

RACE REPORT

[For immediate release 17/03/2008](#)

Race Report – Kyalami 15th March 2008

Who would have thought that the first race of the year would be so eventful and full of surprises. **EmTek Kawasaki** has been in planning and testing mode ever since the day of our announcement as the works **Kawasaki** team in December 2007.

For weeks on end the team toiled and worked, originally with the 2007 models and eventually the 2008 models. The primary objective of the team is to find “the perfect setup”. This meant many hours of problem solving and spanner throwing – a la Cape Town. Anyway back to Kyalami.

What a weekend! **EmTek Kawasaki** pulled out all the stops to put on a professional show and this is the result:



Top Fuelling expert Alaine checking the maps

Friday Practise

Friday started at one hell of a pace with the fastest time posted at a 1:45.2 set by our own Sheridan Morais and another three riders were running under the 1:46 marker.

Christopher Leeson was pretty happy with his first session in the 1000cc Superbike class after managing a 1:47.4 and was in the mix of things. Fortunately Christopher has been working extremely hard on the Superbike and was not in any way intimidated by his recent promotion to this class.

The second session was again lead by Shez at a 1:45.2 and second position was Clinton Seller at a 1:46.0 so Sheridan's set-up was getting better and he was getting comfortable. Chris managed a 1:47.5 but was struggling with front end set-up, even so, he was quicker than a few of the front runners. One of the issues that Chris has had even during testing was a front end patter which is quite puzzling as it is proving difficult to cure. The same problem affects Sheridan but at the moment he is able to ride around the problem.

This is definitely an area of work for the next test sessions.

Third session made it three in a row for Shez with a similar time to the first two sessions and Clinton was behind him again. Chris picked up his pace and after three sessions on the same tyres he managed a 1:47.1 and was 7th fastest!

Race Day - Saturday

All of the work, the testing, the aspirations and the focus came to fruition on Saturday – this is what we were about.

Saturday morning was (an untypically) cold and miserable day, ready for rain and none of the teams or riders were looking forward to wet weather riding – to be perfectly honest neither was **EmTek Kawasaki** as we had hardly been able to do much wet weather testing.

Qualifying was fortunately dry and Shez put his Emtek Kawasaki in **pole position** with young Chris back in 9th on a 1:46.4 and only 1.4 seconds off pole position.

Heat 1

Then came the rain. It got really wet and the first 600cc Supersport race was in the wet – which seems to be becoming a bit of a habit, as the last race of the 2007 season was also drenched for the Supersport 600cc bikes.

With just a single car race in between the 600's and the 1000's it was a challenge to choose what tyres to run. Fortunately the organizers and race control made the correct choice and decided to run another of the car races ahead of the Superbikes. This meant that the track was drying quickly but it was still a gamble as to what tyres to run – because usually the Kyalami race

track does not have enough water drainage points and the cars dropping fuel, oil and coolant in the wet makes the track treacherous. The Crew Chief Ricky Morais and Shez decided to run on full dry tyres and unfortunately Chris had to run on a wet front as there wasn't another spare wheel (or time to change the tyre) for Chris to run with. This was a pity as we believe Chris would have been much further up the pack than he was.

Both Ricky and Shez knew how the Dunlop's worked in these tricky conditions as Shez took his first ever national win in 2003 at Kyalami on a damp track ironically with the Dunlop's and on a Kawasaki.

Off the start Shez got the holeshot with Arushen hot on his heels, they left the rest of the field for dead on the opening lap.



Arushan Moodley right on the exhaust pipe of Shez Heat 1

However racing is a strange sport, because anything can happen, and eventually Seller caught and passed Moodley to finish 2nd behind Shez.

Chris was a bit tentative as to how well the wet front would hold up so lost a bit of ground the first few lap's but came back strong to eventually pass Robert Portman for 10th (who ironically was also running with a wet front due to indecisions).



Christopher battling with wet fronts in Heat 1

Heat 2

Heat 2 was dry and everyone was ready to go for the win.

Off the line Shez was relegated to 5th after a poor start but by the end of lap 1 normal service was resumed with Shez in front and a hard charging field on his rear. Eventually it was just Sheridan and Seller way out in front.

For the last three laps Shez decided to put down the hammer and managed three 1:45.1 lap's, the pace proved just too much for Seller and Shez won by some 2 seconds.



Shez leading the field with Clinton Seller in hot pursuit

Christopher also had a dud of a start and had to fight hard to pass Julian Odendaal and start catching the group in front of him.

With 1 lap to go Chris was in 10th position and closing rapidly on the 6th position bunch. Unfortunately there wasn't enough time and Chris was forced to settle for 10th but was happy to know that his last few laps were quicker than 6th place.



Christopher pushing his Kawasaki to the limits

So to recap what had been achieved by Sheridan on the new Kawasaki 2008 ZX10R:

- Top of timing sheets for all sessions on Friday
- Qualifies on Pole
- Win Heat 1
- Win Heat 2 (first double for Kawasaki since Ever in the Superbike class)
- Breaks lap record two times in the last three laps 1:45;116

If there was anything else to break he would have, such was his weekend.

Hospitality

EmTek Kawasaki decided in its wisdom to invest in a boma for the Kyalami round. The decision was based on the fact that more than 120 supporters and sponsors were invited by the team and it would not be prudent or wise to have this many people roaming around in the pit during a hectic race weekend (I pity the sole that would have gotten in the way of Ricky during a suspension tweak or tyre change).

So Boma 9 became a hotspot for the team.
Any boy did that go down well.

All the sponsors and supporters had a great time (and fantastic food) which was supplied on the day as well as offering protection from the rain.

EmTek Kawasaki wishes to thank the following people for the huge assistance in the catering and hosting of the event:

- Sheridan's long suffering girlfriend Adèle for assisting in managing the promotion girls, tickets, rider refreshments etc
- Michelle, Jamie and Angela (Sheridan's family) for manning the bar and general help on the day
- Clive de Vos – for his fantastic and perfectly seasoned and cooked Greek style lamb
- Dave Nagan – for his traditional and well spiced Bryani
- Jan and Willem – for their tireless help in feeding the team during Friday and Saturday sessions
- Tanita Parsons – for bar duties and general help

Finally a HUGE **THANK YOU** to all the EmTek Kawasaki sponsors that have contributed and helped towards this event – without your support **NONE** of this would have been possible.

On a lighter note!

EmTek Kawasaki is a team made up of many talents and primarily Superbike riders. However there is pride of place for one member of the team who was not too sure of his talents on Saturday:

Roll on Team Kawasaki



*Hmm. Now Ricky says I must pull the back wheel off!! If only I can bounce it.
Chris Snr having feel good moment.*

Next Race

Killarney – Cape Town

As for the next race – watch out for young Christopher – 5th April will be a corker as he really loves the track. See you there.

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