel. The big problem with this was in getting the barrel off the piston, as it always jammed in the ports. As no assistance is allowed and under the watchful eye of the FIM, Chris struggled to prise off the cylinder with only one pair of hands! Eventually he managed, and the job of re-assembly could begin. The new piston was fitted pretty quickly, but as it has two rings, fitting the barrel was to prove quite tricky. At last it went on, so the bike was rebuilt and pushed to the line to start – at 57 minutes late!!! Chris already knew that a second ISDE Gold medal had disappeared, but now silver as well. He'll have to do really well to avoid anything other than a Bronze. That as a final result would still be preferable to



a DNF. The good news is that as 5 of 6 scores count in the Trophy team, his team score will be dropped and it should not dramatically affect the results.

As an outsider, I had to help Chris with the top-end replacement, and talked him through it in conjunction with Euan Syme. Having spent the first hour of



the day in the pits, the first thing I had to do after getting out on the road, was getting him to the first check! I had taken his radiator shields with me, for Chris to fit at the first check. At a road crossing, he indicated to me that he did not have time to put in the bolts holding the rad scoops to the radiator, so I looked out two replacements. I had also grabbed some coolant to top up the radiator and we carried out all this in the five minutes he had at checkpoint 1. With the first test of the day immediately after this check, Chris had barely had time to run in the engine. He held back from over-revving the bike but still managed to post an impressive time in about 30th place in E1 class. His disappointment at losing time had

turned into aggressive riding in the test and he actually looked visibly faster than earlier this week. At least this part is going well today.

The rest of the day proved to be fairly uneventful, with the course pretty straightforward, other than the dammed muddy sections and associated spectators. Si Wakely even commented that he had never ridden in an event where the crowd try to push you into the muddy holes!! I did actually witness the locals constructing a jump at the side of a long railway section. Their enthusiasm for motorcycling knows no bounds! Some sections of the route require me to ride pretty quick cross country, and I enjoyed this much more today. Yesterday I had a minor off on a very slippy landrover track, and when the dirt bit me, it ripped off the side pocket of my backpack and littered the contents across the Polish countryside!! Oh well, it was an old backpack anyway! Today I was stopped by the local cops on this tight section. Fortunately I had my passport and driving licence with me, so could prove who I was. I think that their main concern was that (with all the recent bike thefts) I was riding a stolen bike. The copper let me away after noting done my particulars, but this meant I was about 3 minutes late in arriving at the check to meet Chris.

Chris was on the gas in the tests and put in a solid performance in E1 class. If he'd not been 57 minutes late leaving parc ferme, he'd have completed the

day in 30th place. As it was, he finished in 116th, but still managed to pull out 3½ minutes in the tests on an American rider who also dropped 57 minutes!

At the final work period, he again replaced front and rear tyres and fitted a new filter within the allotted 15 minutes. He'd put in a long shift today and had to be pretty handy with the spanners and throttle. He'd done well despite his final position.

Did I mention my new claim to fame? Yesterday, in the wet and on my 125, I was able to pass Juha Salminen on the going – and I even had my backpack on at the time!! Now the fact that it was a road section and that he wasn't trying and I was flat out has nothing to do with anything OK!

The rest of the Brits are still going pretty steady. Sean Wooley is still going, but was suffering from a lack of bike time and fitness, Rob Meek, in his first ISDE, had been going well, but suffered mechanical problems when the valve clearances had gone. Rowan Jones had a strong day and helped the Welsh A team to 9th overall club team. Team-mate Andrew Edwards had a tumble in the first test and injured his left thumb quite badly, which proved to be painful for the rest of the day. Si Wakely had a big crash in test 1, and lost two minutes when he had to refit the throttle cable! Daryl Bolter continues to impress and holds down another solid top 20 finish.

Wayne Braybrook was unlucky in losing a minute today when he failed a noise test. Despite this minor setback, his score still counts because of the lost time Chris has had.

The Trophy Team has moved up again, and now sits in 5th place overall, with the Juniors also moving up to 5th place for the week.



The German team pay their respects



Chris passes stamp check 3



Out here, even the outriders are mobbed by the kids and sign heaps of autographs!!

The third check on lap 2



Sean Wooley on the going –
Check 1, Day 4



David Knight preps the bike for a Day 4 ride out...



As does brother Juan.