



**FACTORY**   
**OFFROAD TEAM**

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## **STEVE HOLCOMBE IS THE NEW LEADER OF THE ENDURO GP**



On Saturday 1 and Sunday 2 July in Gelnica, Slovakia, the **fifth round** of the **FIM EnduroGP 2023** World Championship was held with an extremely technical race characterized by a track with a very varied surface and **four special tests (Extreme, Cross Test, Enduro 1 and Enduro 2)** to be repeated three times a day for a total of twenty-four PS during the entire race weekend.

The weekend kicked off in the way no one ever wanted and that threw the entire world enduro family and the large audience present into total shock. On the evening of Friday 30/6, during the usual Super Test, a Slovak rider, from the Open 4T category, lost his life due to a terrible crash.

The team and riders express their deepest condolences to the family of the deceased rider and join them in this time of deep sadness.

On Saturday, July 1, the race resumed regularly with the riders measuring themselves against a **58-kilometer race** course characterized by very technical high-level tests where experience and control played a key role in the success of the race. Opening on both race days, the course included a **natural Extreme** about **600 m** long located near the Paddock, a very technical **5.4 km** long **Cross Test** featuring motocross-style counter-slopes, jumps and banks, followed by a **first Enduro Test** (Enduro Test1) of **5.5 km** inside a forest with soft, muddy terrain. Closing out the round was a **second Enduro Test** (EnduroTest2) held on the same terrain as the previous special test Enduro1.

A nearly perfect weekend for **Steve Holcombe**, the British rider ended the trip by remaining **provisional leader** of the **E2 Class** and overtaking his teammate in the EnduroGP standings.

On Saturday **Steve Holcombe** rode a perfect race, **dominating the E2 Class**, the **EnduroGP** and recording best times in several special tests, especially in the two Enduro Tests. At the end of a long day of racing **Steve** deservedly **won both Classes**.

On Sunday the British rider got off to a strong start, but at the beginning of the second lap a violent rainstorm came down on the course, causing him to lose several precious seconds on the second pass of the Extreme Test. Later, also on the second pass of Enduro Test 1, Steve Holcombe made another mistake, losing several seconds from the provisional leader. The third and final lap was heart-pounding with Steve fighting to the last meter to make up precious seconds, which, however, were not enough to take the first position. His **final score** is **two second places**, in the **EnduroGP** and the **E2 class**.

**Brad Freeman** came to Gelnica with the **knowledge** of his **not optimal condition** and the desire despite this to try to take the start anyway at the Slovak GP. Unfortunately, on Saturday, after only two specials, the **British rider decided to stop** and **not even take the start on Sunday**.

At the end of the race weekend **Bred Freeman** remains **leader** of the **E3 class** but **drops to second place** in the **EnduroGP** class.

The performance of **Theo Espinasse (Team Oxmoto)**, who finished Sunday in **second place** Overall in the **E1** Category, with a **first** and a **third** place, deserves mention. **Leo Joyon (Team Oxmoto)** ended the race weekend with a **second place** on Saturday and a **first place** on Sunday in the **Youth** Category, riding **Beta RR 125**. Finally, **Luc Fargier (Team Oxmoto)** ended the race with a **third place** in the **E3** Category.

With the Slovakian trip concluded, teams and riders will take a **long break** before returning with the **big season finale on the last weekend of September** (29/9 -1/10) and the **first weekend of October** (6 -8/10) with the **double Portuguese** trip that will close the 2023 season of the top Enduro World Championship.

## **STEVE HOLCOMBE**

It was a very good race weekend, on Saturday everything went right, and I won the EnduroGP and E2 Classes, but on Sunday the rain compromised the outcome of the race and even though I express my best in these conditions, I couldn't repeat myself by making two mistakes. I am happy to have taken the provisional leadership of the EnduroGP Class and the gold plate.

## BRAD FREEMAN

Unfortunately I arrived in Gelnica not in the best physical condition, I tried to take the start but decided to retire and wait for the two GPs in Portugal to try to be competitive. These two zeros will weigh heavily, but these are the races and I just have to stay focused and get to the top in Portugal.



