

June 26th

## Erzberg Red Bull Hare Scramble 2011

The mountain they call the Iron Giant in Austria overlooking the small town of Eisenerz is a very special place and the host of the biggest Extreme race in the calendar each year, with over 1800 riders competing it has to be one of the biggest Motorcycle races in the World. I have helped David Knight, Taddy Blazusiak and many other KTM riders reach the podium in the last 7 years and this year we returned with a new Erzberg KTM Rookie, hoping to once again conquer the challenges that Karl Katoch and his crew dream up.

This year it would be the turn of KORR's Jonny Walker to make his debut on the mountain with his specially prepared 300 EXC, as usual only 500 riders would qualify for the main race via two prologue sprints up the Iron Mountain on Friday and Saturday, this part of the event favours large capacity 4 Stroke MX Bikes, 10 time's World MX Champion Stefan Everts also competed at Erzberg for the first time on a new 500 EXC. Jonny was not fazed by the level of competition and surprised many at his first attempt by qualifying in 4<sup>th</sup> overall just behind last years winner Taddy Blazusiak also mounted on a smaller 2 stroke KTM.

Every year this race seems to become more difficult, each year you think that it will be impossible, but somehow the riders and the teams find a way to reach the finish. This year I believe was the hardest yet with a few sections requiring assistance to pull the bikes via ropes to the top of muddy climbs in the forests. Only the most experienced and best prepared can think about finishing this race, but also a lot of good fortune is required as its so easy to break the bike.

The race started at 12.00 in the quarry basin, Jonny made a solid start in around 3<sup>rd</sup> position and quickly disposed of other riders as his 300 EXC simply powered past them up the several climbs, soon he was at the front leading Taddy Blazusiak to the first check point. Once he entered the wooded sections the experience of Blazusiak came to play as he found a line that would cut inside Jonny, who then simply followed the champion in his wheel tracks. Taddy would make a mistake and became stuck which stopped Jonny in a difficult section on tree roots and he could not get going quickly again, this allowed the Polish rider to make a small gap.

These two KTM riders in the fastest part of the course started to pull out a good lead over the field, but their progress would soon be halted in the steep forest sections. Taddy arrived first and the KTM team pulled him to the top by rope, Jonny had to wait his turn, unfortunately this cost him time and Jarvis and Lampkin caught him, nothing Jonny could do as he watched Jarvis being pulled up by his team while he waited his turn.

Now relegated to 3<sup>rd</sup> position he crossed over the mountain top and stopped at the fuel check just before "Machine Hill", still in good spirits and everything working well before he would enter the second half of the race, all was looking very good until he bent the front brake disc beyond repair in the no help zone :-



:- now not only did he have an almost impossible course to navigate but the handicap of no front brake !!! and many steep sections. This considerably slowed his pace, he could not ride down some steep descents and also on uphill climbs was struggling to hold the bike, Dougie Lampkin took advantage and passed him just before "Karl's Diner" but once in this long arduous rock section Jonny could actually make up so time again and made easy work of the thousands of boulders.

For this year the riders were rewarded with two portions of "Karl's Diner" !!! as once they reached the end they would drop down one level and return in even bigger rocks to test them to the limit, Blazusiak became trapped here and Jarvis would pass him and both Lampkin and Walker were still within sight. At the end of this section the riders climbed into another steep forest section which took several attempts, Jarvis missed the stamp check here and Taddy would take the lead again. Jonny now in 3<sup>rd</sup> was almost out of energy as he tried to push his bike up to the stamp check on the loose stones, each time he made progress the bike would slide back as he had no front brake to hold the machine and no way could he sit on the bike to use the rear, now in a no help zone he simply had to dig deep to reach the most difficult check point.

Once past this point there was just "Roof of Africa" to negotiate and the famous "Dynamite Hill" which had also been creatively modified this year to give spectators a little more action and the riders more trouble. Fortunately Jonny had a few old trials friends on this section who guided him rock by rock to the top, zig zagging his way up a section that would not be out of place in an expert Trial. Finally Exhausted Jonny crossed the line in a time of 2 hrs and 39 minutes.

**Jonny Walker** " Before the race I had no idea what to expect from this race, I just hoped to finish and make a good result, actually everything went quite good and I was feeling ok until the front brake stopped working, I have never been so scared going down hills before, I took many risks. I lost a lot of time and energy because of the brake, but to still be on the podium at my first time here is amazing, I want to thank KTM for support and also Julian and Leo"

**Julian Stevens** " I have been many times to Erzberg before and I have never seen such a difficult track here, Jonny choose the hardest year to make his debut and made a fantastic job, not only did he show great speed in the prologue he also showed he had the skills and Endurance for the main race, I have to be honest that I did not expect him to make the podium in his first year, we came for experience and to prepare for the future so I am really happy that he exceeded our expectations of him, now with Jonny we go up another level and he has shown his ability and potential to everybody, you do not make a good result here by accident or alone, he has been working very hard all season and now he knows exactly what more he must do, many thanks to Leo for helping, all our sponsors and KTM Austria "

## Results - Hare Scramble

1. Taddy Blazusiak KTM Factory Racing 300 EXC
2. Dougie Lampkin Gas Gas Factory
3. **Jonny Walker Azego KORR KTM 300 EXC**