

ERZBERG RODEO 2009

Gavin Johnston, Niel Flockhart and the boys (Tim, John Zander, Stuart & Brian) headed to Austria to compete in the Erzberg Rodeo XV. This would turn out to be the toughest course set yet and with temperatures up to 30° It's not going to be easy.

WEDNESDAY 10th June

Gavin, Stuart and Bri flew out from Stanstead and met up with the boys from Eurotek in the airport, the bikes had left on Monday the 8th June.

Neil, Tim, John and Zander had the long haul in the motor home and were running a day late. Once Gavin and Co go to Erzberg we had a look about in the hire cars to check out the upcoming prologue and an idea where Sunday's course went. Some of the climbs were shocking. Not to mention the scary down hills, even Dougie Lampkin was taken aback with what he had signed up for.

Thursday 11th JUNE

Out the hotel back to Erzberg, build up bikes and get some practice on the enduro X and a guided tour up the prologue. In the evening it was the rocket ride race up a few climbs in the quarry. Gavin had a run up then it was followed by a lot of hanging about so the bikes went back in the tents and off we went to the hotel. 8.30pm Neil and company were getting close. They arrive about 9.30pm had left info for them to get sorted out that night.

Friday 12th JUNE

Early start back to Erzberg for the first prologue. Only 500 will make the main event on Sunday from 1500. Met up with Neil and the boys for a bit craic. Gavin was up for his first run, riding a KTM 300 this year for a bit more punch up the mountain. Done well he was on the 6th row out of 10 four better than last year.

Neil had a real high number which he was supposed to wait till the end of the day, but we told him to go brass it, which worked. He got the prologue out the way early, but missed out on practice for the Enduro X, (well you can't have everything). Neil was 50th front row so he was wrapped.

Later that afternoon was Enduro X qualifying 6 start but only 3 go through.

In the semis Gavin was up going well running third easy till last lap where he got caught up in the rock section letting a German bloke catch up to him and a few corners later the German pulled a good block pass on Gavin so Gavin was out.

Up next was Neil, with only a part of a sighting lap for practice he has it all to do, he pulls a holeshot out the gate and finishes 2nd and on to the semi finals. In the semi finals Neil pulls a holeshot again, there's a bit of pushing and barging he drops a few places but comes onto the German that blocked passed Gavin earlier, Neil put him down hard with his blockpass and a big cheer goes up from all the Brits. Neil wins the Semi Final.

In the final Neil got a bad pick of the gate. Got hooked up with a few bikes at the start which put him down to 5th, he put his head down and started to pick them off. Sometimes trying a bit too hard he was making heaps of time on all the jumps (right up his tree). Neil made it up to 2nd and was catching Graham Jarvis but just run out of laps. Neil was over the moon with 2nd, which got him a VIP pass for food and drink.

SATURDAY 13th JUNE

Up early again prologue time again. Neil had to go to the press office for an interview, overnight star. Got permission to start the prologue anytime he also got an official guide to take him around the Sunday's course, Gavin going along as well just to see what they were in for.

On the prologue Gavin dropped back to 8th row turns out that later on there was a few tapes down so the course was a bit shorter, for every second you drop 5 bikes will pass you.

Neil moved up to 48th front row his MotoX cornering was helping bit time.

SUNDAY 14th JUNE

Get to the quarry for the game plan. Gavin knew what he was in for from row 8, A REAL HARD DAY. Neil was just up for it as it was his first time.

The boys jumped on the free buses (that run all day around the event never happen in the UK) to the last climb out of the quarry to refuel bike and rider. Gavin would change to his trials helmet.

Neil got stuck on stuck on the second last climb; Bri jumped down to help but had to use the bike as a brake as the hills are so slidy. Tim was next down and was stopped by Bri or he would be going to the bottom anyway bike recovered and Neil was on his way. Gavin was 15 minutes later no problems fuel, helmet and off.

We all set off walking around the quarry to the bit they call the Roof of Africa, 35 minutes walk in the heat was hard going all up hill. We got there a Balzusiak came through "man on a mission". As we all got to the edge of the road and looked down 250^{ft}- 300^{ft} on loose rocks and rubble there was Dougie Lampkin, we were all shouting to him and he shouted back for a cold beer he was part of the Eurotek boys. We slid our way down to give him water and encouragement no help is allowed. They had cut the trees down on the side of the back so it could not be used. Standing on the scree you went down 6^{ft} when you moved, the heat down there was in the mid 30's no air, Dougie was struggling. We gave him all our water then started shouting at people to throw more water down. Within 5 minutes he was gone, couldn't focus passed out then rolled down the hill. The shouting changed from water to medics. The medic took his time getting down, he was out of his depth. So we go someone to radio for more help, just then a BMW rider knocked a large rock on the Dougies head. An official showed up with another medic – two IV's were put into Dougie and the race put on hold until a helicopter could get there. Film makers Full Throttle tried for the chopper, they passed there film gear to John who then started filming (as you do). 80 Minutes later a Medic chopper arrived and air lifted Lampkin to hospital. It took 5 of us to get his bike near the top where John rode it out wearing shorts and trainers (DON'T TRY THIS AT HOME).

Meanwhile the boys are pushing on in their part of the race. Neil got to check 13 out of 20 where his body and bike had gave their best. The CRF250 was not the ideal bike but done well.

Gavin had a harder event with 350 riders in front of him to pass. Gavin got to check 4, where some riders from the 2nd row had given up already and weren't happy to let people past. Gavin pushed by and caught up with Neil and check 13 had a few words and went on- his trials skills paying off big time. Gavin pushed onto check 15 got through Karls Diner but there wasn't anyone to swipe his card but by that time the clock had caught him up. So it was back to the camp for Gavin and Neil, the boys had a good one hours walk back.

Once we were all back and swapped stories it was soon time to pack up and head for home. Neil, Tim, John and Zander had to long drive through the night. Gavin was on a bit of downer after the event and said he was finished with Erzberg. But a few hours and beers later he was on about putting a Scottish Team together (Neil is up for it) next year. So anyone who is keen contact Gavin Johnston.

Gavin Stuart and Bri were on the plane the next day. Dougie Lampkin was on the same plane and thanked the boys for their help and encouragement but said his fuel tank was empty.

Gavin is going to teach Neil Trials for next year and Neil is going to teach Gavin to corner quicker so hopefully two Scottish Champions can help each other.

This year's event was even better than last year. If you only go to one event next year, YOU HAVE TO GO TO ERZBERG.

Everyone got home safely so roll on next year.

Brian Hill

P.S. Once home Gavin found out he was disqualified for a jump start. A bit harsh.

The Boys

Zander, John, Tim, Neil, Gavin, Stuart Brian



Gavin on the rocks section Enduro X



Gavin and Neil – Enduro X



Neil 1415 - Enduro X Final



John and Tim at one of the drop offs



Dougie Lampkin – running out of steam

