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Reigning world champion wins in torrential rain

Current 24 hour mountain bike world champion, Jason English from Port Macquarie, says he is on track to defend his world title this year after winning the JetBlack 24 hour Sydney race over the weekend. The 24 hour solo champion braved torrential rain at Wisemans Ferry to complete 28 grueling laps despite organizers Rocky Trail Entertainment being forced to shorten the race to 12 hours.

English admitted to being relieved to race for only 12 hours after the blistering pace set by the lead riders during the first eight hours. The biggest threat came from another New South Wales rider, John Blankenstein from Tathra.

"I thought I only had to worry about Shane (Taylor) from Canberra. Luckily he pulled out but John was breathing down my neck," said English.

Blankenstein showed his form uphill while English says he was able to reclaim some time on the downhill.

"I think having downhill bars just gave me crazy confidence," said English.

When the race was officially restarted on Sunday morning with only four hours remaining English was still not confident.

"The big thing was that there was only three minutes (gap) in it," he explained.

There was added pressure on English with his new sponsor JetBlack Cycling being the major sponsor of the race. Being on two new Pivot bikes meant some benefits but also could have been his undoing.

"It was great. Having two bikes I was able to adjust things like seat height and the pressure in the Fox forks," said English.

With wet conditions all riders were getting grit in their brake pads forcing them to change pads frequently. For English, however, that was starting to look like a problem.

"We were changing them about every four laps so we had to get some more. There were limited available in Australia as yet. The guys started ringing bike shops for me and finally they had to get me two sets from the warehouse."

English was impressed with the mechanical support he had.

"It was just amazing. Every two laps I got my bike looked at by the JetBlack guys. It was awesome. I don t know how I did it in the past without that level of support," said English.

Even after winning the race, English admitted to this close finish as a wake-up call.

"John is trained by Mark Fenner. I really am now seriously thinking about getting a coach," he said.

Blankenstein finished second on equal 28 laps but was 18 minutes down on the winning time. Third place went to David Ludenia from Lawson in New South Wales who completed 25 laps.

Male Solo Winners (l-r):
5th Jamie Bailey, 2nd John Blankenstein, 1st Jason English, 3rd David Ludenia, 5th Simon Ball.

Photo: Rocky Trail Entertainment

The solo women s race was secured by Sydney based rider, Kim Stokeld from Ryde with a respectable 18 laps. Gill Lugg from Rivett ACT finished second with 16 laps and Philippa Rostan from Queanbeyan took out the third place with 11 laps.

Female Solo Winners (l-r):
2nd Gill Lugg, 1st Kim Stokeld, 3rd Philippa Rostan

Photo: Rocky Trail Entertainment

The two well-known sunshine coast MTB riders Andy Fellows and Sam Bekkers can claim the overall race win with 29 laps, which were the most laps completed by a racing team in the event.

The 24 hour race was New South Wales only qualifying race for solo riders for entry into the World 24 hour solo Mountain Bike Championships, which will be held out of the USA and Canada for the first time when they head to Canberra this October.

Australian riders have claimed the World 24 hour solo title only twice before with Craig Gordon in 2006 and James Williamson in 2008.

For detailed race results of the JetBlack 24Hr Sydney race, visit www.rockytrailentertainment.com

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For further information or images, please contact the event organiser:

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