

Smolensk trouble turned into double – MKR takes two sensational wins and a pair of podium doubles on top

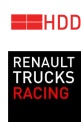
Smolensk – Sixth event of the European Truck Racing Championship series at the Russian track of Smolensk had, bluntly speaking, an absolutely tragic opening for the Czech MKR Technology team. However, the troublesome and exhausting start caused by technical complications had evolved into a sensational finish. All in all, two race victories topped with two double podiums – everything seems to be pointing to MKR being in an excellent shape before the next stop in Most, their home venue. Fantastic performance was given by the pilot Czech Adam Lacko in particular.

The Russian crusade was lined with technical problems already before the racing weekend itself, during the free practice and press drives. *'I couldn't quite wrap my mind around what had been going on since we came to Russia. Even before we heard the start shoot we had lost two turbos and a gearbox. We felt lucky that this didn't happen in the race but at that time we had no idea that another turbo would break already in Saturday's free practice and that a failed cooling hose would threaten the engine later during the race,'* shook his head in disbelief one of the MKR Technology's mechanics Jan Richter.

The team of mechanics were able to cope with all the problems beyond expectations and an equally level-headed attitude was shown by the pilots, however it seemed that the Russian 'battle' would be cursed for the north-bohemian troopers. Already in the very first main race MKR had to swallow a bitter pill, narrowly missing the podium although the Renaults of Židovice's express crossed the finishing line neatly ordered - Bösiger on the fourth followed by Lacko and Oestreich respectively. The first rank was taken by the reigning champ Antonio Albacete with Jochen Hahn closing on him and David Vršecký of Roudnice-based Buggyra completing the podium trio.

Nothing shy of a magic trick was performed by MKR's Markus Oestreich, who managed to triumph in the following handicap race with his brake callipers on fire. Oestreich beat both Levett and Oliver in spite of flames flickering from the rear wheels of his truck. *'The break between the first and second race was not long enough to fill the tanks with necessary amount of water, so when it ran out two laps before the finish, the brakes caught fire. Well, I didn't feel too good with the flames in my back but luckily, I made it,'* sighed the relieved winner of the race Markus Oestreich.

Moreover, the failed hose with the engine cooling liquid forced Adam Lacko to give up the race on the third position. *'I managed to get into fight over the podium with Oliver. I'm sure that I could have made bronze, at the least. After I had overtaken Oliver in one turn, the machine got stuck and stopped. Fortunately, this was the last complication I had to put up with in Russia,'* confessed the young racer from MKR Adam Lacko, whose colleague Markus Bösiger was moved from the fifth to sixth rank after a ten-second penalty. *'It was a kind of paradox. I got penalized after a protest had been put up by Nittel, who himself had come to the starting grid after the track had been closed and so was supposed to start from another position. Ironically, everybody seemed to be just fine with this,'* stated Markus Bösiger of MKR Technology, not concealing confusion over the situation.



Oestreich's victory on Saturday afternoon gave a kick of positive energy to the whole team and drove away all the misfortune. Not only did Sunday see the pilots from Židovice reach for a pair of podium doubles but they also recorded another win thanks to Adam Lacko.

Already the morning qualification showed that the bad luck from the beginning is gone. It was a surprising super pole win for Markus Bösiger, who emerged on the top of the starting grid of the main race. Adam Lacko was starting from the fourth position. *'It was truly sensational, I couldn't believe it myself. Compared to Saturday, when I experienced some trouble with the car, guys did a great job tuning it. Finally, the qualification has turned out well, it caught me in a good shape,'* said Markus Bösiger with satisfaction.

Although Bösiger had not managed to turn the advantageous first position into victory, the team had a reason to celebrate their first Russian double. The race was dominated by Germany's Jochen Hahn, leading man of the championship, but those who followed included MKR Technology's drivers Adam Lacko and Markus Bösiger. Markus Oestreich finished on the ninth spot.

Things having taken a lucky turn, the next handicap race managed to surpass all expectations. Everyone including Adam Lacko himself was amazed by the Czech pilot's performance. Much like an experienced old timer, he fought from the seventh place up to the front position. *'Quite simply, there was suddenly a gap in front of me, so I stepped on it and went full throttle. I must admit I don't even know how I pushed through around my opponents in the first turn and consequently come first. I wouldn't mind having more of such moments,'* laughed Adam Lacko, who could not wait to enjoy his first triumph of the season.

The handicap race was dominated by Lacko in a very convincing manner, with his fellow Czech David Vršecký of Buggyra and his team colleague Markus Bösiger. This time Oestreich did not finish the race but thanks to Lacko, fans heard the Czech national anthem play in Russia.

MKR Technology had its representatives on the podium in all races, recording also three wins in the overall team ranking. *'The Russian stop has brought about many twists, good as well as bad ones. We didn't have a particularly good start, that's for sure, but in the end luck was on our side. Anyway, we noticed that there were obstacles on the way for Albacete and Nittel as well, and neither Hahn has been so sovereign any more. Our machines have been getting into shape, so in conclusion, this has been a very encouraging weekend to open the second half of the season. I believe that in the next home race in Most we could show even more than here in Russia,'* summed up the MKR Technology's boss Mario Kress, wishing for further success.

In spite of all the trouble teams had to face, the front ranks of the European Championship have not changed. After six stops the series is still dominated by Germany's Jochen Hahn, who is followed by the current champion Antonio Albacete. The third place has been occupied by Markus Oestreich. Adam Lacko has improved his fifth position to number four and Markus Bösiger remains on the seventh.



European Truck Racing Championship continues with its seventh racing weekend in less than a month at the home track of Most in Czech (27.-28.8.).

