

BK Maco Racing Team – 24 Hours of Le Mans 2009

The 2009 World Endurance Championship began on April 18 – 19th with the famous 24 hour race at Le Mans, France. After competing for the last 6 years, Slovak team, BK Maco Moto Racing Team had to be there.

For this race the Slovak team had 2 Spanish riders and 1 American, equipped with 2 brand new 2009 R1 Yamahas. The team were keen to build on their fantastic 3rd position, achieved at the last race in the 2008 season, at Losail circuit, Qatar.

One of the Spanish riders, Dani Ribalta, won the 2006 Le Mans 24 Hour race. For his countryman Victor Carrasco this was to be his first race at Le Mans, but from pre season testing the team knew that Victor would be fast. American Jason Pridmore, World Endurance Champion 2003, raced with the team last year, so his outstanding quality was well known. The team therefore entered the race with high hopes.

Free practice and qualifying ran without any problems and the Slovak team qualified in 12th position out of 46. Qualifying lap times for all three riders were very promising showing that the team were capable of running at the front of the field.

Ribalta started the race at 3 pm on Saturday. Each riders' rota was just under one hour, and the team settled comfortably into the top ten, running between 5th and 9th place, depending on pit stops.

As with all marathon 24 hour Endurance races, good luck is required. Unfortunately for the team luck deserted us in the middle of the night. Almost twelve hours into the race, Jason Pridmore crashed heavily in torrential rain. In this high speed crash Jason sustained fractures to his left arm and heel and was unable to push the bike back to the pit box, signalling the end of the race for the team.

This was obviously a big disappointment and the team were very concerned about Jason's injuries. However, this is motorcycle endurance racing and incidents like this are part of the sport. Even with this setback, the team is not discouraged and will continue to fight their way toward the top, building on the promise shown during the first twelve hours of the race.



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Denisa Greskova, Team Manager:

“Our team was well prepared. Our motorcycles and pit box for this year was a surprise for our competitors and journalists. Although we are not a factory team, during the winter Martin Kuzma demonstrated that he could prepare everything to top quality. Before our crash everything was going to plan, but between 1 am and 3 am there were many incidents due to the heavy rain. Jason’s fall came when we were in 5th position. Jason’s injuries meant that his leathers and boots needed to be cut off. I am very sorry for Jason. He has apologised for what happened. I would like to take this opportunity to wish Jason a swift recovery and to let him know that we are looking forward to his return, back to full health, when we can welcome him back to the team.”

Martin Kuzma, Team Owner:

“I have mixed feelings. On one hand, we did not finish the race because unfortunately Jason got hurt, but on the other hand we have never been in such a high position during a race at Le Mans. During training our riders made fantastic times, with the top ten and Superpole only escaping us by 0.3 seconds. We were the third fastest Yamaha team and the first with a standard engine. Four months work in preparing the motorcycle proved its worth. The whole weekend ran very smoothly with riders, motorcycles, and the whole team working at 110%. I would like to say thank you to everybody in the team, and to all of our sponsors and partners.”
“In the end we were stopped by a crash, a racing incident. I am very sorry about Jason’s injury, but I had the opportunity to communicate with him after his surgery. His Doctor has stated that he should make a speedy recovery from his injuries.”

BK Maco Moto Racing Team will race next on the 31st May at the Oschersleben 8 hour race in Germany.

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