

Jacob Williams, Horsham's Young Gun Motocross Racer

2008 Swann Insurance International Motocross Championship, Taupo, New Zealand

Race Report

Young Victorian Moss Institute rider Jacob Williams, 12 year old from Horsham, headed over the Tasman Sea to New Zealand on 2 November 2008 to race the 2008 Taupo Swan Insurance International Motocross Championship event run as a predecessor to the 2009 FIM World Junior Motocross Championships to be held in August 2009.

Jacob jetted out of Melbourne to a week of practice in the lead up to the event and was the only Australian junior rider at the event. The event, run under full FIM control, was a fantastic opportunity for Jacob to gauge his speed and skills against a small number of international junior riders from Europe and a large number of New Zealand's fastest juniors.



Jacob's proud father Merv Williams provided the following insight into how Jacob managed to get to New Zealand and Jacobs success.

"After talking to a number of people here in Australia we decided that after missing out on the 2008 Australian Junior Motocross Titles due to the strain of the drought conditions in the Wimmera that we would bite the bullet and fundraise to send Jacob over to the international in New Zealand. I had chatted to a number of guys who had gone over to race in New Zealand and they all encouraged us to go so we undertook some fundraising by having auctions and functions that raised enough for the airfares and costs including the FIM insurance so we were set to go.' said Merv. "The local community helped us no end to get Jacob over there."

"One person who I have to especially thank is Gerry Okane from Taupo who helped put the whole thing together for us. Jacob was lucky that Gerry was able to source a KTM 85 SX for him to ride from Troy Tipenes of Motoworld and then organized a number of tracks for Jacob to practice on before the event." A very grateful Merv said. "Whilst Gerry was setting up the New Zealand end we were busy organizing passports and other things that took up an amazing amount of time but a week before we were due to fly out everything came together very nicely including a trip to the SuperX at Geelong, the day before flying out. It was a great start to the trip and the racing was fantastic."

I had a really good time in New Zealand." said Jacob. "I got to ride on some unbelievable tracks and with some of New Zealand's top riders including Scott Moir & Iain Pemberton from Promoto who also gave dad full use of there workshop, Ben Thomeson, Brad Groombridge, Lee McKinstry and a number of others and had an awesome time. Even the place we stayed at the Cascades in Taupo was unreal and Alan and Del were really good to Dad and I."

"The International was huge, lots of riders and you had to qualify to race. They had MX1 and MX2 racing with a number of the Worlds best riders including Josh Coppins raced." Continued Jacob. "I had

a mixed day with a few stuff ups dropping me down in the race placings but it was the best experience and has made me committed to qualify for the FIM World Junior Motocross Championship's next year."

"Jacob settled well after the travel with the excitement being his first time overseas, even I was excited" laughed Merv. "At the International Jacob hit the track on his KTM in practice with good speed with lap times equaling about 20th place. It set the scene for a good days racing I thought and he headed out into qualifying but after the first lap Jacob didn't look balanced as he had tweaked his foot on landing on one of the massive jumps but he forged on in a fair bit of pain to just qualify in 39th place. Not the best but it meant he had qualified and we were very happy with that."

"After a bit of a massage and ice on his foot Jacob was still a bit tender but ready to race. We rolled up his KTM 85 SX onto the start line for his first race and found out that they don't allow starting blocks for Juniors in FIM events. No blocks meant that he struggled off the gate when it dropped but he still managed to be in the top 20 at the end of the long straight into the first corner. He quickly passed a number of riders and then came to grief over a later corner ski jump. Jacob was back quickly on his bike and then managed to high side his bike in a later lap dropping him well back in the race order. He again was up and again catching riders but two pretty big offs put him well behind where he could have been." Said Merv. "I was proud that he pushed on to finish the race especially after his sore foot in qualifying and then two big crashes."

"After a bit of recovery and some encouraging words from the KTM team Jacob was right for his second race. His KTM 85 SX was running perfectly but balancing on a big wheel without blocks made for a pretty average start and then he got tangled up in a 1st turn pile up with some other riders and he left first corner in 40th and rode his heart out and finished 24th." reflected Merv.

Jacob and I learnt a lot in the week in New Zealand. He was one of the smallest and youngest guys in his class. There were some fantastic riders out there and I believe he rode really well and the whole time had the biggest smile on his dial. I reckon he has the making of a champion and to me is a champion. I hope that the both of us will be back there in Taupo later in 2009 for the FIM Junior World Championships."

"I was surprised by the help that we received both to get Jacob there and over there. Gerry Okane on www.holeshot.co.nz I suppose summed it up with: "The "Geez Your Lucky Award" goes to Jacob Williams who has flown over from Australia to compete. Jacob just scraped in 39th place in qualifying and so was very happy to do so. He may also be the Worlds smallest 12 year old on a big wheel bike and he did Australia justice."

We both thank the many people that gave Jacob the chance to go. From his Mum, Kim who sat worrying back in Horsham to Westlander Motor inn, Harvey Norman Horsham, Irwin Motors, Wimmera Funerals, Hod Hardware Ballarat, Western General Insurance, the Royal Hotel, Victoria Hotel and the Whiteheart Hotels in Horsham, the Lakeview Hotel Ballarat and Statewide Bearings who all helped in raising money and Jacobs racing sponsors Moss Institute, KTM Caldecott Motors, Answer Racing, Dragon, SixSixOne, ProTaper, Serco, Drift 83, Craig Wasley & Choice Suspension.

Photo from Rice Photography.

Any body who is interested in helping Jacob achieve his goal of racing the 2009 FIM Junior World Motocross Championship later next year in New Zealand please contact Merv Williams.

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