



Suzuki 6 Hour

Well I guess to start off, you might notice a change of scenery around here - more blue than usual. For those who don't already know, I have been picked up by Yamaha New Zealand and given the opportunity to ride the WR450F for the foreseeable future.

To say I'm pretty excited is an understatement - I am really looking forward to taking on this new challenge and seeing what the new WR450F is capable of.

And the first challenge on the new blue machine was the Suzuki 6 Hour Cross Country race, held just out of Tokoroa over the weekend. One of the biggest team events on the calendar, and after having the WR450 for only two weeks, I teamed up with long-time Yamaha racer Adam Reeves to see what we could achieve.

I elected to go first, not doing us any favours by blowing the start and getting off the line in about 100th place with a lot of work to do. After an endo in lap one and passing around 90 riders, I handed the bike to Adam and he took off on his first lap. He had about as much luck as myself during his first lap, collecting a tree and bending the radiator back by about 45 degrees.

During the next pit stop we checked for leaking water. Happy the radiator was still sealed we started to make our move through the field. Lap by lap we managed to pick off team after team as the WR450 made easy work of the slippery conditions and tricky rutted terrain.

On the penultimate lap, Adam moved us into second position outright, and I managed to finish the race off, staying in second position, about four minutes down from the eventual winners, Mark Penny and Scott Columb.

By the end of the race, Adam and myself were lapping as the fastest team on board the WR450, but unfortunately had given away too much time early on to the fast-starting Suzuki pair.

I am very happy with this result, even though it was not a win. It's a very promising start for the first race out and I am very excited to know that the WR has the pace to run up front and that the bike gets unbelievable traction where other bikes can be found struggling. Plus we beat it up pretty good and it never missed a beat. It's bullet-proof.

I'm looking forward to the next race, which will be the GNCC this coming weekend at Burts Farm just out of Matata. Thanks to everyone who is staying aboard with me during this transition - it is very much appreciated and you can look forward to bigger and brighter racing future.

Chris

