

World Cup Poland
3rd-6th June 2010



Round two of the MTB-O World Cup was held in the city famous for freeing Poland from Communism and Lech Walesa in the late 80s - Gdansk. I went into the event ranked 10th in the World Cup standings and left in 7th. The weekend kicked off with an informal sprint race around the seaside park, which, on the public holiday was crowded. I finished 4th in a very tightly packed elite field.

Since I was ranked in the top ten in the world, I was privileged to get seeded into the last ten starts for the long distance race. Although by the Baltic, Gdansk is by no means flat, and the long distance race became one of the toughest races I have done.

The course took athletes up and down every hill, with an average gradient of 25%. Unlike other events, there was no escaping the gruelling hills, and as the course progressed, the gradient became more energy sapping. Adding to this, the 25° weather meant many athletes, including myself, suffered from dehydration. As I collapsed over the finish line, I was aware I was =11th (a position that did not change) and then passed out.

The afternoon was spent recuperating and drinking gallons of water and electrolyte drinks, to prepare for the middle distance on Saturday.

The middle distance was less physical, and all the elites were able to ride up the hills this time! However, what the course lacked in physicality, it made up for with the technical navigation, never giving a break to switch off and focus on pedalling. It was a constant 55 minutes of tough navigation and route planning. I had one of my better races and was really pleased to finish in 5th place - my best international result to date.

The final race of the weekend was the mixed team relay. Great Britain had a fantastic first leg and came back to handover to me in 6th place. I was able to hold this position until the very end of the course where some of the stronger men were able to pull away. Unfortunately the team were unable to finish as the anchor leg had a mechanical in the forest resulting in a broken bike.

Overall, the weekend has been fairly successful with some better international results firmly planting me within the top ten in the world. Bring on the World Championships!

