



Roof of Africa 2009

30 November 2009 16:57

Lettenbichler dominates Roof - robbed of victory by a rock

The adventure that is the Roof of Africa ended after three gruelling days under extreme heat in Lesotho/South Africa in major disappointment for Team BMW Motorrad Motorsport. Factory rider Andreas Lettenbichler lost a certain win just eight kilometers from the chequered flag after colliding with a rock.

Lettenbichler started the race, which would prove to be as tough as ever, placing his BMW 450 X second in the opening "Round the Houses", the traditional prologue through the capital Maseru. Unfortunately though for the friendly German, he collected a one-hour penalty in the following 75-kilometer time trial. Lettenbichler missed a marshall point and his race seemed basically over.

But "Letti" showed fighting spirit and kept charging, showing a remarkable recovery on day two. He displayed incredible talent in the uphill sections, passed more than 100 riders and virtually rode circles around the competition to move into second position by the day's end, behind New Zealander Chris Birch.

The third and final day of the legendary Hardenduro race started just like before - with Lettenbichler being the quickest. The recent winner of the Red Bull Romaniacs first stormed to the front, then even expanded his lead. But there was no Happy End for the 35-year-old. Lettenbichler collided with a rock while climbing up a super-steep section, resulting in a leak to the engine case. Eight kilometers from the finish line the engine expired. The race was over and an almost certain win gone out the window.

Lettenbichler was understandably disappointed: "A rock hit the engine case. I had been pretty much running out of oil when I finally realised the misery. I tried to repair the damage, but there was nothing I could do. What a massive blow after yesterday's successful ride".

Lettenbichler's DNF gave way for Birch, who took the win ahead of fellow countryman Rory Mead and South Africa's Jade Gutzeit. The latter carried the BMW flag aboard his BMW 450 X.

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