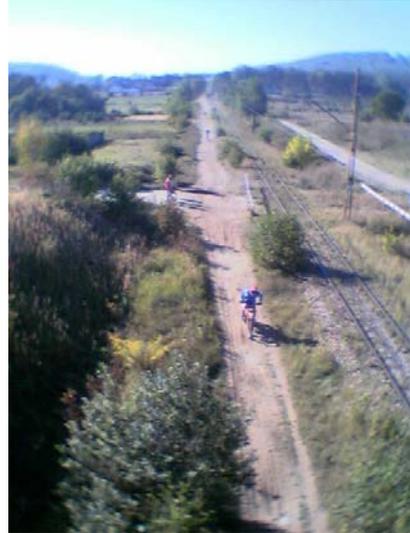


ISDE Poland 2004

The Six Days Diaries

Report 9 – Day 5 A new route!

The soft sandy terrain around Miedziana Gora has taken a battering in the last four days. Nearly 500 riders have ridden over the way in and out of the paddock twice each day, for four days. To say the bumps are horrendous would be a major understatement. Stiff and sore bodies are finding it more and more demanding as the week goes on. No ISDE is ever easy, and the 79th continues the tradition.



Day 5 usually means a new route with fresh bumps. Unfortunately this year, the first and last checks are the same as earlier in the week, complete with larger versions of the whoops. 3 of the 5 checks however are on new going,



which is welcomed by the riders. Many of the outriders were unable to establish the route of Day 5, so this gave us the challenge of following the route whilst combining a bit of trail-riding. The race track crosses a main road several times and gives the outriders a short chance to gather and chew the fat.

Today the start list is re-shuffled and Chris now starts with Juha Salminen (Finland) and Arnaud Vilanova (Spain). He's been riding pretty well since Tuesday, and normally leads the trio on the going. On the tests however Salminen takes the lead and usually beats Chris by about 10-12 seconds in a four minute test. Over the course of the day, Salminen will pull out a lead of about 70 seconds!

Today I met a new group of outriders and we fly off after each check and test to meet our respective riders at every opportunity. Today this worked out at about 3-4 times each check.

Chris again had a steady day, still riding the fine line between racing hard and crashing hard! The tests have



been used earlier in the week and are by now very worn out, especially around the last few tight corners. The top riders use different techniques to dealing with the hardpack. The flamboyant Italians, Spanish and Australians all blast around the small dusty berms, carrying lots of speed but going the long way round. The precise Finns and individuals like Merriman tend to be avoiding the worn line, sweeping in late to the corners, spinning round and then blasting up the inside of the following straight. Both are very fast and both are very effective. Chris finishes the day in about 35th place, after he dropped the bike in the final test. He is a little disappointed as he is comparing his times to other British riders, some of whom are really finding their form in Poland.

He has ridden well, but feels he should be higher in the overall standings. Because of his top end problem of Day 3, his overall position will be considerably lower than his respective speed. Like Juha Salminen (who lost 55 mins on day 2 with engine trouble) he will be in the final race of his class, so stands a good chance of finishing very highly. The MX will be right up is street, and it wouldn't surprise me if he was able to pull off a top finish.



As far as the national team goes, the Trophy team suffered a bit of a blow when Paul Eddy suffered mechanical problems, forcing him to change the shims at night. Unfortunately he was unable to complete the job in the 15 minutes of work time, so had to push the bike all the way round from his Fast Eddy Race Van to the Checkpoint. Having allowed himself 3 minutes to do that, the push ended up taking him 6 minutes, a penalty of 180 points. At the level he is competing, that means he will drop way down the leaderboard.

Wayne Braybrook was having clutch problems, so replaced the plates at the halfway stage and suffered no further problems. Knighter was on form, but lost out again to Samuli Aro overall in the E3 class. Juan Knight had an uneventful ride, as did Ed Jones.

The Juniors had very mixed fortunes. Daryl Bolter again flew and was 10th overall E1 class, a real step up. Robert Jones was the victim of a check mix-up and he ran out of fuel on the last check of the day. Cousin Ed caught up and siphoned some fuel out to get him going to the finish. Although Ed came in on time, young Bobby dropped two minutes. Their overall position will probably remain around the fifth place mark.

Tomorrow is a short 3 check ride to the final MX track (a stubble field) and Chris will be in the final E1 race. I'm sure his MX experience will come to the fore in the race and we'll have something to shout about tomorrow.



Chris concentrates on the test, despite the best efforts of the local girls



But sometimes he succumbs....

Attached report for Day 5. Just been up to Final MX. Paul Ed got a bad start and in the dust was unable to come through much. Daryl Bolter in eighth and Si Wakely back in about 20th. Wayne Braybrook had bike probs on last two laps and brought up the rear, however still finished. Race 2 was the 2nd E1 lot (40-80) and Rowan Jones got the holeshot. He was passed on lap two by a Polish Trophy rider and was unable to repass him, finishing an excellent 2nd in race. Race 3 had Chris in and he was really up for it. Got out the gate well and into the first turn in second place to a Dutch Junior rider. These two pulled out a big lead over third and had a really exciting race. The dust was getting really bad and Chris was never really close enough to get past the Dutchman, so came into the finish in second.

The fourth race was the best of the E2 riders with Merriman and co going head to head. In an unfortunate repeat of the final MX in Portugal, some of the riders refused to race. The track was watered by fire engines, but it was all too little too late and made absolutely no difference. After another sighting lap, they again still protested and after 90 mins all the other riders and spectators decided to head home as there was no way it was going ahead. Poor planning by the Poles, as it had been very obvious for over a fortnight that the ground would need significant watering.

Euan Syme writes - [Trophy team finished 5th. David Knight took the E2 runner up award behind Finnish rider Samuli Aro. Mechanical problems hit Paul Edmondson on Day 5 & dropped him out of the E1 top 3 down to 60th](#)

I'll be in the van for the next few days coming home, so I don't know when I'll get the chance to write again, but will send it on asap.

Cheers for now

Derekski