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www.jedmetcherracing.com.au

MTM-RT Motorsport/Jed Metcher Round 10, Portimao Portugal STK 600 Championship.

The final round of the World superbike season 2011 would finish up on the beautiful Portimao, Portuguese coast. A truly unique circuit with elevations and incredible descents that can make you feel like you are on a roller coaster! The type of track that i would recommend to anyone looking for a thrill. Although it sounds exciting it was defiantly the most difficult track to learn in my 2011 campaign.

Practise 1 was simply learning the track a little better after our testing was interrupted multiple times throughout the day. This was a tricky situation due to the tyre restrictions so we needed to gain as much track knowledge of lines and set up as we could, with minimal laps. We finished the session with only 6 laps completed, leaving us in 14th position which was a little bit worrying at that point. However, we did manage to improve with the set up.

Qualifying 1 proved difficult again with the very technical nature of the track. We struggled to find a good feeling with the front suspension. And this lack of suspension caused a small front end loss in a tight right hand hairpin. This crash highlighted our issue and helped to find a better set up. We finished up in 7th position, a second row start with a spare set of tyres was not to ideal but we had time to improve again in qualifying 2.

Qualifying 2 produced some fantastic weather and a great time to put in some fast laps to challenge for the front row start. Unfortunately for us we were still trying to find a good setting for the front suspension, we spent some time on the old rubber fixing our problems. After making a lot of changes we decided it was time to put some new rubber on and attempt at least 6 laps to snatch the front row. I had a few clear runs with some nice consistent pace. I managed to place in 4th position with 5 minutes to go but was relegated back to 6th at the end of the session. We sat as a team after the session and discussed the issues and the strategy that we would put in place in order to bring the championship home! Two times during the year we have started from the 2nd row and still managed podium finishes so the confidence was still on our side.

The final race of the year, and up to this point, the most important race of my career! I had not felt any real nervous feelings, I had thought and talked about them more than really feeling them. I saw it simply as a normal race weekend where the podium finish was the goal. But at this point in time just before the race putting my suit on I had no choice in the matter, it was like a flooding feeling that couldn't be stopped even if I kept my mind distracted. A big meal the night before prepared by the amazing couple Bart Jacobs and his wife Marina Boterberg set the team up for a pleasant sleep. Preparation went as normal on Sunday morning with a little more concentration in all areas by my fantastic mechanics Swen Jenik and Roberto Lukken Codes. Team manager Ludo Van Der Veken and I went over the race plans in different situations again to be sure that pit board communication to me mid race would be understood. Once on the grid I managed to calm down and focus on the race ahead. My start was quite ok and the first corner proved even better pulling out in 3rd position gave me a great confidence boost because I had a little bit of clear track and only needed to finish 9th in the worst case scenario. It was good to finally follow some of the guys who know the circuit pretty well in order to improve myself a little more. I honestly felt that I could run with Van Der Mark and Day at the front but although the risk was low I was still not willing to take it. At this point in third position I wanted to settle down and find a nice rhythm this was much more difficult than I thought it was going to be due to the pack of riders following behind. I became a little more nervous when wild card "Irwin" came past because he made a mistake a few corners later, I would prefer he was in front so I could see him. The next obstacles popped up when "Irwin" and "Lanusse" both moved pass, but within a few laps "Lanusse" crashed and half a lap later "Irwin" crashed. At this point first and second position looked impossible but a podium was still in sight. With two laps to go "Krajci" a rider who had yet to gain a podium position was pushing hard to get the result and I was thinking only about the finish line.

The relief really hit after I crossed the finishing line in 4th position, 6 positions ahead of where I needed to be to confirm a championship win!

I have a list of people to thank, My mum Jackie, my Dad Mal, my amazing girlfriend Jemma who has supported me and visited me this year in Europe, my whole family and friendship group who have been incredibly supportive, Gary Morrison my great friend and main supporter outside my family, all those who helped out on the journey till now, Tam and Bruce (Warrantyte cafe), Tania, Richard and Ivan (Yarrambat Estate)/Margharita's Pizza lower plenty, The balding family (Pumpworks Vic).

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Margherita **Pizza**

Warrandyte Cafe

SLGRAAFICS



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