

09 October 2011

Red Bull Sea to Sky Kemer, Turkey

At the holiday resort of Kemer on Turkey's South coast the Kemer Motorcycle club hosted the second edition of their Sea to Sky race, literally an Extreme race which starts on the beach and finishes 2635 mtr above the sea on the peak of Mount Olympus, a place only accessible by Foot, Cable Car or Extreme Motorcycle.

This region of Turkey has all the ingredients for a perfect Extreme race, a welcoming town to host the riders and teams, already thousands of spectators and natural terrain that is perfect to test the riders and their bikes.

The format for this race is 3 stages over 2 days, Saturday is the qualifying day and decides the starting order for day 2. The first test for the 85 participants would be a true beach race with the course running down to the Mediterranean sea. A Le Mans style start got the race underway, the ever so enthusiastic locals did not even wait for starting orders and took a home advantage, Jonny not quite expecting the start so soon was caught off guard. However he made light work of his poor start by moving up the leader-board quickly and passed around 20 riders to take the lead in just a couple of laps, once out front with a safe 26 second margin he cruised to the finish of the 20 minute moto and finished in front of Chris Birch making a KTM one two result.

From the Beach the riders had around 10 minutes to get prepared and leave for the center of Kemer, here they would be seeded for race 2 based on the beach race results. At 30 second intervals the riders would start the 40km Forest race again from the beach from a river bed running through the center of town. Jonny on pole position started the race in a much more controlled manner and 30 seconds later Chris Birch would follow and each rider after that 30 seconds apart.

At the 10km check point riders could refuel without assistance and JW was first to stop, but the more experienced Birch took a small gamble and decided not to fuel, this would save him at least 1 minute and allow him to catch on Jonny's lead. Furthermore Jonny would crash down a small ravine and lost more time and while retrieving his bike could only watch his KTM team-mate pass by. So the order of stage two was a reverse of the first race with Birch taking the win from Jonny and again a KTM one two, the result from stage 2 decided which row riders would start on Sunday, Groups of 10 riders will be leave at 30 second intervals.



Day 2 would see very different condition's, Saturday had temperatures close to 30 degrees and Sunday was overcast and cool, you could not even see the mountain top and rain threatened and eventually storms arrived just as the leaders finished.

At 9.00am the race got underway from the beach and once again nervous riders jumped the start which left Jonny with work to do, but within minutes he passed his rivals and took the lead once again and would remain there until around half distance when Jarvis caught him, Jonny let him through so Graham could guide the route and meet the hazards first, the idea of this tactic was to give himself chance for a rest and let Graham do the hard work and maybe make mistakes, however it would be Jonny who made a mistake and hit a tree, it great pain there was no way he could match the pass of Jarvis and had to settle for defending second. With great relief he reached the summit, a few minutes down on Graham but most importantly in a good solid 2nd position.

Jonny Walker Azego KORR KTM 300 EXC:- “ I've had a great weekend, I'm so pleased that KTM, Red Bull and the organisers helped me to race in Turkey, the Beach race was so much fun and the mountains trails really spectacular, the club made a really good course, I pushed hard in the main race but I was making a few mistakes and getting tired, so I decided it was better to follow Graham and try to learn from him, but I hit a tree very hard with my shoulder and have damaged it quite bad and thought at first maybe I would need to stop, after this it was difficult to ride the bike and I could no longer match Graham's pace, but I was too close to the finish to give up. Thanks to all the people who helped me and made me feel welcome in Turkey, my priority now it to get fixed up quickly as we have many more races in the next few weeks, I think that my shoulder is fractured.”.

Julian Stevens Team Manager:- “ A really great event which i'm sure has a great future in the world of extreme racing, something very different from other races and an excellent combination of terrain. Jonny has had a great weekend, winning the beach race in style and showing great pace on the forest and mountain race's, being a rookie to extreme his has a lot still to experience and learn, but he is showing that he is a fast learner and has great potential, another podium at a major international event shows his consistency and talent. I'm hoping there is nothing to serious with his shoulder, but he has a great deal of swelling so its important that we get him straight to hospital for x-rays once we get back to the UK. A big thanks to KTM, Spormoto and Red Bull Turkey for helping with logistics and also Taurus Traxs (Enduro Tours Turkey) for excellent race support, we really look forward to coming back next year”