

Hello again

My race in Spain was frustrating. It was a long drive and the venue was impossible to find, it was cool to have some sun though. I had a big crash in practice which knocked my confidence; it also broke my shock (rear suspension) and scratched my forks which meant they were leaking oil, not a good start. We didn't have a spare shock so I had to race with it banging away. In the end I managed to come 2nd only 1 second off the lead. I was quite chuffed despite all the problems I had.



I was well up for my next race though. This was the third and final round of the Caersws Cup. They had cut a few new sections of track that were great to ride while they were still loose and natural. On Sunday the day of the race, there were many rain clouds about which didn't look too promising for a dry race. It poured, I managed to take the win though I won with a lead of 9 seconds over Mark Scott, and this win also gave me the win in the series too.

The next weekend was up at Fort William for the 3rd round of the National Series. This was also another eventful weekend. In practice I had a massive crash and knocked myself out! I wasn't able to remember getting back to my car or anything. I also have a hefty scar to show for it on my neck now. I had to spend that night in the local hospital and was told I wouldn't be able to race. But after having a good sleep and rest I felt pretty stiff, but still up for the race. On the Saturday doing more practice I felt pretty good on my bike, only thing hindering me was a pain in my wrist. On the Sunday I managed to put in a perfect run, totally exhausted at the end, taking the win by 16 seconds. I was really pleased with the race as at one point I thought I wouldn't be able to race at all.

Next was the Scottish Champs in Glencoe. This track had never had a race held on it before. It was steep, rocky and technical. I really liked the track. The weather stayed dry and sunny which kept the midges at bay. The race went good, I managed to win by 8 seconds in my first run and slipped up in my second, but this was the first time that I had been the Scottish Champ so I was pleased with the whole weekend.

The following weekend was the National Champs, held in Bala, Wales. It was the first time that I had been there and I didn't really know what to expect. The track was fast and easy. The National Champs was another race that I had never won before so I was quite nervous to do well. On Saturday I was going well on the track. It was really wet and slippery. By Sunday the track had dried out a lot so a tyre change was needed. At the top while I was waiting for my run there was a big delay, this didn't help as I started to think too much which made me nervous. In my run I felt like I was going well until I made a few mistakes in places because I couldn't concentrate, these mistakes cost me the race. I came 2nd; I was one second off the lead. This made me pretty upset.

Back down to Wales, Moelfre for my next race, round 4 of the National Series. It is a pretty easy and fast track. There are no really hard sections. However there were 90mph winds and the very top section had to be closed, some people lost their easy ups. The wind made the track a lot harder than usual and the seeding run on Saturday was cancelled so nobody knew how they were going compared to others. On Sunday the wind was still blowing hard. There was a pretty big delay at the top of my run, but I managed to keep myself warm and put a good clean run together. I finished 1st with Mark Scott in 2nd and Jamie Maller in 3rd.

Ae Forest near Dumfries was the 4th round of the Scottish Series. This is one of my least favourite courses that I race each year. This is because it's always the same track with no really good bits in it. The last drop into the bottom field (about 30 feet) is usually straight forward but for some reason this year there were quite a few crashes, a broken wrist and collar bone! The race was good though; I put together a good fast race run and won by 3 seconds. I went a bit big on the last drop, when I landed there was a loud clunk in my forks, as I pasted the finish line I heard the commentator say "That sounds expensive." I was lucky enough to get them fixed under warranty ready for my next race.

Back at Innerleithen for round 5 of the Scottish series. This is one of my favourite tracks, it's always a different track and they're all really good. The uplift got a bit behind the race times which meant the seeding got out of order, I was sent off behind two slower guys that I caught up. When you catch a slower rider you have to shout which side you are going to pass on and they have to move over a little, it's tricky as the track is very narrow in places. I got past the first rider alright, but as I was catching the second he crashed and his bike was lying in the track. I managed to just squeeze past and it didn't affect my run too much. I still won, but it was pretty close.

The final race of the season was at Innerleithen again, the final round of the National Series. I was leading the series and had to finish in the top five to win the series. It was a great weekend, the sun was out and the track was pretty good. Practice went well and I was feeling good. At the very start of my race run as I left the start gate my chain came off. I couldn't believe it. Luckily it was a fairly steep start so I got up to speed. I tried to keep my speed, not braking too much, it was frustrating not being able to pedal to keep up my speed. I lost by 2 seconds and was pretty disappointed, but when I realised I had done enough to take the series I cheered up.

A few weeks off from riding now to rest then into my off season training.

Cheers
Arran

