

IMAGOLIVE

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MATTERLEY BASIN (ENGLAND)- The 60th edition of the Motocross of Nations was already expected to be “the one” everyone could remember for life.

And the 85000 spectators who were at Matterley this weekend will definitely remember Team USA winning in front of Team Belgium, with Stefan Everts racing his very last Heat of the career.

Matterley Basin, hosting a successful Grand Prix of England last June, turned into the “Paradise” of Motocross fans on Thursday, when the gates opened to crowds from all over the world.

Since then the massive flow of Motocross migrants never stopped and the 85000 people were just a part of the many who came to the gates.

The entire valley was packed with such a record audience witnessing the high level of racing reached by the Motocross of Nations in his many years of history.



Stewart's uniform mixing with the crowd

A breathtaking show begun at 1 pm with the first Moto mixing the MX1 and the MX2 riders together. Stefan Everts got the holeshot, followed by American leader Stewart, New Zealander Ben Townley and youngster Villopoto. One lap later Stewart crashed while Everts kept up his rhythm and opened up a gap from Villopoto. But once Stewart re-entered the race in seventh he stormed from there to second, right behind winner Everts who could race on his own for the entire Moto. Ryan Villopoto brought another good result to Team USA, finishing third behind Stewart and in front of MX2 World Champion Christophe Pourcel, fourth. The top five was completed by New Zealander Ben Townley.



Stefan Everts marked the first Moto with a S72 signature

The second Moto had MX2 and Open classes together. The final winner was Italian Antonio Cairoli who just celebrated his 21st birthday yesterday. Winning the second Heat of the FOX Motocross of Nations was like a present for the Italian but on track he had to fight hard for it. After the start Tedesco lead from Christophe Pourcel, Ben Townley and Ryan Villopoto; Antonio Cairoli was fifth but he was coming closer. Pourcel crashed, handing second to Townley, but the New Zealander was then overtaken by Villopoto. Ryan was second when made a mistake and handed Cairoli the chance to pass Tedesco. The Italian found an open door at lap ten then brought the bike home in first place; Villopoto made up for his mistake with second and former MX2 Champion Townley completed the top three. After a bad start, Ramon was consistent for the entire Moto and finished fourth ahead of Rattray and Tedesco, sixth.



Three interesting youngsters: Ryan Villopoto, Ben Townley and Antonio Cairoli

The final Moto had once again the challenge between Everts and Stewart but it was Philippaerts surprising the crowd with a storming start. Both Mackenzie and Coppins tried to snatch the lead from the Italian but David blocked all attacks until the arrival of Everts and Stewart. The American and the Belgian started a thrilling battle which was finally won by Everts. Once the Belgian made his final move on Stewart, he passed also Philippaerts. Stewart did not want to let Stefan go so easily and moved past Philippaerts right after Everts. The latter kept the gap open and never let the American get close to him; Stewart finished the Moto with second place ahead of Philippaerts, third, and Tanel Leok was fourth. Steve Ramon got another top five result and finished fifth.



Steve Ramon won the Open class at the 2006 FOX Motocross of Nations

The American Team brought once again the Trophy home with injured Carmichael watching the race from outside; the strikes at the Motocross of Nations are now 17 for the USA Team. Belgians were second but much more successful in the individual class standings: Ramon won the Open class and Everts secured first place of the MX1 class thanks to a couple of Moto wins.

The King completed his very last race in his own style and the whole crowd cheered him up while he was gifting them with another winning performance. The last one.

Team New Zealand was third: the challenge with Team Italy lasted until the very end of the day when the Italians finished fourth by just 1 point.



The podium of the 2006 FOX Motocross of Nations

At the end of the 60th edition of the Motocross of Nations Giuseppe Luongo said: “After Ernée, the event in Matterley Basin confirmed that the Motocross of Nations has now reached the level of the greatest sports in the world. A race showing such important numbers can enter the record books together with the best sport events ever. I thank the FIM Motocross Commission and the FIM itself for all the support they gave us; all fans, riders, teams, FOX and all sponsors who joined us in such a thrilling adventure. Thanks to my staff as well: they have been working very hard to reach such a result. And last but not least, thanks to Stefan “The King” who ended his career today in the way that made him the “winningest” rider of all times. We will see each other again in Budds Creek-USA for the 2007 edition of the Motocross of Nations”.

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