



BMW Motorrad Motorsport

BMW brings first Enduro World Championship season to a close WEC France Noirtable 2007-09-15/16

BMW Motorrad Motorsport team rider Joel Smets successfully delivered BMW's pre-production 450cc sports enduro bike to the finish of both days of the eighth and final round of the '07 World Enduro Championship, the GP of France staged in Noirtable, bringing to an end what has been an exciting first season of WEC competition for both Joel and the BMW Motorrad Motorsport team. Entering a prototype version of the Enduro 2 class machine into the second round of the WEC series in Spain back in April before making further improvements and testing many new parts one month later in Italy, the machine used by Smets in Noirtable featured several parts that would likely be used in the production of the finished 450cc sports enduro bike. In finishing both days Joel showed that the bike performed faultlessly.

Despite the GP of France marking the end of the '07 WEC season the event was in many ways the toughest with all riders facing 200 kilometres of demanding rock and dust littered tracks on each day, as well as dealing with many challenging special tests. Far from properly prepared for the event, due largely to having been unable to ride the 450cc sports enduro bike since the WEC GP of Italy in late May due to the ongoing developments being made to the bike, Joel was forced to dig deep and finished 16th in the Enduro 2 class



Finisher of both days: Joel Smets

on day one before improving to 15th on day two. Despite 30 per cent of the E2 class entry failing to finish day one BMW's 450 sports enduro bike performed perfectly.

The BMW Motorrad Motorsport team now plans to enter a selected number of indoor enduro events to further continue its development as well as competing in the final round of the '07 US Grand national Cross Country Series in late October.

Joel Smets: "The GP of France was a really, really tough race – a perfect place to test the latest version of the 450cc BMW in fact. Because the bike has been developed considerably since the last time we raced it at the WEC GP of Italy

I haven't been able to ride it that much, which meant that my bike fitness wasn't what it needed to be. I was so tired on the transport stages that I wasn't able to attack the special tests like the top riders. But I'm not competing to try and win, like all the WEC races this season I was competing to continue the development of the bike. There have been many very positive improvements made to the bike and as tough as the race was, and as tired and unsympathetic as I was to the bike, it finished both days with flying colours.

200 kilometres a day on these rough tracks was extremely difficult. I honestly thought that I might not be able to finish after the first lap on day one. The team were extremely pleased with the way that the bike performed. So all in all it has been a very positive weekend."

Markus Theobald (development department): "The goal at the world championship races in Spain and Italy was to test the concept of the bike as a prototype, to see which parts worked well and which areas we needed to improve. Here in France many of the parts fitted to Joel's bike were parts that could become production parts. So to see the bike finish both days was extremely encouraging, especially considering the punishment Joel has given it.

Mechanically the bike performed perfectly. We now have a bike that could go on and become a production bike. All season it has been our goal to enter a bike that could become a production bike, and to have it finish both days of a world championship race. We have done that now, which is great."

Grand Prix of France, E2 Class – Day 1

1. Johnny Aubert (Yamaha) 49:48.35
2. Fabien Planet (KTM) 50:06.50
3. Samuli Aro (KTM) 50:12.46
16. Joel Smets (BMW) 1.07:03.91

Grand Prix of France, E2 Class – Day 2

1. Johnny Aubert (Yamaha) 50:43.14
2. Mika Ahola (Honda) 51:03.15
3. Fabien Planet (KTM) 52:24.05
15. Joel Smets (BMW) 56:17.38

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