



Salminen is Vice World Champion!

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As factory rider Juha Salminen parked his BMW 450 X inside the Parc Fermé at St Flour, France, all the pressure of a demanding season fell off his shoulders. Salminen had clinched runner-up honours in the hotly contested World Enduro Championship (WEC), to become Vice World Champ in the toughest class of them all: the E2 category. Now, after a difficult start to the campaign, he and his team had reason to celebrate.

The success came as a result of hard and tirelessly work carried out in the past year. The first races didn't go according to plan and the BMW Motorrad Motorsport riders struggled to get familiar with their machinery. But the whole staff kept working on every detail and, step by step, the factory bikes became better and better.

"The season was too short in the end," said Juha Salminen. The quiet Finn referred to his impressive finish in the series, where he scored a number of wins and second places. Maybe, with some more races left, the title could have gone his way. The team earned two wins, one runner-up position and a third place at the final two meetings in Greece and France.

These achievements tell a lot about BMW's competitiveness. Brand and bike now clearly belong to the top league. Both in the WEC and off road racing in general. This is further underlined by Simo Kirssi's Cross Country success and Andreas Lettenbichler's recent top results this June and August. The German finished third at the Erzberg before putting his BMW on top of the podium at the infamous Red Bull Romaniacs.

The World Enduro season is in the books, but work continues for the riders. The Six Days (team world championships) are to follow in October and Simo Kirssi plans to defend his German and European Cross Country title. And the "extreme" division is gearing up towards the Roof of Africa, the legendary extreme rally held in the Lesotho mountains. Andreas Lettenbichler goes there with the ambition to bring this victory to Munich also.

Berti Hauser, Director BMW Motorrad Motorsport: "First of all I would like to congratulate Juha and the team. This is a remarkable success, just like the achievements of Simo and Marko (Tarkalla). Admittedly, before the season, we aimed at the title. But we soon had to realise that this was too ambitious. We suffered a bit at the beginning. Yet, with strong commitment and plenty of passion coming from Markus Theobald, Wolfgang Fischer and their staff, we did manage to turn things around.

"They addressed the specifics of WEC racing and soon Juha was able to fight for podium positions. But we wanted more. We wanted to win and we wanted the vice championship. And that's exactly what we got.

"I'm touched and proud to see the team alter from the middle of the field into a front-runner. Juha ended only six points behind the world champ, he did take the vice title and he guided us to runner-up in the manufacturer's championship. This success is based on a lot of work. Obviously we're delighted. The team has all the ingredients to be capturing the title in the future."

Media Contact

BMW Press Department
Liane Drews
liane.drews@bmw.de

Team Contact
contact@motorsport-
communication.com



DOC WEINGART



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