

Race report for Mettet Superbiker
13th-15th October 2006, Mettet, Belgium

2006 was the 20th Anniversary of Mettet's Superbiker and it was being billed as the biggest Superbiker event so far. And bigger and better it was – as it had been extended into a 3-day event, with over 260 riders, quads, Starbikers and evening entertainment. It seemed as though even the weather had been organised especially for the weekend as it was warm and sunny.

Both DCR riders were there this year – Double Irish Champion Greg Kinsella, who has been a regular competitor here for the past 4 years and Double Norasport Champion Andy Mitchell, who was returning to Mettet after a 4-year gap.

Friday – Free practice and Time Practice

Free practice and the first timed practice sessions were held on Friday afternoon. 5 sessions with up to 50 riders in each meant that getting a clear run at a fast lap was tricky. Kinsella was quickly up to speed, on one of his favourite tracks, putting in a quick last lap to finish fastest in his group (1:14.936). By the end of the day Mitchell was going well and looked like he'd never been away, finishing 4th in his group (1:14.875).



Saturday – Timed Practice and Qualifying

Saturday morning started off misty, with a damp track and poor visibility. Kinsella was out in the first qualifying session and was going well until a rider fell at the first corner. It took the remainder of the session for marshals to sort this out which affected lap times. Kinsella finished 2nd (1:15.118). Mitchell's group had better luck later in the morning with no major incidents. He also finished 2nd in his group (1:13.705).

Other Husaberg riders were also going well in their groups Keith Farmer, on his SMR Husaberg was 4th, Alan Smith, SMR Husaberg 6th, Lee Jones 8th and Carl Shield 9th in their group and even Dave Jolly managed a respectable 23rd in his debut appearance at Mettet.

The finishing position for timed practice was based on the best lap time from both timed sessions. As a result Mitchell was 7th fastest and Kinsella was 19th, thanks to his quick lap on Friday afternoon (1:14.936), positioned between Ady Smith on 18th and Keith Farmer, in 20th place.

Qualifying for the semi-finals took place on Saturday afternoon. A puncture saw an early finish to Kinsella's qualifying session, which meant he'd have to take part in the repercharge the next morning.

Mitchell's qualifying session was a great race between himself and Ady Smith. Mitchell led most of the way until he hit an oil patch which nearly took him off. Although he managed to stay on, it gave Smith the opportunity he was looking for to get past. Mitchell fought hard but finished 3rd just behind Ady and Kevin Berthome.

Sunday – Repercharge and Main Event

Due to his DNF in qualifying Kinsella had to start from the back of the grid in the repercharge. Of the 40 riders taking part in this last chance qualifier only the first 4 across the line would make it into the semi-final, and it was only a 10 lap race so he'd have his work cut out. But as the race went on Greg had his best ride of the weekend, moving up through the field in an almost effortless way, taking riders 2 at a time on his favourite corner at the petrol station. After reaching the front and leading for a couple of laps Greg took the chequered flag and got a well deserved place in the semi's.

So both DCR riders had made it through to the semi-finals. This time the first 19 from each semi would go through to the main event – the “Best Biker” race.

Because he had qualified from the repercharge Kinsella was at the back of the grid for his semi-final. Again, Kinsella rode well, coming up through the field, picking off riders lap by lap, to finish in 10th place.

Mitchell was starting his semi-final from 10th position. He rode well and moved up to finish 5th.

By now Mettet was buzzing and a 30k strong crowd were enjoying the show and looking forward to the main event of the day – Who would become the “Best Biker”? Would local favourite Fred Fiorentino retain his Mettet title??

At 4.50 pm the “Best Biker” was under way and following a glitzy ceremony riders took their positions on the grid. 2005 DCR rider Fred Fiorentino took his place on the grid - pole position! Mitchell was 10th, Farmer 12th, Ady Smith 13th and Kinsella 21st.





You could feel the tension as the 45 riders waited for the lights to change, and then they were off. Kinsella fell at the first corner after coming together with another rider. He remounted and chased the rest of the pack for 6 laps until another fall broke his gear lever and caused him to retire from the race. Meanwhile Mitchell was battling with Ady and Farmer near the front. Although he came under pressure from Ady a few times, he started to move away and

put distance between himself and Smith. As the race came to an end, Fred crossed the line first, much to the joy of the crowd, Mitchell had moved up to take 8th place, Smith was 10th and Farmer was 12th.

Summary

Mettet is a fantastic event, a true Supermoto festival, and a great way to end the season. It is well worth a visit for anyone who rides or has an interest in supermoto.

As we reach the end of the supermoto season I'd like to thank everyone who has been involved this year; all DCR Husaberg riders, the mechanics, Chris Hartley and Andy Fawcett for all of their help and hard work and last but not least, our sponsors Putoline, Michelin, Lazer, Sinisalo, Race FX and Enigma Signs for all their help.

